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Lexical Entrainment, Empathy, and Materiality in African American

Creative Improvised Music and Conceptual Art

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology

by

James IE Ilgenfritz III

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Kojiro Umezaki, Chair
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2023

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my partner in life and creative practice, Sarah Krasnow, who has always had the remarkable ability to help me find the spaces for patience and mindfulness from which this dissertation developed. The difficult process of recovering from two different challenging ordeals with brain surgery could not have had the same positive, even transformative outcome without her courage and love as a guide.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank first and foremost, my dissertation advisor Kojiro Umezaki, whose patience, insight, and commitment to elucidating the path of his advisees' pursuits knows no limits. I must also acknowledge Professor Umezaki's delicate and supportive handling of the not uncomplicated matter of how to make space in this dissertation for recognizing the very personal and challenging life experiences that have informed the trajectory of my scholarship. Without Professor Umezaki's advisement, I would have had much more difficulty articulating the relationship between those experiences and the scholarship that ensued.

I would also like to thank professor Amy Bauer, who recognized the emphasis on materiality that was already recurring throughout this document, and encouraged me to embrace that aspect and also the concept of New Materialism. It then became a central process of this document to reconsider the materiality/conceptualism duality, and somewhat resolve that binary through the endeavors that lexical entrainment proposes.

I must thank professor Bridget R. Cooks, whose UC Irvine course Contemporary African American Artists, and whose book, *Exhibiting Blackness,* both provided critically valuable insight that shaped the direction of my scholarship during my time at UC Irvine. I must also thank her for her participation in my qualifying examination and dissertation committee.

I must also recognize Chrisopher R. Williams, whose Fall 2019 course at UC Irvine *Black Experimentalism* proved to be a most auspicious beginning to my time at UC Irvine. The research and scholarship in which I engaged during that course directly informed the primary thrust of this dissertation.

I would also like to thank Professor Anthony Davis, who served on the committee for my qualifying examination, and together with J. D. Parran, provided a lot of guidance in the research that is largely represented in the first chapter of this dissertation.

I must thank all the instrumentalists who took part in my April 8, 2023 creative capstone concert, particularly bass clarinetist Joshua Rubin, guitarist Lily Guarneros Maase, and vocalist/conductor Malcolm McGee. Likewise, the musical contributions of Jiryis Ballan, Oliver Brown, Fabricio Cavero, William Fastenow, Isaac Otto Hayes, Rebecca Larkin, Teerath Majumder, Matthew Nelson, and Lisa Yoshida for their musical contributions and technical assistance.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Lexical Entrainment, Empathy, and Materiality in African American

Creative Improvised Music and Conceptual Art

by

James IE Ilgenfritz III

Doctor of Philosophy in Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology

University of California, Irvine, 2023

Professor Kojiro Umezaki, Chair

This dissertation extends the standard notion of musical entrainment as the human capacity for rhythmic synchrony to propose that the cooperative, improvisational and conversational aspects of lexical entrainment can describe communal engagements with artistic expression and sociopolitical alignment. Focusing primarily on African American creative improvised music and conceptual art since the 1960s, it interrogates dualities of structure/intuition, subjectivity/objectivity, and materiality/conceptualism. This research then provides context for a series of original musical and intermedia works, and reveals how empathy and mindfulness interact with scholarship and artistic discipline to support a more fully-embodied approach to engaging process-based transformations of instrumental technique, notation/orchestration, and artistic expression.

This scholarship considers the creative and conceptual processes of various artists, with one main trajectory focused on improvising performer/composers Ornette Coleman, George Lewis, Roscoe Mitchell, and Matana Roberts, and another on artists Terry Adkins, Charles Gaines, David Hammons, and Benjamin Patterson. Two significant ways in which materiality and conceptualism become imbricated in this investigation are in Charles Gaines's grid-based deconstructions of form and identity, and in Roscoe Mitchell's embodied approach to process-based transformations of both instrumental technique and notation/orchestration. Both artists' distinctive vocabularies and practices are presented as methods for the lexical entrainment of artistic practice.

The original intermedia works, also discussed in this dissertation, reconsider assumptions about time, narrative, and temporality, and showcase relationships between extended techniques on the 5-string contrabass, retuned in a Just Intonation-derived scordatura called the *Alien Generator* system, and the

Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array (AMIA), a family of twelve servo-controlled mechanical instruments that engage in various subtle processes often associated with Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR). Through these works, lexical entrainment can be seen as the process by which individuals defer their own subjectivities to conform to the dictates and functionalities of materials and conceptual frameworks. In this respect, group dynamics and materiality exert similar influence on behavior, mindfulness, and empathy.

Preface

In the late 2000s I was diagnosed with a benign brain tumor. I had surgery to remove brain tumors in 2013 and again in 2017. Fortunately both tumors were benign, but following the second surgery in particular, I've lived with some cognitive and neurological challenges. I briefly lost the ability to speak fluently and write my name — a condition called Aphasia, which is common with individuals who have had a stroke. In my own experience this manifested as word recall deficit, difficulty concentrating, a slight stutter, and numbness in my right foot. Now almost six years later at the time this dissertation is completed, those challenges remain a part of my life and continue to inform the direction of my work.

What I learned from the experience is that what makes us different is also what makes us stronger. My life took a dramatic change for the better when I learned to see my misfortunes as opportunities — as gifts. I've worked for 20 years with students from pre-kindergarten through to college, and that work was essential during my recovery, because as I helped young children develop the focus and patience to learn a musical instrument, I helped myself reclaim those qualities.

My time in the ICIT program at UC Irvine provided me with the time and space to explore the connections between my own focus on empathy and compassion, and the meanings and messages embodied in the work of the African American musicians and conceptual artists who have influenced my work for decades.

This very personal story of loss and recovery is embedded in the work I've made at UC Irvine, and I make this music to show how being mindful of the present moment can help others to value connections with others, and with one's inner self; because when we define excellence by the quality of the relationships we maintain with others, we celebrate humanistic values, personal achievement, and a commitment to a more inclusive sense of community.

These ideals are embodied in the work of the artists and musicians discussed in this dissertation, in the methods employed in the scholarship that has shaped this document, and in the original works that were presented during this past four years. These are the personal motivations that make this particular path of scholarly inquiry relevant for the dissertation and creative work, and while that personal history most certainly stretches far into my past, the most effective and concise way of integrating these inquiries and creative works is found in my very recent history.

Introduction

This dissertation investigates the relationship between African American conceptual art since the 1960s and improvised music during the same period, viewing those fields through the lens of *lexical entrainment.* This concept of lexical entrainment extends the standard definition of entrainment beyond the human capacity for rhythmic alignment to additionally offer a way of considering artistic methodology and an *empathic deference* towards the subjective and objective realities of others as essential to collaboration and to harmony between distinct social bodies.

Traditionally, entrainment refers to the synchronization of the beats of music with natural body function or processes (dance, breathing). This process of coordinating trajectories and velocities in order to enable synchronization between separate bodies takes on other meanings in this document: as methods for not only organizing and modulating sound, action, and symbol, but also for coordinating and aligning perspectives in order to more effectively realize commonalities between individuals and groups who would otherwise operate independently. In this document lexical entrainment is an improvisational process by which individuals defer their own subjectivities in order to more effectively engage dictates and functionalities of materials and other collaborators. In this respect, *group dynamics* and *materiality* exert similar influence on behavior.

This endeavor is articulated here in this dissertation through correspondences between the following three areas of artistic practice:

1. Conceptual art practices associated with four specific African American artists whose works reconsider notions of performativity through entrained material embodiment.

2. Material and conceptual considerations of entrainment in creative improvised music from African American performer/composers from the 1960s through the present day, and the concert music practices of black avant-garde composers in the same time period.

3. Original musical and intermedia works created specifically for this dissertation and accompanying capstone concert, with attention to how those creative projects frame entrainment as a reconsideration of structure and ordered systems in relation to creative expression. The relationship between ordered systems and creative practice is particularly relevant in the work of Charles Gaines, Roscoe Mitchell, and Matana Roberts, and in the original work presented at the April 9, 2023 creative capstone concert. All the work discussed here is focused on an embrace of patience, compassion, and empathy as binding principles for a just and mindful engagement with any artistic discipline and with society in general.

Along with this emphasis on mindfulness and empathy as ecologies of lexical entrainment, the relationship between materiality and conceptualism is also a continuous theme in Chapters 2 and 3. The relationship between structure and intuition becomes a highly conceptual inquiry in all the work discussed here, and at the same time, materiality is both the foundation and the embodied expression of those conceptual pursuits. Ultimately the themes in both those chapters have a strong influence on the forms that are set up and investigated through the original work discussed in Chapter 4.

The word entrainment came into this dissertation project through two sources: improvising drummer and composer Gerry Hemingway made mention of entrainment in his article "Awake At The Wheel: Observations in Overdrive," where he invoked notions of entrainment in explaining the concept of the *groove*:

> Then there is groove, another word for connectedness or entrainment (synchrony in life forms). It's an aspect of life that everyone has experienced at one time or another. [...] Musical groove for me extends beyond the auspices of beat and dance. Like harmony, it is a kind of glue that brings together all the elements of a piece of music, the way a line connects the dots to form a picture.[1]

Scholar Eugene Montague also discussed entrainment in terms of "long-term," "short-term," and "physical" entrainment.[2] He explained that the term's use in "discussions of the complexities of musical rhythm considered as sound, as well as for work on the interactions between humans and the pulses, rhythms, and durational repetitions available within music."[3]

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[1] Gerry Hemingway: "Awake At The Wheel: Observations in Overdrive," in *Arcana : Musicians on Music* / Edited by John Zorn. New York: Granary Books, 1999.
[2] Eugene Montague: "Entrainment and Embodiment in Musical Performance." The Oxford Handbook of Music and the Body. Oxford University Press, 2019. The three forms of entrainment, for Montague, are "long-term" (in Biology, Physiology, and Related Sciences); "short-term" (developed primarily through work in psychology and cognition); and "physical" entrainment (which "joins together certain aspects of both long-term and short-term entrainment in a common foundation of physical movement")
[3] Ibid.

The concept of lexical entrainment emphasizes the collaborative, improvisational nature of entrainment, and is relatable to Ornette Coleman's concept of Harmolodics (an ethos that extends beyond pitch and rhythm in order to draw attention to the more elusive concept of *spirit*). Like Coleman's highly abstract system, lexical entrainment does produce fungible commodities in the way that the elements of pitch and rhythm do, but it also brackets those fungible agents as variable according to the dictates of any given situation.

Embedded in Coleman's concept is a critique of the systems that distinguish improvisation from composition: There may be no shortage of rhetoric about improvisation having validity alongside composition, but the concept of lexical entrainment here emphasizes not simply the work created, but also the actual *labor* done by *people.* To place primacy on the *artists and their labor* (rather than the results of that work) allows each iteration to retain agency as an artifact of that labor, while accommodating the elusive *spirit* that is always present in the *work,* but unaffected by the process of conceptualism's transition to materiality.

Because music is a time-based (teleological) art form, it becomes necessary to relate sound to materials, in order to establish a firm connection between *music (sound)* and *art (object).* An emphasis on conceptualism and materiality places this oblique relationship at the center of the discussion in this dissertation. Embodiment and artistic labor both problematize conceptualism even as they resolve the open-ended question of conceptualism's almost "blurry" relationship to materiality. They also problematize and deconstruct systems-based *teleological* taxonomies, where subjectivities are entrained and encoded into the objective grid of western conceptualism, because however immaterial it may seem, *sound* nonetheless materializes the even more ephemeral notion of *time.* The concept of materiality itself renders fungible commodities out of those otherwise elusive concepts: the presence or absence of sound immediately renders (materializes) the on/off, event/non-event binary that so easily translates into ones and zeros in computation. The cyclical nature of these binaries invites parallel investigation of how artists

encounter barriers and find solutions that in turn provide new paths and procedures for others to follow: iterative practice as lexical entrainment.

Chapter 1 discusses late 20th century African American artists and musicians in terms of their engagement with established western practices in museums and the concert hall, and in approaches to organizing self-sufficient communities in the absence of adequate support from those established institutions:

- Ornette Coleman, whose innovative concept of *Harmolodics* was a central influence on an emerging but also quite decentralized network of transgressive improvising musicians that came to be known as the *Free Jazz* movement.[4] Beginning in the 1960s his work also began to intersect with classical music, as his works for string quartets, chamber ensembles, and the London Symphony Orchestra foregrounded black transgressive engagements with the objectivity of the printed score.

- Julius Eastman and Benjamin Patterson, both of whose musical creations have received a substantial posthumous re-engagement from western concert music practitioners.

- *Los Angeles 1972: A Panorama of Black Artists* and *AACM in Paris: Art Ensemble of Chicago and Creative Construction Company in Paris 1969.*

Chapter 2 discusses the work of four African American artists whose works consistently engage notions of performativity and musical structures, forcing their *addressees* to engage problematic issues of race that can be inadvertently undervalued in many artistic and musical practices, even when those forms are ostensibly built in response to issues of race. Those four artists are:

- Benjamin Patterson, a classically-trained African American contrabassist who embraced the so-called "neo-dada" forms of Fluxus at the very beginning days of that movement in the early 1960s;

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[4] While terms like Free Jazz and Harmolodics were far from universally embraced, those terms nonetheless retain the capacity to invoke the ethos established by Coleman and his contemporaries, and continue to function as a signifier for all improvisers who re-consider the possibilities for sound and action.

- Charles Gaines, a conceptual artist who became active in the 1970s and has remained highly prolific throughout the first quarter of the 21st century;

- Terry Adkins, a conceptual artist whose sculptures and musical performances all bear evidence of his thorough commitment to investigating overlooked histories of African American innovators throughout the history of the United States, with a specific focus on Adkins's works as presented in the context of composer George Lewis's 2014 work *A Recital For Terry Adkins*; and

- David Hammons, a conceptual artist whose almost antagonistic relationship with the contemporary art establishment has always placed his performative and fixed works in critical dialogue with problematic structures in the art world and in the general public.

Chapter 3 looks at two innovative African American improvising musicians whose works engage notions of conceptualism that are often more easily recognized in the art world. This includes:

- Saxophonist, composer, and visual artist Matana Roberts, whose concept of *panoramic sound quilting* informs their elaborate 12-volume project *Coin Coin*. This series of concert-length works began 15 years ago and adds its 5th installment in the summer of 2023;

- Roscoe Mitchell, the saxophonist and composer, who founded the Art Ensemble of Chicago over 50 years ago. Mitchell's *Conversations for Orchestra* project began in the early 2010s with a long series of transcriptions of his *Conversations I* and *II* trio recordings: works which Mitchell then adapted for orchestras and chamber ensembles of various sizes. This iterative process of transcribing, performing, and re-transcribing began in earnest in the 1970s, when Mitchell began making multiple complementary arrangements of his solo saxophone work *Nonaah*. This iterative and improvisational process illustrates this dissertation's understanding of lexical entrainment, and as will be discussed in chapter 3, resembles printmaking: Here, interactive process functions similarly to that of a *matrix* and *print*, in that a *matrix* can be an abstract container, materialized as a *print* that is not simply a replication but a discrete iteration that asserts its own autonomy, recalling the discussion of *spirit* in regards to Coleman's Harmolodics above).

One particular instance of socially mediated lexical entrainment discussed in Chapter 3 is the rhythm and pitch of the audience's heckling as they interact with saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell, who ultimately brings the entire audience into his creative domain in his iconic solo saxophone performance of his piece *Nonaah* in Williasu, Switzerland in 1972: The improvisational process through which Mitchell resolved the tension and resistance between his intentions for *Nonaah* and the audience's apprehension about the substitution of Mitchell for the originally-scheduled Anthony Braxton is a model of a composition functioning as a system, or an iterative process that Mitchell repeats 90 times, before the resistance is resolved (recall the matrix-print discussion earlier). This interplay between embodied and systems-derived process is at work throughout this dissertation, and has as much to do with Gaines's use of the grid as it does with Roberts's concept of *Panoramic Sound Quilting,* or the concept of layering temporality as discussed in the original works discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 discusses the original work composed and performed for the April 8, 2023 capstone concert that serves in tandem with this dissertation as a cumulative statement about the research conducted during the four years of study in the Integrated Composition Improvisation and Technology (ICIT) program at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts. In these works, abstraction, subjectivity, objectivity, and structure all meet and problematize each other, finding resolution in their material embodiment onstage. This includes:

- *MRI Dark* (2023): A work for solo contrabass in a Just Intonation -derived scordatura, with computer-mediated distribution of the Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array (AMIA)
- *Ambigram Series II: Numbers 1-3* (2023): A series of solo works that can be combined to make duos, trios, and other combinations, combining live performance with videos of the performers playing the piece, which run backwards simultaneously with the live performance, creating an audio-visual crossfade between forwards time onstage and backwards time in the video.
- *Proprioceptions II: Context Clues* (2022): Second in a series of works for any number of performers, exploring temporality through simultaneous iterative realizations of graphic notation.

- *Almostness* (2022): A work for solo contrabass with live electronics and AMIA. Juxtaposing extended bass techniques, the AMIA, and the real-time temporally modulated recorded sounds of the AMIA creates a cyclical loop, with all sounds existing specifically to reference each other. In this way it invites contemplation of the notions of Verisimilitude, Simulacrum, and Ship of Theseus.

Lexical entrainment remains a valid reference point throughout this work because it describes an improvisational engagement with systems. Chapters 3 and 4 describe forms of entrainment that modulate the ephemeral, subjectively experienced sensation of sound into fixed, objective, material forms such as binary code, musical notation, quantifiable voltages, or the grooves in vinyl or shellac. Entrainment also implies an understanding of ephemerality as accessed through materiality. This interpretation is considered through William S. Burroughs's *Cut-Up* method, Mitchell's use of *Cards,* and in Gaines's investigation of the grid as the site of transcendence through entrainment. The concept of course has its limits, and the ephemerality of sound can be seen to resist entrainment, because the present moment itself resists any observation outside of the present moment itself.

In Chapter 4 a more unlikely conception of entrainment emerges, as Mitchell's philosophy of *Multi-centered Improvisation* suggests an understanding of entrainment as a temporal engagement with materiality. In this respect, this dissertation looks at both embodied and computationally-derived notions of *entrainment* as closely related. Though focused on forms of abstraction that are commonly regarded in terms of their relationship to Western academic inquiries, the work in the concert is primarily motivated by the radical re-orientation of temporality that the Art Ensemble of Chicago developed with the polystylistic juxtapositions in their live performances — a distinctive ethos the group developed and ultimately came to refer to as *Great Black Music Ancient to the Future*. Similarly, the foregrounding of compassion and human spirit that Ornette Coleman called *Harmolodics* also re-oriented the subjective and objective structures through which performers and audiences alike engaged the creative process. Both

of these radical departures from conventional Western European ecologies of artistic practice constitute radical new forms of social, lexical entrainment.

There is an intention behind the engagement with black subjectivity and subjecthood in these musical works that is directly inspired by visual and performance art. Theorist Kris Cohen speaks of *fungibility* in describing the capacity for Gaines's works to embody a form of conceptual mobility for black art that directly responds to limitations in the material/physical world. This dissertation draws comparisons between the fungibility in Gaines's work and the fungibility in Coleman's Harmolodics as two complementary expressions of *embodied lexical entrainment.* Coleman speaks of "one's own logic" as an organizing device in music, and Gaines similarly speaks of the mind "alchemically resolving and dissolving differences."[5] Gaines and Coleman are both speaking of strategies for mediating the relationship between the self and the group.[6]

Though not a central topic of this dissertation, it is important to recognize that much of the work discussed here offers a parallel antecedent to the rapidly expanding field of scholarship around the concept of *Afrofuturism*.[7] This field advances an ethos of African American creative expression that scholars such as George Lewis and others have called *Afrologic*.[8] Moreover, Gaines's use of number systems proposes a radical form of transhumanism, where numerical abstractions flow unbounded through the distinct characteristics of the individuals his works depict.

Improvised music practices are predicated on the value of personal expression being translatable to continually evolving situations, which directly embodies the concept of entrainment as expressed in this

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[5] *Snake River: Charles Gaines & Edgar Arceneaux.* California Institute of the Arts/REDCAT. Linz, Austria: 2006. p39
[6] Recall also the previous discussion of *spirit*, as Harmolodics is also relevant in this discussion of fungibility as a process of materializing the self-other relationship.
[7] The term emerged in the last 20 years, notably in the wake of Ytasha L. Womack's 2013 book *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*. The movement quite effectively combines diverse references such as Sun Ra, George Clinton, Alice Coltrane, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, connecting those sound-based work to other works in Science Fiction, such as the prosaic and poetic work of Octavia Butler, Fred Moten, Samuel R. Delaney, and Nora Keita Jemisin.
[8] George Lewis (2002). "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives." *Black Music Research Journal*, *22*, 215. https://doi.org/10.2307/1519950. Lewis's definitive document compares and contrasts Eurologic and Afrologic perspectives on mid-20th century modernism and has essentially become the founding document of the field of Critical Improvisation Studies

dissertation. As the music has evolved, it has become both more focused on *situations* while downplaying the *personal histories* of the artists involved. Thus the question of mobility has increasingly eclipsed the attention that was initially directed towards the notions of identity that were attached to the form initially: improvised music is not as inextricably linked to the notion of "black music" as it was at first. Personal expression has itself become an increasingly fungible commodity.

In directing the rhetoric around African American improvised music away from the tendency to commodify, the work discussed in this dissertation instead addresses the intentions and meanings that fueled those works' creation in the first place (this is true for both the visual artists and musicians discussed herein). In many musical fields, a high regard for fluency quickly digresses to a preoccupation with gratuitous virtuosity. Such foregrounding of *results* in favor of *process* privileges those with ample access to resources and training, inadvertently diminishing the focus on humanity in creative music and artistic practice.

For a white artist enjoying the support of an academic environment to engage these visionary legacies of African American artistic and social practice brings one particular challenge to the fore: that of the danger to essentialize and appropriate. Through an embrace of deference and empathy, this dissertation will establish an ethos for engaging these issues in a way that offers a meaningful path forward in the quest to ethically cooperate with others and advance the personal missions of those involved.

The role of empathy, both here and across diverse fields of scholarship is not an uncomplicated one. American author, theorist, and Chancellor's Professor of African American studies at the University of California, Irvine, Frank B. Wilderson questions the salience of an empathic position in his essay *'Raw Life' and the Ruse of Empathy*. Wilderson cogently surmises that in the realm of contemporary scholarship, the notion of empathy extending across thresholds of dramaturgical and sociopolitical engagement is a precarious one indeed, with suspicion and disavowal entrenched in almost all critical discourses:

Empathetic aesthetics, materialists argue, risks dissipating a drama's critical force by hailing the spectator with a self-evident and impoverished ensemble of questions, such as Isn't it sad? Isn't it tragic? Aren't they funny? [...] Poststructuralists, postcolonialists, postmodernists, and even a critical mass of rhetoricians have all but abandoned empathy theory, asserting that as a mode of interpellation, as a conceptual framework of interpretation, and as a strategy for liberation within ideological structures (Lacan's 'Symbolic') it is 'weak, epistemologically flawed, and politically suspicious'.[9]

Wilderson grounds his rebuttal in his perspective that an even greater disassociation is at work when considering the void that separates African Americans from empathy:

The aesthetic and explanatory powers of empathy and analysis are scandalized when confronted with the Black position, a paradigmatic location synonymous with slavery. My claim that Blackness cannot be disimbricated from slaveness is based on a synchronic critique of power.[10]

Wilderson's stance is unapologetic on the inaccessibility or even incompatibility of empathy when directed towards African American subjective and objective realities. It is a position to which all must attend, and devote incalculable quantities of respect and deference towards the solidarity and equity that too easily is cast aside when considered alongside the contemporary Western enterprise of liberal autonomy. All of the artists discussed in this dissertation propose visions of interconnectedness that serve as a sustainable rejoinder to the chasm that now surrounds discourse around empathy.

In her book *Deadpan: The Aesthetics of Black Inexpression*, scholar Tina Post discussed the relationship between African American identity and notions of abstraction. She cited art historian Darby English's concept of *Discomposure,* which English said "is apt whenever the objective conception of racial blackness encounters an incontestably subjective factor. Discomposure is what happens when blackness *adapts.*" (emphasis in the original text). In citing English, Post seeks to locate the adaptive capacity of blackness and abstraction in terms that may also "apply in any number of instances that present blacks' embeddedness in a larger scene of differences." Post's investigations into Black abstraction, inexpression, and fugitivity all speak to a neatly interwoven duality of materiality and universalism.

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[9] Wilderson
[10] Ibid.

Lexical entrainment of the individual and the group on conceptual levels is not an unproblematic endeavor, however, because the materiality of distinct bodies underscores the differences as it subsumes discrete subjectivities into a totalizing whole. It is the primary objective of this dissertation to seek out methods of engaging this totalizing capacity of the collective in ways that not only embrace materialities and differences, but in fact recognize the essential role difference plays in buttressing a conceptualism rooted in the material. This interdependent cooperative between conceptualism and materiality is the essence of entrainment as theorized in this dissertation.

Roscoe Mitchell's conception of improvisational dynamics, labeled *Multi-centered improvisation* by Art Ensemble scholar Paul Steinbeck, places primacy on the "materiality of the human bodies" and the "circulatory and shared social phenomena"[11] described by Pomona College Professor of English Kyla Wazana Tompkins, but with an emphasis on how social dynamics in embodied decisionmaking reinscribe the behaviors labeled in this dissertation as "purposeful purposelessness," grounded in the "biological and chemical make-up of the neurological body itself" (as per Tomkins's analysis above).

The adaptive capacity of African American subjective and objective experience/expression is the unifying agent in this discussion of Post, Gaines, Mitchell, and Roberts. Likewise the original work in this dissertation seeks to draw comparisons between the author's subjective experience and the forms of artistic and transpersonal entrainment exemplified by the creative and scholarly work discussed prior to the final chapter's discussion of the original works in the Creative Capstone concert.

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[11] Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "On the Limits and Promise of New Materialist Philosophy," Emergent Critical Analytics for Alternative Humanities, Issue 5.1 (Spring 2016)

Chapter I

Entrainment in Sociopolitical Organization: African American Artists/Musicians in White-Dominated Institutions

Harmolodics is 'the use of the physical and the mental of one's own logic made into an expression of sound [...] 'harmony, melody, speed, rhythm, time and phrases' all have equal position in the results that come from the placing and spacing of ideas' – Ornette Coleman[12]

YOU'RE FINE / YOU'RE HIRED – Lorna Simpson[13]

In the first quote above, composer and saxophonist Ornette Coleman speaks of "one's own logic" being of great importance in his vision of a "sensation of unison," and directs that concept towards "the placing and spacing of ideas." Coleman was asserting the importance of self-determination in the structuring of one's own logic system. Coleman's logic system was embedded in his consciousness, and his performances were an embodiment of that system.

The situations described in this chapter focus on efforts by African American creative musicians — particularly Ornette Coleman, Julius Eastman, and Benjamin Patterson — to proceed with their work despite a lack of support at some critical stages in their creative process. This chapter also discusses the efforts of African American musicians to engage in the classical music world at times when segregation was legal in many parts of the country, and de facto in practice in most supposedly 'integrated' environments. This discussion includes musicians such as Patterson, Eastman, Abdul Wadud, and Ortiz Walton,[14] and also briefly, a comparison with the problematic reception of black creative expression in predominantly white spaces: the Black Arts Council -organized exhibition *Los Angeles 1972: A Panorama of Black Artists*, and the initial reception by the French jazz press of Chicago-based improvising groups the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the Creative Construction Company in 1968.

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[12] Hammons's quotation of Coleman's words comes as part of Hammons's Hauser & Wirth exhibition from February 2020, in an article Hammons wrote for Sculpture Magazine about the exhibition, which will be discussed in more detail later in this document. https://sculpturemagazine.art/david-hammons-2/ (accessed June 9, 2022)

[13] https://ocula.com/art-galleries/hauser-wirth/artworks/lorna-simpson/youre-fine/ (accessed Sep 6, 2023)

[14] At the time of this dissertation, the problem is still very present in classical music. Highly publicized situations like that of Kansas City Symphony's (KCS) principal percussionist, Josh Jones show that the discrimination encountered more than 60 years ago by Elayne Jones, Art Davis, and Benjamin Patterson is still very much present.

In the second quote above, found in a photographic work by African American conceptual artist Lorna Simpson, words associated with a physical exam (such as "blood test" and "electrocardiogram") are found to the left of the central triptych (which depicts Simpson lying on her side with her back to the camera), while on the right are the words "Secretarial" and "Position." The work brings into sharp focus the highly contingent nature of mobility for African American men and women in the United States. Wilderson emphasized this dilemma as one that is fundamental to the African American experience: In his essay *'Raw Life' and the Ruse of Empathy,* Wilderson discusses the stories of three individuals whose blackness presented dilemmas for capitalistic business-as-usual that range from the banal to the tragic, all the while challenging readers to reconsider the unseen boundaries that frame society's engagement with notions of empathy:

> The empathetic question: How does it feel to have a problem? is nullified by: How does it feel to be a problem? or even: How does it feel to recognize that 'being the problem' is the problem – that the rupturing of the 'normal' invisibility, silence and insubstantiality of Black people and insistence on material existence is the problem?

Wilderson's article, like Simpson's artwork, broaches the all-too-easily dismissed dilemma of how society (all societies) navigate (or fail to navigate) both subjective and objective realities of the African American experience. Wilderson questions the universality of empathy, just as African American conceptual artist Charles Gaines questions the universality of subjectivity. Chapter 2 of this dissertation will investigate Gaines's thoughts on subjectivity, while this chapter will consider the successes, shortcomings, and contingencies of mainstream society's capacity to accommodate the objective realities of African American experiences, and possibly develop a capacity to share conceptual (and physical) space.

There is a fundamental challenge in sharing conceptual and physical space that is presented when considering Ornette Coleman's dilemma as a composer and bandleader, and also when considering interpersonal (but also structural) dynamics described in both Simpson's work and Wilderson's scholarship. This chapter will tease out some (but certainly not all) of the challenges and also consider some solutions that can at least to some degree provide a path forward.

Ornette Coleman

Through much of the 1960s Ornette Coleman maintained a trio with bassist David Izenson and drummer Charles Moffett, during a time when Coleman was deeply frustrated with constraints that limited the group's opportunities despite Coleman's notoriety at the time. The scenario is described in A.B. Spellman's *Black Music: Four Lives*:

> Ornette took the trio into the Jazz Gallery, where he drew his ever-growing audience almost nightly. It was here that his bitterness for the scene hardened after seeing Dave Brubeck follow him into the club and earn many times the money Ornette's group had.[15]

Coleman tripled his pay demands for nightclub appearances and these demands were immediately rejected by the nightclub owners. Record dates and concert engagements disappeared. Thus Coleman did not take any performances for quite a while, and this frustrated him further. Meanwhile, Moffett and Izenson both turned to supporting themselves and their family through alternative means, while awaiting opportunities for the trio to return.[16]

In the 1960s Coleman also expanded his artistic output into territories beyond those typically associated with jazz musicians, and these activities constitute an under-recognized aspect of experimental African American engagement with Western concert music experimental practice in the 1960s - one that was closely connected to the general trend towards a modicum of increased inclusiveness in the White-dominated world of institutionally-supported creative practice. But for Coleman and others, this transgression of artistic boundaries depended less on institutional support and more on individuals with shared values.

In the winter of 1962 Coleman rented Town Hall with financial assistance from Irving Stone. Coleman not only presented his trio on this event, but also presented a work for string quartet, *Dedication to Poets*

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[15] A. B. Spellman, *Black Music: Four Lives*. New York: Schocken books, 1970.
[16] Izenson, as a classically trained musician, focused on orchestral and chamber music freelance work around the city. Moffett, an avid educator since his days in Fort Worth, TX, began teaching music at PS 58 in Carroll Gardens neighborhood of Brooklyn. Interestingly, for years in the early 2010s I taught beginning violin in an after school at PS 58. These days the school has a vibrant music program but its primary focus has shifted, as it is now a French immersion school with a Dual Language Program instated in 2007. All students learn both French and English. Thus Francophone New Yorkers have for years moved to this neighborhood so that their elementary age children can learn French. The current state of both music education and the emergence of specialized programs and "Magnet Schools" is a fascinating topic but certainly not within the scope of this research.

and Writers. This work was performed by an integrated quartet that included Kermit Moore, an African American cellist who was one of the founders of the Symphony of the New World, the first racially integrated orchestra in the United States. Moore also co-founded the Society of Black Composers. This group also featured noted African American composers Carman Moore, Olly Wilson, Talib Rasul Hakim (brother of ubiquitous jazz drummer Joe Chambers), and the prolific Alvin Singleton.[17]

The Town Hall event was successful, and the recording of this concert also features Ornette's trio along with a work for a hybrid ensemble integrating a more traditional R & B band with Ornette's trio. This innovative concept was credited by Amiri Baraka as anticipating the Jazz Fusion movement of the 1970s.[18] The success of the Town Hall event did not, however, bring about the change Coleman sought: prospects for receiving fair pay for his group did not improve, and the group did not work for two years. According to Izenson, "It seems that when Ornette wanted to play, they wouldn't hire him; and when they would hire him, he didn't want to play."[19]

Coleman ended his hiatus after two years, and the trio resumed work in 1965. Ornette's trio also worked with filmmakers — on Conrad Rooks's film *Chappaqua* and Thomas White's film *Who's Crazy,* both released in 1966. Though Rooks's lavishly funded film does not benefit from The Ornette Coleman Trio's contribution, the material from that session was released as *The Chappaqua Suite,* together with the release of *Town Hall 1962* on Bernard Stollman's ESP label. Together these two 1965 releases brought Coleman's work back to the public's attention, ending the two year break and announcing a new prolific phase of renewed creative output for Coleman.[20]

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[17] Singleton was for decades the only African American composer to receive any recognition of note from the biannual Darmstadt Summer Course in Germany, where in 1972, Singleton's work *Argoru II* for cello was performed. Then, in 1974, his *Be Natural* for three string instruments received the Kranichstein Music Prize at Darmstadt. https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/darmstadt-on-air-20-singleton-in-darmstadt-again/id1524225978?i=1000530508300. This work continues to receive frequent performances, including a few by the author's group the Anagram String Trio, who can be seen performing the work in an article about Darmsadt's in the New York Times (uncredited, as is sadly often the case for the publication) https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/arts/music/review-a-birthday-of-the-darmstadt-avant-garde.html

[18] Unfortunately this recording remains unissued. Blue Note records had expressed interest but this project never materialized. Coleman formally embraced this development in the 1970s with his electric group Prime Time, which issued numerous albums from the 1970s into the 1990s.

[19] Spellman, *Black Music: Four Lives.* New York: Schocken books, 1970.

[20] These recordings also serve as two primary documents of this trio's work (along with the two "Live at the Golden Circle Stockholm" recordings released on Blue Note Records in 1966).

White's film featured members of New York's seminal Living Theater troupe.[21] Included in the DVD reissue of the film is a 30 minute documentary about The Ornette Coleman Trio's visit to Paris to record the music.[22] The group can be seen interacting with the filmmakers, and one striking moment shows some heated back-and-forth about lack of clarity in the instructions. Interestingly, the documentary then transitions to conversations with Coleman and with Izenson, both of which invite some comparison between creative freedom and personal freedom:

> [Ornette Coleman] I grew up in the south where many negroes would have a masters degree in something and come back and have a job as a janitor. I didn't see too much future in it for me, and I became a musician to pay rent. Then I discovered art.
>
> [David Izenson] When you're playing in an orchestra, you have your allegiance to the music, and to the conductor. Unfortunately, most conductors want allegiance to them, and then to the music [...] I would never want to put myself in that kind of position, where I was that kind of a slave.
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> [Coleman] With David and Moffett, one of the things they are both involved with is, they want the right to be perfected. And acknowledge their possibilities without having to sell out. I'm for that all the way.[23]

Izenson's comment is notable for invoking the history of slavery. The ethos of Freedom is central to the creative improvised music of the 1960s in particular, as so many defining advancements in civil rights were developing at the same time as this music, and the language and impetus became synonymous. Izenson later directly invokes the distinction for African Americans enduring racism in the United States, specifically referencing treatment of African Americans in the South. Often though the more subtle expressions of racial discrimination in the North are no less restrictive. The lack of support for Coleman's critically acclaimed and commercially successful group bore little effect on the group's financial stability, and Coleman decided he was prepared to resist the venues' and institutions' devaluing of his work:

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[21] Living Theater was also involved in another film from the era that featured a soundtrack by jazz musicians. https://burningambulance.com/2017/07/27/whos-crazy/ (accessed May 6, 2023)

[22] British filmmaker Dick Fontaine captured the trio's recording session in Paris, doing multiple takes to different sections of the film. Coleman's music also appeared in some parts of the soundtrack that were not performed by his trio: Marianne Faithfull sang the Coleman composition "Sadness," and a rock/jazz organ trio called Les Gottamou also performed music - to which Coleman's trio contributed additional material during the recording session, to create a multi-layered sonic environment that reflected the ethereal experiences of the film's characters. A detailed account of the occasion appeared in the New Yorker: https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/ornette-colemans-inspired-soundtrack-for-whos-crazy

[23] All quotes from the trio are from the documentary "Ornette Coleman Trio Performing The Soundtrack" from 1966. The film can be found on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzoboHzKOGU (accessed May 6, 2023)

> [Coleman] When I retreated in America because I was mad and hurt, I would read in the paper about how I was selling records, but I'd be evicted the next month […] So it didn't mean any sense for me to be what I thought I was if it made me what I thought I wasn't. So I said 'okay, I grew up hungry, so I can be hungry now.' And that's when I stopped worrying about whether what I was doing had any value or was good or bad, but to do it.

Additional projects with his trio and other ensembles followed soon after, as well as continued exploration of the possibilities for his fully composed music: *Forms & Sounds for Wind Quintet,*[24] and *Skies Of America*. Almost 20 years later, Coleman's cycle of 20 fully-notated works for solo instruments, *Freedom Symbol*, was premiered in Battery Park in 2000 for the Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival.[25]

Skies of America, *Freedom Symbol*, and the other compositions mentioned here all translate Coleman's concept of *Harmolodics* into a context where his melodic and gestural vocabulary became accessible to performers and audiences in environments more accustomed to classical music. But there remains an essential element of Colemen's work that does not so readily serve as a fungible commodity in the way that the elements of pitch and rhythm do. Embedded in Coleman's written music is an *ethos* that extends beyond pitch and rhythm, and this more elusive quality is at the center of what he called Harmolodics. It also approaches what Adkins called *essence,* and what this dissertation aims to approach through an expanded understanding of entrainment.

In University of Michigan professor Stephen Rush's book *Free Jazz, Harmolodics, And Ornette Coleman,* Rush provides both extensive transcriptions and analysis of Coleman's improvisations and compositions, and also myriad insights derived from interviews between Coleman and himself. Rush notes that Coleman places the sensation of "unison" in a larger context than simply addressing whether or not an A-natural

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[24] This new composition, recorded by London's Virtuoso Ensemble, accompanied eight works featuring the trio with Izenson and Moffett on the 1967 album *An Evening with Ornette Coleman.* The fully-composed *Forms & Sounds* anticipated *Skies Of America,* Coleman's next large-scale composition for classically trained instrumentalists.

[25] This was a city-wide festival that had grown out of the Knitting Factory's What Is Jazz? Festival, picking up major corporate sponsors along the way, such as Texaco as well as Bell Atlantic. The event was not without controversy: the Battery Park premiere of *Freedom Symbol* was situated between two other projects from Coleman: The opening set from an electric project featuring bassist Charnett Moffett and drummer Denardo Coleman and Indian musicians was well received, but all who were in attendance were focused on the opportunity to see the three surviving members of Coleman's classic 1959 quartet with Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins. The event was behind schedule and the city was not willing to allow the trio to finish their set, turning on flood lights and cutting the sound in the middle of Charlie Haden's solo. It was a disappointing ending to a highly anticipated event, which may in fact have in fact been the final appearance of the three surviving members together).

played on an alto saxophone, a D-natural played on a tenor saxophone, or a C-natural played on a piano all sound like the same pitch to a listener.

Coleman seeks to communicate a need for caution around humanity's use of language. For Coleman, naming "is about who belongs and who doesn't."[26] Rush explains how African Americans rejecting their slave owner-derived given names during the Civil Rights era played an important role in the "first step[s] to restoration of self-identity."[27] Rush explains that "'unison' in Harmolodics means that players are playing in unison of heart and unison of intention."[28] Coleman is after a more universal understanding of the relationships between distinct quantities. "The idea of being 'in sync' is translated by Ornette into the word *unison*, something we usually associate with pitch. [...] in Ornette's words: 'This and this are in unison, but it will never sound the same.' Harmolodics *respects and celebrates differences within unity."[29]*

Embedded in Rush's understanding of Coleman's concept is an appreciation for mindfulness and empathy. Rush consistently orients his analysis of Harmolodics in such a way as to establish a direct line between the Civil Rights Movement and the empathy that came with the wider recognition of the significance of that struggle. Rush asserts that mindfulness and empathy are of utmost importance for Coleman, more so than pitch and rhythm: "This is Free Jazz–free from the constraints of key, mindful of the moment, responding to the context in time, space, and vertical activity/harmony." Rush also directly invokes the liberatory ethos of Civil Rights, asserting that in the critically essential element of harmolodics…

> …equal-ness is part of the human endeavor, and that hierarchies in music *and* in society destroy their strength. [...] Harmolodics reflects the major cultural shift that was the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Once again, the move toward the liberation of the voices in the Jazz ensemble parallels the demand for equality by black Americans.[30]

The chamber and orchestral works of both Coleman and Mitchell follow a similar trajectory as Gaines's Manifestos series, enlisting classically trained instrumentalists in systems-based deconstruction of

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[26] Stephen Rush, *Free Jazz, Harmolodics, And Ornette Coleman,* Routledge, New York 2017.
[27] Rush, *Free Jazz, Harmolodics, And Ornette Coleman,* Routledge, New York 2017.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

teleological taxonomies. In all these scenarios, subjectivities are entrained and encoded into the objective grid of western notation for information pertaining to pitch and rhythm. Moreover, the method of entrainment is given primacy over the grammar and syntax that has been established through standardized practice in music theory over the last few centuries. The ethos, instead, is grounded in an urgency about righting unjust systems that privilege Eurocentrism.

Julius Eastman and Benjamin Patterson

Two notable African American artists who found success (albeit with much tribulation) working within the context of the American and European Avant-garde are founding Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson and sensational composer and vocalist Julius Eastman. In recent years, long after Eastman's passing, his work has been celebrated across the United States and Europe. Composer/performer and Eastman primary archivist and bibliographer Mary Jane Leach assembled the posthumous compilation *Unjust Malaise* in 2005[31] and subsequently worked with Renée Levine Packer to edit the collection *Gay Guerrilla: Julius Eastman and His Music* (published in 2015). After his passing, Eastman's work was still largely overlooked, until the present day, where over the last 10 years Eastman's legacy has become almost universally heralded in New York as well as around the United States and abroad.[32]

Patterson's career as a composer began much earlier, in 1960, and continued until his passing in 2016, making his career substantially longer than that of the nonetheless very prolific Eastman. Attention to Patterson's work is much more widespread in Europe than in the United States, however, particularly in Germany where he spent the last 20 years of his life and enjoyed recognition as the last surviving artist from the founding days of Fluxus. Europe had always been more openly responsive to Patterson's work. Indeed, the 20 years he spent in the United States between his initial Fluxus activities in the 1960s and his

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[31] https://www.dramonline.org/albums/julius-eastman-unjust-malaise/notes (accessed Jun 2, 2023)
[32] Today, there is an intense focus on celebrating Eastman's extensive compositional output, which received minimal attention or support during the time he made his critically valuable contributions to Petr Kotik's SEM Ensemble, Peter Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King,* Meredith Monk's company in the 1980s, and his involvement in The Black Composer Series in the Brooklyn Philharmonia Community Concert Series.

re-emergence in the late 1980s were spent in a variety of administrative positions in arts organizations in New York.

In the late 2000s, Patterson created pieces for improvising musicians to perform. This included two works for toy piano specialist Margaret Lang Tan, the British harpist Rhodri Davies, and one piece for Keith Rowe of the British improvising group AMM. Patterson became familiar with AMM in the late 1960s when his position in arts administration allowed him to arrange for international travel for American experimental musicians to travel abroad, and for international groups to come to the United States.

Patterson created "FREE" for Rowe in 2009. The piece made use of Morse Code, a rhythmic device that was common to works Patterson made for musicians later in his career. The score itself includes 39 Morse Code characters, but does not include instructions on how morse code should be used. This is in keeping with work Patterson had been creating since the 1960s, where some details would be dryly precise, while other unanswered questions about the piece would inevitably occasion some type of decisive action by those performing the work.

The score does include a message from Patterson to Rowe:

> Dear Keith, Of course, this is an "open score." But, I thought you might like to know my thoughts about where… in my subconscious… such "audio/visual" images erupt. The easy part is the "FROGS." In the country-side, near Pittsburgh, Pa', where I grew up, there were several small ponds, where many frogs lived, breed, and "sang." Since 6 years old, I know their signs. About "TIME," it is only necessary to say that at various points in my life, I have been a bass-drummer and a tuba player in marching bands. I was the "TIME KEEPER." Here of course, "TIME" is only about when you want to start, and when you want to end. Finally, the composer portraits: Palestrina, Mozart, Mahler, and Berg. Well yes, I like many other composers… but today, I am trying to imagine the taste of a Palestrina/Mozart/Mahler/Berg SOUP! I hope, here-in, you will find some interesting "points-of-departure." If not, Ok, NO PROBLEM.[33]

Patterson also created two works for Davies, *Pages To Save Our Planet,* and *What Music Can You Make From These Notes?,* both composed in 2008. Both works involve imaginative illustrations and Morse Code.

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[33] *Ben Patterson Event Scores* compiled by Benedikt Stegmayer.

My pieces, as they appear on paper, have neither material nor abstract value. They can only achieve value in performance, and even then only the personal value that the participant himself gives to his own behavior and/or that of the community during and/or measured by experience. In fact, each piece is just this: a person consciously doing this or that. Anyone can do it.[34]

Having spent time in the Ottawa Philharmonic prior to his arrival in Germany, Patterson knew that the orchestra's conductor was a close friend and even brother-in-law to Karlheinz Stockhausen. Looking to further his involvement in contemporary music, Patterson procured a letter of introduction signed by the German ambassador to Canada, and when in Köln, introduced himself to Stockhausen. The interactions were far from the welcoming environment Patterson had been expecting: Stockhausen "read all the way to the bottom, and then looked back at the top, and he said, 'But this letter is dated April 15, and today is June 6. Where have you been all this time?' Typical Stockhausen arrogance."[35]

The elder composer's arrogance turned off many artists. Patterson's *Paper Piece* was in part a response to Stockhausen's *Kontakte* (1958–60), an electroacoustic work so complex and technically demanding that it required over 200 hours of preparation to perform. Patterson's fraught interactions with Stockhausen led him to create one of the most striking works in the repertoire that came to be known collectively as Fluxus. As Patterson told the art historian Suzanne Rennert, "I thought, there has to be another way to make music without this great virtuosity and technical expenses and so forth. And actually I stayed in bed for ten days to think—how how how—and then—paper! This was an instrument anybody could play and it had great flexibility."

Patterson's choice of readily accessible materials reflected both a rejection of elitism and an embrace of a participatory and egalitarian vision of artistic practice. From Alison Knowles's "Make a Salad" (1962) to LaMonte Young's "Composition 1960 No. 10," (a work consisting solely of the instruction 'Draw a straight line and follow it'), to Patterson's own *A Very Lawful Dance* (1962), for which a performer

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[34] https://www.kunstverein-wiesbaden.de/follow-fluxus/das-stipendium/ben-patterson (accessed June 18, 2023) Originally: Benjamin Patterson, New York 14. November 1964, in: Becker und Vostell, Happenings, Fluxus, Pop Art. Benjamin Patterson, Bekenntnis, S. Hamburg, 1965, S. 241.
[35] https://www.moma.org/artists/4520 (accessed June 18, 2023)

crosses a street (or a space onstage) and repeats "an infinite, indeterminate, or predetermined number of repetitions," Fluxus works had the performers themselves as the intended recipients of the artwork as much as anyone who was observing without participating. Gaines, in his essay "The History of Gray Matter from the Avant-garde to the Postmodern," explained how Patterson's *Dance*…

> …is an objectification of the situation in that he has no decision-making power but gives himself over completely to the minute-to-minute circumstances of the environment. This makes his thoughts about past, future, and context irrelevant to the execution of the event or experience.[36]

Creative improvised music is more often than not regarded as an embodiment of the summation of the performer's subjective experience. Gaines, however, redirects notions of authorship, lending primacy to the situation, and circumstances, in which the performer finds him or herself. The experience shared between the performer and audience, then, is not one of addresser and addressee, but rather a shared experience in which all participants (those onstage and those in the audience) have all entered.

Patterson's scores for Davies, Rowe, Lang Tan, and others all reflect the central ethos of this dissertation, in that the works reflect a simultaneous entrainment of artistic practice, while beckoning the performer, insisting that the works depend on a certain form of self-reflection that engenders a more mindful engagement with others. Like Patterson's works, both Knowles's or Young's works also necessitate an investigation of one's own engagement with their community and environment. These engagements are not a by-product of the artistic practice, but rather this simultaneous entrainment of the self towards more mindful engagement with one's environment is where the artistic work actually resides.

Arts Administration as Activism and Entrainment

In the 1970s African American artists and musicians increasingly found success in navigating administrative fields that enabled them to directly influence the extent to which support for artists could be directed towards artists who represented the interests and needs of the communities from which they

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[36] Gaines, "The History of Gray Matter from the Avant-garde to the Postmodern." Valerie Cassel Oliver, editor. *Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of Flux/us*. Houston, TX: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2012.

emerged. The purpose of this dissertation is not to provide a thorough survey of this evolution. Nonetheless, a brief look at some problems and solutions will elucidate the overall role these structures play in shaping the entrainment of creative practice. That is, in artistic fields defined by exclusion, any path that affords forward momentum is both a successful innovation and a form of *sociopolitical entrainment*. This section will look at how innovators met with barriers and found solutions that in turn provided new paths and procedures for others to follow, and through such sociopolitical entrainment, further the potential for innovation. Two examples of barriers follow, first looking at African American artists, and then musicians, both regarding work presented in the 1970s.

In *Exhibiting Blackness,* Bridget R. Cooks described the critical responses to African American -organized exhibitions, and the dilemma described reveals valuable insights to the concept of *Corporeal Entrapment* - a concept discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2. Specifically describing the Black Arts Council -organized exhibition *Los Angeles 1972: A Panorama of Black Artists*, Cooks described a critical response that amounted to a situations where there were no correct answers to the question of Black artistic expression in white museum spaces:

> Critics were looking for an essential Black difference in the work of Black artists. Art that did not depict this difference was perceived as unsuccessful. However, inclusion of figurative race-related social commentary or the visual assertion of pro-Black politics was to be ignored so that the work could be evaluated on its aesthetic merit.[37]

This exhibition highlighted numerous artists whose works have in the subsequent half-century received substantial recognition: David Hammons, John Outteridge, Noah Purifoy, Betye Saar, and Charles White. But this exhibition, and others like it, encountered a dilemma where the more an artistic expression centered black figuration, the more the artists met with resistance. The *corporeal entrapment* here is that work is simultaneously criticized for both succeeding and failing to transcend the blackness of the authorship and subjecthood presented.

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[37] Bridget Cooks, *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2011.

A similar double-negation existed for musicians around the same time, as noted in saxophonist Steve Lehman's survey of the French press's reception of the arrival of the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the Creative Construction Company in 1969:

> Many French jazz journalists subscribed to the notion that African-American music was best when it was most emotional or 'instinctual,' and thus unfettered by intellect. Critical thinking and formalism were thought to be the domain of Western Europeans while emotion and raw talent fit into the domain of African-Americans.[38]

Here, Lehman emphasizes the extent to which French jazz criticism offered support that was both effusive and highly conditional, in terms of how 1970s Black American experimental practices could be presented in France. The enthusiasm expressed for the music included support for American Civil Rights -era resistance to race-based oppression, but ultimately this amounted to a form of appropriation:

> The [French press's] intense focus on the Black Panthers and the civil rights movement, together with the lack of any acknowledgement of African-American cultural diversity, reflects an extremely limited understanding of black identity during that era that allowed neither for the multitude of perspectives articulated by AACM members, for example, nor for the wide range of their musical influences.[39]

Lehman goes on to paraphrase Lewis's analysis of the response of the French jazz press to African-American experimental music in the 1970s, describing "how the attempts to theorize black music in relation to this bourgeois-versus-vernacular binary rely on an essentialized understanding of black life and culture in the United States, and perpetuate primitivist and romantic notions of the African-American musician as exotic other."[40] Thus African American artistic and musical expressions encountered ambiguous but firmly enforced restrictions on conceptual mobility.

For some artists, the response to these restrictions was to seek positions from which to influence the systems by which these judgements were being made. Patterson was one of the first black experimental artists to transition into positions of authority upon his return to the United States in the mid 1960s. This Arts Administration period for Patterson proved to be a model that would be followed by other African American creative musicians who came to New York and found a strong disparity between the support

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[38] Stephen H. Lehman, "I Love You with an Asterisk: African-American Experimental Composers and the French Jazz Press, 1970-1980." Critical studies in improvisation 1.2 (2005): n. pag. Web.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

white artists and musicians were receiving from funding opportunities, and that of the African American artists applying for the same grants. Thus, Patterson's involvement in arts administration in those years became a model followed by such others as Muhal Richard Abrams, Leroy Jenkins (violinist in the aforementioned Creative Construction Company), Tania León, Andrew N. White III,[41] and the previously mentioned Kermit Moore.

While those artists were working to address the systemic barriers to support for African American artists, creative improvisers with substantial training in classical music such as Abdul Wadud and Ortiz Walton[42] were also beginning to find opportunities to sit alongside white instrumentalists in orchestral and chamber music situations — in some cases this was made possible through the deliberate efforts of white administrators who sought to improve the situation in the particular ensembles they managed. Of note in this respect is Janet Wolfe, director of the NYC Housing Authority Symphony. Though trained as an actor and dance instructor, Wolfe was given a position at the NYC Housing Authority and founded the orchestra with the express purpose of creating an orchestra that would provide classically trained musicians with minority backgrounds with the opportunity to perform, despite the segregation that was preventing these musicians from other opportunities that were available almost exclusively to white musicians.[43]

The sociopolitical climates of the 2020s and the 1970s both reflect rapidly increasing awareness of the racialized nature of art music worlds and their support systems, owing to the general awareness of structural racism. Projects like the NYC Housing Authority Symphony suggest a type of double-entrainment on the structural and sociopolitical levels, where multiple parties are given space in

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[41] Andrew White's position as an African American oboist joining the American Ballet Theater in 1968 reflects a notable development in the effort to overcome institutional racism - a notable contrast to the situation Benjamin Patterson had encountered a decade earlier. White's subsequent involvement in arts administration was brought to my attention by woodwind virtuoso J.D. Parran, who, along with composer and pianist Anthony Davis, cellist Abdul Wadud, and others, was yet another example of an African American instrumentalist who was active as both an improviser and orchestral and chamber music musician in the 1970s onward. https://blogs.loc.gov/music/2016/11/andrew-white-petey-me-and-the-library-of-congress/ (accessed June 2, 2023)

[42] Orchestral bassist Ortiz Walton's book about his experiences as an African American classical musician is entitled *Music, Black, White and Blue : a Sociological Survey of the Use and Misuse of Afro-American Music*, and was published in 1980.

[43] https://hub.americanorchestras.org/2015/12/08/obituary-janet-wolfe-founder-of-nyc-housing-authority-symphony-101 (accessed Aug 2, 2023)

which to bring subjectivities of the establishment and others who do not have such access into alignment and embrace cooperation rather than exclusion.

One parallel trajectory in resolving the problem of recognition the NYC Housing Authority Symphony was addressing also came in the form of scholarship and theory, notably the work of African American orchestral bassist and author Ortiz Walton. In his 1972 book *Music: Black White & Blue*, Walton discussed the racial dynamics in jazz and classical music in the United States.[44] Walton explained how "…like Ragtime, bebop was a system which could absorb and transform other musical genres. While Ragtime transformations occurred through syncopated rhythmic structure, bebop not only thoroughly enhanced the latter, but succeeded in a distillation of harmonic structure from American popular standards with a highly original, individualized treatment of melody."[45]

Bebop, like Ragtime before it, brought strikingly different rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic practices into expanding cultural contexts. In both cases, African American subjectivities are always entrained by objective realities of the harshly contingent status of any degree of autonomy that the established cultural systems will afford. All forms of momentum will have a counterbalance, and in this case, it is the *entrainment in kind* through which Ragtime and Bebop then bring the subjectivities of the established communities into deferential alignment with the subjectivities of the African American experience – or rather, those aspects that can be transmitted through sound and movement, though still without any true capacity to embody that experience.

Patterson's response to white-controlled, Eurocentric logics and education systems came through not only his Fluxus activities, but also his engagement with Arts Administration. This under-discussed aspect of his career is also notable because he sought to address a lack of consideration for the African American experience that he recognized from his Fluxus colleagues.

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[44] Walton, (1972). *Music: Black, White, and Blue: A Sociological Survey of the Use and Misuse of Afro-American Music* (1St Edition). William Morrow.
[45] Ibid. This book was recommended for this dissertation by Anthony Davis's longtime collaborator, multi-reeds specialist J. D. Parran, who, like Walton, frequently acted "on both sides of the field," as both a classical musician and a jazz musician.

In a conversation with Thomas Buckner,[46] Patterson described his disappointment that none of his Fluxus colleagues were interested in joining him in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Patterson received the response "you never asked," but Patterson's perspective was "I shouldn't have had to." The anecdote highlights the lack of understanding that too often illustrates the conceptual barrier for white artists who may feel (often quite strongly) inclined to support their African American artistic counterparts, but simply lack an understanding of the material reality of systemic racism, and therefore often do not immediately recognize the degree to which deliberate intentions are needed if the aforementioned conceptual barrier is to be truly overcome.

Patterson's argument is about *solidarity* and *entrainment*. The failure to join Patterson in the march is not in itself the shortcoming about which Patterson was lamenting: Rather, what was needed then (and in most cases still is), is an understanding that there are forms of deference and listening that extend beyond acknowledgement and into a deeper engagement with the authority and agency of those with whom Patterson was marching. True deference necessitates that one relinquishes authority in ways that are almost shockingly unfamiliar to those whose deference could add so much resonance, if only it were possible to allow those in need to define the terms of the exchange, and change, that's needed.

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[46] Thomas Buckner discussed this story on numerous occasions, most recently via telephone in May 2022, specifically in relation to the topic of this writing.

Chapter II

Entrainment through Material Embodiments of Sound: Black Conceptual Artists Terry Adkins, Charles Gaines, David Hammons, and Benjamin Patterson

"Abstraction makes one love material objects all the more."
— Adrian Piper[47]

This chapter discusses the work of four African American artists whose works investigate the intersection of three opposing dialectics: materiality vs conceptualism, individuality vs. contiguity, and fixed vs. performative media. The discussion centers around two primary artists: Benjamin Patterson (a classically-trained African American contrabassist who embraced the so-called "neo-dada" forms of Fluxus at the very beginning days of that movement in the early 1960s) and Charles Gaines (a conceptual artist who became active in the 1970s and has remained highly prolific throughout the first quarter of the 21st century).

The chapter also looks at sculptor Terry Adkins (with a primary focus on George Lewis's *A Recital For Terry Adkins*) and numerous key works in Adkins's oeuvre, most of which embody his endeavor to "make sculpture that is ethereal as music and music that physically approaches the visceral suggestion of matter."[48] Finally, the chapter ends with a look at the journalistic discourse around artist Hammons, a conceptual artist whose antagonistic relationship with the contemporary art establishment has always placed his performative and fixed works in critical dialogue with problematic structures in the art world and in the general public.

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[47] Adrian Piper: "Flying," in *Out of Order/Out of Sight, Vol. 1: Selected Writings Meta-Art, 1968-1992* Cambridge: MIT Press,1996, 224.
[48] Adkins, interviewed by Okwui Enwezor, "A Certain Kind of Luminescence: The Recitals of Terry Adkins," in *Terry Adkins Recital* (Saratoga Springs, NY: Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, 2012), 221.

Relevant terms or concepts in this chapter include the following: Gray Matter; Decentralized Communal Authorship; Corporeal Entrapment, Essence; and Posthumous Embodiment (all of which are discussed in detail below).

What resonates about the work of the artists discussed in this chapter, like that of the composers and improvisers from the African American communities who have so thoroughly influenced all forms of music, is that each artist consistently interrogates the determinist understanding of structure and the established, arbitrary opposition with creative expression. Gaines's critique, much like that of Lewis, is that this opposition specifically places Eurocentric logics on a plane that affords any and all freedom to transgress the arbitrary boundary between subjectivity and objectivity, while over-determining the work of African Americans as necessarily grounded in subjectivity.

The contemporary discourse around *Afrofuturism* is embodied in Gaines's envisioning of African American identity as fully mobile across such constructed boundaries as race, or the aforementioned boundary between conceptualism and abstraction.[49] This suggests a utopian past, present and future where the enlightened mind and freed body are free to transgress conceptual boundaries and explore any potentiality: a freedom from the social and political structures that restrict African Americans, many other marginalized persons in this country, and all people who seek to define identity on their own terms.[50]

Benjamin Patterson and Charles Gaines

As both instrumentalists and conceptual artists, Patterson and Gaines maintained a dialog between the present moment and the legacy of not only their work but also the real and imagined historical and hypothetical resonances of their work through time. In this respect both artists' work embodies the Art Ensemble of Chicago's ubiquitous mantra, "Great Black Music: Ancient to the Future." Patterson and

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[49] Gaines's recent exhibition offers "a new critique of identity, creating a series of works depicting individuals who self-identify as coming from mixed racial heritage." https://news.artnet.com/art-world/charles-gaines-interview-dia-art-foundation-1943017 (accessed June 9, 2022)

[50] In this respect the African American struggle for conceptual freedom has a very contemporary counterpart in the struggle for individuals to self-identify in terms of gender. Further investigation about freedom to self-identify is where the connections between Queer and African-American transgressive artistic practices is most salient, and further investigation into this relationship is absolutely necessary, though it resides largely outside the purview of this dissertation.

Gaines both work with systems that outline procedures, and their artworks are the results of these actions. In their systematic modeling of methods and process, both artists embrace a conceptual engagement with the present moment, where the creative act is tied to the past and future. Temporality becomes the site of entrainment in such situations, where both temporal and spatial periodicities are poetically imbricated in the context of artistic practice.

Despite their divergent methods, both artists' works materialize as realizations of ephemeral processes that have an unmistakably musical quality. In the case of Patterson's performative works, this musical quality is overt—not only are his text scores performative even upon a simple *reading,* they frequently elicit highly engaging *performances,* often overtly deconstructing and transgressing the performer-audience distinction. In Gaines's case, this performative quality is obscured by the reception of the works in their fixed form (as numbers drawn or painted on a grid, as scrolling text in a video work, etc.), but these works are documents of a performance—an embodiment of Gaines's exquisitely organized systems.

Through his use of "the grid as a mediating device between the artificial and the real," Gaines challenges those experiencing his work to recognize the inherent subjectivity they bring with them in viewing the work, which then *actively obscures any direct perception of the work itself.* In her article *The Face Is A Politics,* Ellen Tani describes the artificial and also real paradox driving the active role of chance in biological individuation and the construction of the racially-articulated imagination:

> Exploring the paradox between an artificial system (numerals) and a real system (speciation) yielded a generative process that was expressive but not subjective. Rather, a kind of expressive automation resulted from the process of biological individuation and systemic form giving, yielding unconscious transformations that were closely linked to chance. […] The characteristics that we typically associate with "race" have no basis in a specific gene; rather, race lodges itself between chance expression […and the] social imagination.[51]

By systematizing these methods of creative expression and social criticism, Gaines and Patterson engage forms of entrainment that can be both *lexical* and *social* (as with Patterson's *Variations for Double Bass* or

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[51] N. J. Keith, A. Ellegood, T. Golden, & C. Gaines (2014). *Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974-1989.* Studio Museum in Harlem.

Gaines's *Manifestos* series). In essence, the conceptual nature of these artists' forms keeps the experiencer's attention on the transgressive nature of the processes, which deliberately obfuscates the work's potential for expressivity. Moreover, both artists' systematized processes represent sharp criticisms of systems that were implemented with the express intention to limit freedoms of expression for marginalized persons—namely African Americans. Patterson's and Gaines's use of systems, therefore, should be interpreted as a deliberate and very articulate form of resistance, as discussed later in this chapter, with works such as Patterson's *Three Operas*.

Patterson's and Gaines's painstaking processes of systematizing the methods for realizing their creative works offer unique, even novel ways of considering the relationship between *structure* and *intuition,* and consequently offer further insight into how entrainment provides a space where structure and intuition are fundamentally imbricated. Improvising musicians rely on intuition as a means for expression, so it can be quite intriguing how these artists suggest alternative ways of generating form.

For both Gaines and Patterson, these methods are derived from processes and procedures that place expressivity in a somewhat precarious position: both artists demand the viewer/listener/addressee/audience question their own role as a passive experiencer, because their works are so overtly incomplete without the experiencer becoming aware of their own response to the situation. This demand that the experiencer become complicit in the artistic process is one that is fundamentally about entrainment.

Lexical Entrainment, Anti-fascism, and Materiality in Patterson's *Variations for Double Bass* and Gaines's *Manifestos* Series

Like a fixed work of visual art, the printed score is a material embodiment of the performative actions undertaken in music. In his collaborations with, and performances of works by Patterson, Berlin-based American contrabassist Christopher Williams posed a fundamental question, asking "How do

composer-improvisers use notation to share, challenge, or transform their own ways of improvising?"[52] Williams worked closely with Patterson in developing his performance of Patterson's highly influential work *Variations for Double Bass*. Williams asserted: "I consider *Variations'* notation to be an improvisation: a "meta-improvisation" entextualized by, but not reducible to, the composer's ad hoc markings and the temporal conditions under which he applied them."[53] The published score was not the end product, as Williams regarded any information about Patterson's subsequent developments of the piece to be a part of the evolving "entextualized" (or continually evolving) text, to be read by performer or by audience as an inevitably incomplete sum of the living history of the work.[54]

Gaines's work as a drummer and Patterson's work as a contrabassist are essential in understanding the relationship between the materiality of fixed forms and ephemerality of sound and action in their work. The dialogue between ephemerality and materiality is a consistent theme in the work of all of the artists and musicians discussed in this dissertation. Lewis interacted with Patterson and wrote frequently about the significance of the role of performance in Fluxus and in Patterson's work. In particular, Lewis noted how "Fluxus artists used music's most vital and traditional attribute—its immateriality—to explore the interstices between art forms."[55] The immateriality Lewis describes is a notable counterpart to the materiality of Gaines's works with ink and pen. Both Gaines and Patterson created work by outlining procedures using pen and paper, and what is fixed in the work's realization constitutes lexical entrainment.

The process of entrainment becomes *lexical* when the process of arriving at entrained alignment is itself a performative and improvisational dialogue between discrete agents. This stands in contrast to other forms of entrainment where alignment is predicated on one agent dictating the terms of alignment for others. In this respect *lexical entrainment* stands in sharp contrast to the potential, more top-down arrangement of discrete agents one associates with fascism. The role for language here is to function metaphorically

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[52] http://www.tactilepaths.net/patterson/ (accessed June 13, 2022)
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] https://www.artforum.com/print/201609/benjamin-patterson-64196 (accessed June 13, 2022)

alongside performative action within the context of iterative creative practice: The collaborative nature of improvisational behavior fundamentally resists the neutralizing, essentializing aspects of entrainment, and provides a firm recourse to totalitarianism.

This dissertation's concept of decentralized communal authorship is relevant here because when entrainment is not collaborative, and the subjectivity of one (or some) dictates terms for others, the fascist endeavor to totalize and control populations prevails. Scholar Sylvère Lotringer summarized this relationship in his essay on George Bataille's *The Miserables*, which drew on Louis-Ferdinand Céline to critique fascism in the mid 20th century:

> They are all camouflaged, disguised, chameleons, The Jews," Celene wrote in 'Trifles for a Disaster.' They change their name like they change their borders. Wasn't it for the same reason that Hitler felt the need to define strict criteria to identify them?[56]

Returning to Gaines and Patterson: Williams's emphasis on the "inevitably incomplete sum of the living history of the work" highlights the collaborative nature of the maintenance of history, which invokes both Williams's notion of Entextualization and the notion of lexical entrainment. Likewise, Gaines's *Librettos: Manuel de Falla / Stokely Carmichael Set 24* (2014), for example, maps data from a political speech by Stokely Carmichael to notes on the 5-line musical staff, and the information was then orchestrated (entrained lexically and collaboratively) for string quartet by Gaines's close associate, composer Sean Griffin (see Figure 1).

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[56] Lotringer, S., & Hodges, A. (2014). *The miserables*. Semiotext(e). Lotringer's criticism of Célene and Georges Bataille (the primary theorist being addressed in Lotringer's essay) can quite easily be extended beyond Nazi antisemitism and directed towards today's anti-trans or queer rhetorics.

An example of Gaines's methods for integrating conceptual rigor, social criticism, and the "immateriality" of music described by Lewis, can be found in *Manifestos 4: The Dred and Harriet Scott Decision*, premiered in July 2022 at Times Square Arts. In this work, Gaines used his distinctive approach of translating words into musical notes to generate a score for woodwind quintet, piano, and tenor. The work, according to Gaines, "transforms the original text of the landmark 1857 U.S. Supreme Court case of Dred Scott vs. Sanford, which denied U.S. citizenship to people of African ancestry."[58] The score that was generated uses the "original text of the Dred and Harriet Scott Supreme Court decision as well as Frederick Douglass's speech responding to the ruling" to create an onstage embodiment of the struggle for recognition that was as real in the 1850s as it is now 170 years later.[59]

Whereas previous iterations of the *Manifestos* series applied a system for encoding all the words in the source texts, a more conceptually charged method was at work in this piece: "To create the musical composition, Gaines uses a rule-based methodology, transcribing letters 'A – H' from the texts into their equivalent musical notes (with the use of the letter 'H' representing the code used in early Baroque

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[57] https://www.vip-hauserwirth.com/works/gaine100939/ (accessed May 5, 2023)

[58] http://arts.timessquarenyc.org/times-square-arts/projects/at-the-crossroads/the-american-manifest/index.aspx (accessed May 7, 2023)

[59] https://creativetime.org/american-manifest-chapter-one/ (accessed May 7, 2023)

tradition for B, and the letter 'B' meaning B-flat)."[60] By specifically including the notes of the diatonic

scale and excluding the other five notes (which outline the Eb pentatonic scale), Gaines accomplished a

highly conceptual embodiment of the spurious assertion that had been made by the court's highly

contentious ruling: the white keys on the piano were *included*–deemed eligible for U.S. Citizenship–while

the black keys on the piano were *excluded*–deemed ineligible for U.S. Citizenship.

Like notions of inclusion-exclusion, other binaries play important roles in the works by Gaines and

Patterson. They are, however, also used to set up conventions for the purpose of challenging them. Both

Gaines and Patterson use operatic forms, for example, to offer dramatic re-contextualizations in certain

works, where conventional notions of creator and receiver are challenged.[61] In the *Alien* issue of

Anthology of Recorded Music's nearly 30-issue journal *Sound American*, Nicole Kaack emphasizes the

relationship between the reception of a work and the intentions of the creator in Gaines's work:

> By relinquishing a tactical positioning of materials, Gaines releases his authorial control to
> the viewer's perception. However, by pairing objects that carry complex material, cultural,
> and linguistic meanings, the "Librettos" also indicate the extent to which these materials
> are already overwritten by almost inevitable cultural narratives.[62]

As with his artistic work, Gaines presents a dynamic reconsidering of authorship and agency through his

incisive investigation of his chosen topics. His work encodes the subjective within the objective (or vice

versa). Gaines asserts that avant-garde practice "rethinks the role of the performer […] taking away the

power to transform according to his subjective interests. The result is a concrete or pragmatic space of

performance, which is, like a score, autonomous and independent of the performer."[63]

For Gaines, authorship and gesturality (or an embrace of expressiveness) are misleading indicators of

personal freedom. Writer Emily LaBarge described Gaines's argument, emphasizing the extent to which

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[60] Ibid.
[61] The author's responses to operatic forms include similar critiques on the conventions of this form: this is true of the 2011 opera based on William S. Burroughs's novel *The Ticket That Exploded*, the subsequent *Deleted Scenes* (a "dance opera" created in 2014 for William Burroughs's month-long centenary celebration in New York, WSB100), and 2019's *I Looked At The Eclipse*.
[62] *Sound American* is a journal edited by Nate Wooley for Anthology of Recorded Music, Inc. *The Alien Issue* features writing on the alien and alienation by Sarah Hennies, Marc Hannaford, Nicole Kaack, Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste, Matana Roberts, Jacob Wick, Wendy Eisenberg, work by Lester St. Louis, and more. The print edition includes a very special full color reproduction of Gaines's *Librettos*. https://soundamerican.org/issues/alien/introduction-charles-gainess-librettos (accessed May 23, 2023)
[63] Gaines, "The History of Gray Matter from the Avant-garde to the Postmodern." Cassel Oliver, Valerie, editor. *Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of Flux/us.* Houston, TX: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2012.

subjectivity is contingent on objective truths, in favor of an an acknowledgement that meaning is socially constructed: "The eradication of authorship and subjectivity contests the myth of individual genius and expression, but it also makes space for modes of exchange that might be communal, relational, generative."[64] Here, LaBarge makes a strong case for the *lexically entrained* nature of subjectivity's dependence on objectivity: meaning is socially constructed through lexical entrainment, and subjectivity can comment on, even obscure, objectivity - but not replace it wholesale.

As with his comments about "avant-garde practice" above, Gaines's ambivalence about gesture rethinks the role of the performer. In a letter to Sol Lewitt,[65] Gaines stated that his transition from painting towards systems began in 1972: "The problem is the associated discourse surrounding gesture, that is, gesturing was a material manifestation of emotive or expressive intent. And I didn't care for that idea."[66] Cohen describes Gaines's intentions as moving away from "the fantasy of autonomy that was encouraged by the discourse of gesture, the feeling that expressivity could be an analogue to something like human spirit or unbounded imagination."[67]

The "emotive or expressive intent" and "unbounded imagination" from which Cohen suggests Gaines is distancing himself is given a somewhat liminal or even ambiguous placement in Gaines's scholarship about Patterson. This same ambiguity would at first glance seem to problematize Gaines's regard for one domain that is traditionally considered to elevate expressivity as a hallmark of the form: the same tradition of African American creative improvised music discussed in the following and preceding chapters.[68] However, Gaines's methods of conceptualizing expressive intent are in fact foregrounding the *transpersonal* nature of artistic process, thereby highlighting the ways in which creative expressions (generally considered to be articulating the subjectivities of the performers) can actually be recognized as

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[64] Emily LaBarge. "Emily LaBarge on Charles Gaines." Artforum International 2021: n. pag. Print.
[65] Gaines's letter to Lewitt was partially reprinted in Kris Cohen's essay "*The Irresolutions of Charles Gaines*"
[66] Kris Cohen. "The Irresolutions of Charles Gaines". *Nervous Systems: Art, Systems, and Politics since the 1960s*, edited by Johanna Gosse and Timothy Stott, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2021, pp. 103-124.
[67] Ibid.
[68] And, in which Gaines himself frequently performs as a drummer in tandem with presentations of his more familiar artwork in the visual medium

articulations of objective systems. The fundamental, even material, components of music (such as tempo, dynamics, articulations, timbral complexity, and musical dialog) can all be recognized as sites for entrainment as the subjectivities of the individuals are all subsumed into the gestalt during collective improvisations.

Gray Matter, Decentralized Communal Authorship, & Corporeal Entrapment

In his analysis of Patterson's work, Gaines offers a direct challenge to conventional binaries like objectivity and subjectivity, and his view of Patterson's work as an essential engagement with "gray matter" — an expression Gaines borrows from Fluxus artist Dick Higgins, who first used the expression in asserting that:

> Patterson, more than hardly any other composer, seems to understand that for a composer to divide activities into musical and non-musical, what-I-do and what-I-do-not-do is to accept the dualism of good and evil, of black and white, and ultimately, to place one's work on a level of purely theoretical relevance. Patterson goes for the gray and he seems to accept, even to encourage, the non-memorable, disappearing aspects of his work.[69]

This liminal or ambiguous position Gaines is calling "gray matter" actually makes a specific space for the *audience* or *receiver* in the creative act. In highlighting this "gray matter" in Patterson's work, Gaines emphasizes a form of *decentralized communal authorship*, wherein the establishment of meaning is a collaborative act, cooperatively enacted through a decentralized transmission of imagination between an artist and an experiencer. This creative process is thus ongoing: "Patterson's performance work becomes a portal that allows postmodern artists to engage with their own subjectivity found in ordinary events and used to widen the social, political, and poetic 'gray matter' of representation."[70]

There is an emphasis on personal engagement with ideas (and the resultant connection to action) that is implied within the term *decentralized communal authorship*. This emphasis also suggests that "the

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[69] Gaines, "The History of Gray Matter from the Avant-garde to the Postmodern." Cassel Oliver, Valerie, editor. *Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of Flux/us.* Houston, TX: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2012
[70] Ibid.

non-memorable, disappearing aspects" of what Gaines describes as "going for the gray" in his discussion of Patterson's work also highlights a dilemma that this dissertation seeks to address: There is a certain restriction on artistic and personal mobility that inevitably factors into the creative process for anyone who seeks to extend their vision and capacity for expression. The expectation that an artist should (or even must) engage the universal while *also* underscoring the personal in their work provides a dilemma, because an artist's conceptual mobility is often still limited within this expectation, particularly for those who seek to reach beyond social restrictions related to class, gender, or race. This dissertation identifies this dilemma as *corporeal entrapment.*

Corporeal entrapment describes a simultaneous drive towards transcendence and concurrent reinvestment in corporeality. In both visual and sonic artistic disciplines, there is a contemporaneous drive to differentiate and to assimilate. This capacity to function as both a source of, and obstacle to, cooperation is the catalyzing element of *corporeal entrapment.* Often, artists struggle to not only embrace universal or perennial themes and project their ideas out to a wide field of addressees, but also to reinvest in personal experience and demand that their work and their personal experience be acknowledged and validated.

However abstract or transgressive a work may seem, the practices of the artists discussed here and also the original work discussed in the final chapter all share a core commitment to showing how humanity can overcome *corporeal entrapment.* Social structures may enact a functioning network of traditional forms (from roads to sheet music to language itself), but they simultaneously enforce a dependence on those artificial structures. Such structures can facilitate a fluency that transcends the very limitations and demarcations that structure society, but this dependence on fluency also precludes forms of cooperation and innovation.

In a conversation between artists Arthur Jafa and Theaster Gates published in Interview Magazine in January 2023,[71] Jafa described how the "dual relationship to structure and freedom" is "central to much of

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[71] https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/we-come-to-fuck-shit-up-theaster-gates-gets-deep-with-arthur-jafa
(accessed July 6, 2023)

the conundrum of Black being." Jafa highlighted the troubled binary of the corporeal and the transcendent that is at once universal and also uniquely embodied in the "conundrum of Black being" he describes, adding that "We do need structure, we do need institutions, we do need continuity. At the same time, we are clearly a people traumatically invested in breaking things, breaking loose, breaking structures." Gates concurred, recalling his initial shock at the power of Jafa's *Love Is The Message,* which surfaced in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic and circulated widely, encapsulating and amplifying the myriad sentiments driving the Black Lives Matter movement that flourished that same summer: "When I first saw *Love is the Message,* it struck me as a lexicon for presenting the Black body in all of the ways that it's fugitive, alien, obsessed, stressed, stretched."

Gates highlights how the "fugitive" state of constant struggle to coexist in separate-but-equal conceptual spaces that troubles the dialogue between the communal, the personal, and the eternal is embodied in Jafa's remarkable video work. This trichotomy of logic is the core of *corporeal entrapment.* There are, however, readily accessible methods for mediating and counterbalancing these opposing objective, subjective, and transgressive scripts.

The original work discussed in the final chapter has all been developed to facilitate an ever-increasing capacity for patience, mindfulness, empathy, and compassion. These qualities all contribute to a fluency that resists the dependence on social structures. There is a shared objective of promoting empathy and resistance to a designation of otherness, that is embodied in the cooperative methods prescribed by Patterson and Gaines. The methods that both artists employ are embodiments of the conceptual motivations that reside within the fabric of their artistic practices. These embodied processes epitomize the overtly humanistic values that have always been at the core of contemporary artistic practice (however encoded in abstraction those values may be). The relationship between materials and procedures that resides at the center of this discussion of *corporeal entrapment* and *decentralized communal authorship,* and the capacity for those artistic concepts to be enacted in tandem with expressions of the humanistic

values of empathy and patience will be further discussed in this dissertation, notably in the final chapter (which discusses the original work created in tandem with this dissertation).

Materiality, Conceptualism, and Raster-based Graphical Embodiment

Gaines's work has emphasized the materiality of performance from the outset in his mature creative work, as he began his conceptual work with pen on paper — a familiar medium for conceptual artists who emerged in the 1970s.[72] Materiality in conceptual art or music simultaneously obscures and also underscores the particulars of the disciplines they interrogate.

Conceptualism and Materialism both place traditional languages and methods under close scrutiny, having the specific aim of re-evaluating definitions and perforating the boundaries that give those forms their shape. Literary scholar Kyla Wazana Tompkins, in her article "On the Limits and Promise of New Materialist Philosophy," describes a *New Materialism*: one that is "interested in relations between things, objects, phenomena, materialities, and physical bodies, as well as the relations between those things (things with each other) and humans (humans with things)."[73] This expanded concept of Materiality addresses both humans and systems as measurable networks of potentialities:

> New Materialism also considers the thingness of the human, the materiality of human bodies, and explores consciousness, feeling, affect, and other circulatory and shared social phenomena as they rise out of the substance of the world. Therefore, much New Materialist thought thinks through and with the biological and chemical make-up of the neurological body itself in relation to an increasingly toxic but always-chemical world.[74]

Chapter 3 of this dissertation will specifically consider materialism and conceptualism as embodied in musical practices. Created around the same time Fluxus artists like Patterson and AACM artists such as Mitchell and Muhal Richard Abrams were interrogating relationships and methods in action and sound,

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[72] Notable works that initially established this new trajectory in art-making include John Baldessari's I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art, (1971) a work initially created by volunteers who followed Baldessari's instructions, covering the gallery walls with repetitions of the phrase; or Baldessari's Throwing Three Balls in the Air to Get a Straight Line (Best of Thirty-Six Attempts) from 1973.
[73] Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "On the Limits and Promise of New Materialist Philosophy," Emergent Critical Analytics for Alternative Humanities, Issue 5.1 (Spring 2016)
https://csalateral.org/issue/5-1/forum-alt-humanities-new-materialist-philosophy-tompkins/
[74] Ibid.

Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965) epitomized the conceit that the idea itself supersedes the realization of the idea. This concept essentially places conceptualism and materialism at odds with each other, but the New Materialism that Tompkins describes places an emphasis on *behavior* that invites a direct conversation between materialism and conceptualism. Coleman's concept of Harmolodics as a process of embodying and materializing the notion of *spirit* is contingent on *artists and their labor* generating an artifact through the process of conceptualism's transition to materiality (as discussed in the introduction). This movement towards embodiment exemplifies how lexical entrainment places materialism and conceptualism not at odds, but in an improvisational dialogue.

Twelve years prior to Kosuth's conceptualist *One and Three Chairs* from 1965, Robert Rauschenberg made a similarly defining statement about materiality with *Erased de Kooning* (1953), as explained by theorist and scholar Zöe Sutherland:

> Robert Raushenberg's *White Paintings* (1951) were pitted against the dogma of expressive artistic processes: his *Erased de Kooning* (1953)—a literal description of the work—signaled rejection of the Abstract Expressionist's personalized signature. The aim was a de-reification of the artwork, to allow new kinds of meaning to appear.[75]

Sutherland not only highlights a rejection of expressionism in Rauschenberg's work: she further notes that "in the mid 1950s a Duchamp revival began, in which the readymade would be interpreted as revealing art's conceptual nature and the institutional underpinnings of its alleged autonomy."[76] In this respect Rauschenberg's work both reinvests in the *materiality* of Duchamp's *conceptual* work, and prefigures the conceptualism that defined Kosuth's work in the 1960s. Moreover, this rejection of "the dogma of expressive artistic process" directly exemplifies Gaines's own endeavor to circumvent expressivity: the previously discussed "eradication of authorship and subjectivity."[77] This dialogue between materiality and conceptualism then becomes an indirect focus in both the creative work and scholarship of Gaines, whose work (like that of Patterson before him) brings forth an overtly political agenda.[78]

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[75] Zöe Sutherland. "The World As Gallery: Conceptualism and Global Neo-Avant-Garde" New Left Review 98. Mar/Apr 2016
[76] Ibid.
[77] Kosuth's work then leads towards the conceptualization of artistic practice in the 1970s in the form of the Land Art and Systems Art made by Nancy Holt, Robert Smithson, Gordon Matta-Clark, Sol Lewitt, John Baldessari, and Gaines.
[78] Both Gaines's and Lewis's discussions of Patterson's works highlight political aspects of Patterson's work that Patterson himself did not always overtly state. This irony has a strong tone of intentionality about it–one that might in fact underscore the seriousness of the apparently comedic nature of Patterson's Fluxus-based work.

Figure 2. Robert Rauschenberg: *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953)

Figure 3. Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (1965)

In his essay "The Irresolutions of Charles Gaines," Kris Cohen argues that the movement in conceptual art from "art about art" to "art about political art" identifies a movement "from conceptualism to a politicized conceptualism that explicitly takes up identity politics." Cohen argues that this movement, in tandem with the increased centrality of the raster-based graphical user interface since the advent of the personal computer, "makes it clear that all systems aesthetics are concerned with identity politics," which ultimately "resituates the labor of gesture, creativity, expression, and subjecthood itself."[79] Thus the focus on materialism and conceptualism in this dissertation constitutes a move away from abstraction and towards politically-informed artistic expression, as embodied in systems aesthetics.

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[79] Cohen. "The Irresolutions of Charles Gaines". *Nervous Systems: Art, Systems, and Politics since the 1960s*, edited by Johanna Gosse and Timothy Stott, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2021, pp. 114-115.

For Gaines, it was through numerical transcriptions of performative actions by colleagues like choreographer Trisha Brown in the early 1980s that his work began to embody the intersection of computational procedures and personal expressiveness.[80] The Trisha Brown series in particular captured a distinctly performative embodiment of his practice: Gaines's transcription of Brown's movements into raster-based grids engaged expressivity not in-kind, but by placing a caveat on motion and expression.
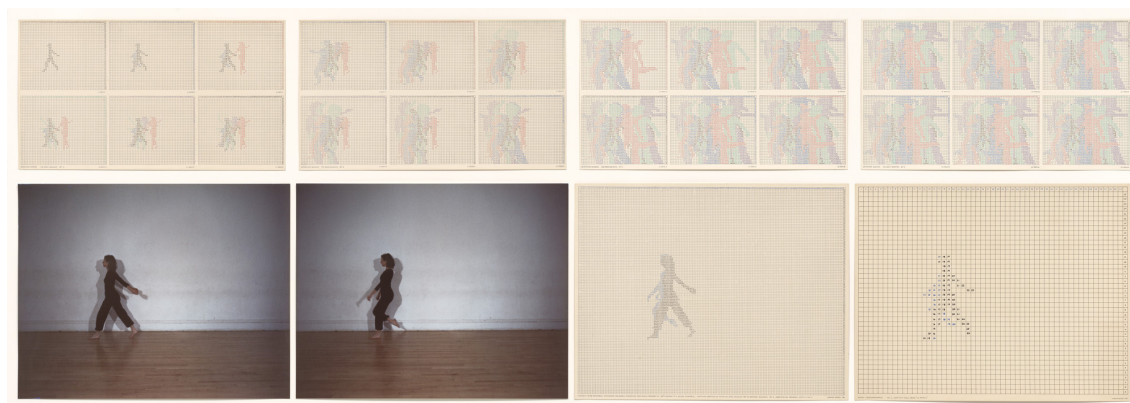
Figure 4. Charles Gaines - *Motion: Trisha Brown Dance, Set #1 1980–81*

Paradoxically, the non-performative quality of this practice was precisely what gave the work its unique quality of motion. Trisha Brown's conceptual palette was developed during her participation in the early days of Robert Dunn's work at the Judson Dance Theater. Brown's website explains how her work was focused on rule-based procedures, which likewise directly influenced Gaines's approach to developing a conceptual and structural framework for his visual work: "Expanding the physical behaviors that qualified as dance, [Brown] discovered the extraordinary in the everyday, and brought tasks, rulegames, natural movement, and improvisation into the making of choreography."[81] In this respect Gaines's early gridwork not only invites comparisons to the work of Trisha Brown, but the non-performative quality of his work was not unlike the embrace of the quotidian that characterized Hammons's snowball project *Bliz-aard Ball Sale* (1983) in Cooper Square in New York City, which will be discussed later in this document.

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[80] https://studiomuseum.org/event/gallery-tour-137 (accessed June 9, 2022) Earlier work on pen and paper began with the *Regression Series* in the 1970s. https://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2015/charles-gaines-gridwork-1974-1989
[81] https://trishabrowncompany.org/trisha-brown/biography/ (accessed June 25, 2023)

A critical observation from Cohen, in fact, pertains to the relationship between *individuality* and *contiguity*. Central to Gaines's use of the grid is a nuanced vision of the dissolution of the individual into networked systems of relationships. The raster-based graphical user interface of the personal computer is directly invoked through Gaines's use of the grid, all but implicating "the graphical screen with its accommodation and aggrandizement of the individual, its division of the self into units of labor all of which appear to be emanations of that self's expressive interiority." In this respect, Gaines's vision of the grid is in fact a technology for mediating the porous boundaries around the individual and the collective. Cohen argues that Gaines's use of systems,

> seems less about making systems antithetical to expression and more about producing a series of enchainments where no part floats free (as generator or product, author or final artwork), where all parts move in contiguity with those that proceed and follow.[82]

By placing the grid of the raster-based graphical interface in the role of mediating *difference* and *contiguity*, Gaines actually *highlights* the capacity for individual expressiveness *within* the network of the collective — a central principle for both the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and Coleman's concept of *Harmolodics*.[83] This perplexing turn places emphasis on the personal expression that is so central in creative improvised music, which may seem antithetical to conceptualism's de-centering of personal expression. However, Cohen's observations about Gaines's use of systems show "why Gaines's arrangement of the raster for and against the assembly of a fungible collective is important." Cohen argues that Gaines's systems are,

> a machine for producing contiguity more than they are an imposed logic or depersonalizing structure. Contiguity, in this sense, short-circuits–rather than negates or opposes–or more simply, just doesn't believe in the smooth interior-to-exterior relay of expressivity: what Gaines, echoing Kant, has called the "free play of meanings."[84]

This "free play of meanings" is materialized in Ornette Coleman's concept of Harmolodics, in that the art of musical improvisation assembles an ecology of associations that traverses the threshold that separates

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[82] Cohen. "The Irresolutions of Charles Gaines". *Nervous Systems: Art, Systems, and Politics since the 1960s*, edited by Johanna Gosse and Timothy Stott, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2021, p. 116. It is perhaps also worth noting here that this concept of simultaneously problematizing and resolving the relationship between the self and the collective is also central to the mission of Infrequent Seams.

[83] See the quote that opens chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[84] Kris Cohen. "The Irresolutions of Charles Gaines". *Nervous Systems: Art, Systems, and Politics since the 1960s*, edited by Johanna Gosse and Timothy Stott, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2021, p. 120.

materiality and immateriality. It is again useful to recall the earlier discussion of the "materiality" of "components of music such as tempo, dynamics, articulations, timbral complexity, and musical dialog" and consider how Gaines's engagement with systems in fact materializes the "free play of meanings" in Coleman's system, because *Harmolodics* is a system that is embodied by the collective expressions of the performers and audience. Cohen argues that Gaines's systems reject the "interior-to-exterior" relay of expressivity, and this is accurate, because, paradoxically, Gaines's grids disassociate from the linear, ordered narrative of expression in ways that challenge musicians and listeners to extend beyond a preoccupation with the expressive qualities and instead embrace the procedural characteristics of musical practice.

This implied attention to what Cohen calls "contiguity" is why the performative nature of improvisation (as theorized by Coleman and so many others) resists the essentializing, totalizing or even totalitarian conception of systems as a mode for the production of rigid forms, instead placing even more emphasis on those elements that resist systematization. In the April 9 creative capstone concert (discussed in Chapter 4), the *Ambigram Series II* works all specifically address this notion of "contiguity," and were designed specifically to translate Gaines's spatially-oriented systems into temporally-oriented systems for musical performance. By layering reverse video on top of live performance, these works produce neatly interwoven temporal latticework of abstract musical procedures that place structure and gesture in continuous dialog. Similarly, Mitchell's 1977 performance of *Nonaah* in Willisau embraces the procedural characteristics of musical performance, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Moreover, it is this transposition from expression to process that most inextricably links the processes of Gaines with the processes of Mitchell: both present process as the true site of both conceptual and material embodiment, and in doing so, both reject subjectivity and expressivity as the embodiment of the interpersonal. For Gaines and Mitchell, and Patterson, who titled his collections of his text-based scores *Methods and Process*, the only true and present reality is one's commitment to their process.

Theorist Timur Si Quin proposes that "All systems, from a lump of clay to a conceptual art piece, have characteristic tendencies and capacities in their causal interactions with the world and thereby express their own materiality." In this respect, the behaviors encoded in objects' materialities (and improvisers' physicalities) enliven the collective conception of the physical world:

> …things we traditionally have labeled as "immaterial" are understood to have a certain materiality after all, because, like any system, they have characteristic tendencies and capacities as expressed in their internal dynamics and causal relations with the world. Thereby things like a novel, a poem, or an algorithm can also possess and express a real materiality, as reflected in the effects they have on the world.[85]

Mitchell's improvisational practice is also part and parcel of this expansion of materiality. Saxophonist James Fei explained Mitchell's practice in terms that emphasize the same conception of materiality and process as described by Si Quin: "In improvisations you find Roscoe constantly shifting his embouchure and the angle and position of the mouthpiece where the physical interface of the instrument is perpetually unstable."[86] This emphasis on process drives the pairing of Gaines and Mitchell that resurfaces throughout this dissertation.

Charles Gaines's Ecology of Linear & Spatial Relationships

A recurring motif in Gaines's works is the use of sequential numbering as an organizing principle. This engagement with such a conceptual process clearly places Gaines's work in line with that of his peers in the conceptual art movement of the 1970s, but Gaines situates this engagement with systems in a connotative dialog with embodiment to a far more personal extent than that of his peers. For Gaines, the use of grids and numbers is in part a critique of systems of control, particularly the use of such systems to control populations. He has cited historical practices such as eugenics as methods for using information to enforce segregation:

> One thing that made me different from other conceptual artists is that I was not shying away from language or meaning or content. Those things are part of the art, whereas for

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[85] Timur Si Quin, "Aesthetics of Contingency: Materialism, Evolution, Art," PCA-Stream 04 The Paradoxes of the living (Nov. 2017)

[86] James Fei. "There's So Much To Learn In Music." *Sound American 29: The Roscoe Mitchell Issue* (2022)

the most part, conceptual art was phenomenologically based. It didn't deal with metaphor.[87]

Gaines's images of single trees engage viewers in a game of semiotic de-coupling and symbolic association through their repetition and re-presentation. The ongoing series *Numbers and Trees* highlights the artist's penchant for revealing the limits of the media he employs–drawing, photography, and painting–in accurately imaging reality as well as the potential disconnect, in the resulting works, between content and logic." Gaines uses numbers as a way of organizing variables, and the serial nature of his focus on multiples reconsiders narrative not as a teleological, time-based system, but as an ecology of linear and spatial relationships.

The *Regression* series (1973-74) began Gaines's engagement with conceptual procedures. In these works and in Gaines's many subsequent serieses of works, the gradual accumulation of data progresses from pristine and ordered to seemingly chaotic. This perceived chaos, however, is achieved through Gaines's carefully selected and ordered systems. This facilitates the layering of the faces, trees, and other subjects depicted in his works.

Figure 5: *Numbers and Trees: Palm Canyon, Palm Trees Series 4, Tree #1 Tataviam, Tree #2 Kitanemuk, Tree #3 Chumash, #4 Acjachemen, 2021*

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[87] Charles Gaines to Malik Gaines, "Remember the Grid," 2001

Gaines's systems bare a resemblance to the systems used by Mitchell in his *Conversations For Orchestra* series (which will be discussed in the following chapter), in that Gaines's triptychs and other multiples display a systematic reduction of information and subsequent enlivening as the work gains new dimensionality and contiguity with other works in the series in the final image of each triptych. This systematic restructuring of components places emphasis on difference and repetition, for which Kris Cohen offers the notion of *contiguity* as a resolution. Like the concept of *contiguity*, Gaines also found a term capable of traversing the somewhat arbitrary boundary between individual expression and entrained procedure — one he borrowed from his colleague Adkins: *essence.*

Gaines on *Essence* in the work of Patterson and Adkins

In his essay on Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson, titled "The History of Gray Matter from the Avant-Garde to the Postmodern," Gaines also considers the intersection of the political and the aesthetic. The overt critique of social systems that is so central in the work of Gaines echoes similar, though decidedly more subtle, even subversive qualities in the work of Patterson. Premiered in 1960 and signifying Patterson's arrival in the highly conceptual art scene that soon became known as Fluxus, Patterson's *Paper Piece* was in fact a direct critique of the elitism of Karlheinz Stockhausen and his associates.[88] In prescribing a performative engagement with physical objects, Patterson emphasized simple materials — both in terms of the physical materials used in his work, and the resolutely un-virtuosic nature of his performance-based work. *Paper Piece* intricately interweaves performative and conceptual visions of art in a genre-defining work. Patterson's method of outlining procedures and processes on pen and paper, for either himself or others to realize in performance, sets a critically valuable precedent for the performance art practices that emerged some years later when performance art emerged as a ubiquitous form of expression. In an email exchange with Gaines, Patterson suggested that…

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[88] In Patterson's aforementioned "I'm Glad You Asked Me That Question" he also stated that Stockhausen's "egocentricity revolted me so much that I eventually went into isolation for three days to ponder a more socially responsible way of making art, and *Paper Piece* was the result."

…'Paper Piece' was the direct reaction to the 'establishment-sponsored' elitism of the 'official' new music scene at the time […] I was trying to find a way for 'ordinary people'—people without years of technical training—to have a direct 'musical' experience. Thus, 'Paper Piece,' in itself, was already a 'political statement!'[89]

Figure 6. Benjamin Patterson, *Paper Piece*, 1960. Hypokriterion Theater, Amsterdam, June 23, 1963.

Gaines goes on to discuss how Patterson's work "passively administers a powerful and wider social effect…" noting that "In works like *The Clinic of Dr. Ben*, we think about the ineptitude of bureaucracies as he collects useless statistical information… [which] opens up pathways to proactive insinuations about subjectivity."[90] Interestingly, *Clinic…* not only offers a specific critique of bureaucracy and control—it also offers a critique of certain structures in music. Patterson's role as collector of (mundane, inconsequential) personal data in this piece affords him a "type of distance by being the composer-conductor in the traditional musical performance."[91]

Patterson had recounted one particular performance of the piece where amidst the mass of crumpled and shredded paper that was to be tossed into the audience were copies of Fluxus proponent George Maciunus's "Fluxus Manifesto" (a document with which few artists associated with Fluxus actually agreed). In an email exchange between Patterson and Gaines, Patterson asserted that the inclusion of

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[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

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Maciunas's text in the performance was accidental, and that the inclusion of paper with that *particular* text was not intentional or political. Patterson explained, "It was only [a] 'practical act', to dump a lot of excess paper!" Gaines's analysis of this situation illustrates the complexity of the role of politics in Patterson's work:

> The fact that the allusion to politics was accidental is exemplary of the 'gray area' that Patterson's performances produce. Politics for him was not an entirely uninvited consequence of the performance. In other words, there was no intention for it to be directly political.[92]

So while Gaines appreciates Patterson's assertion that this particular performance was not overtly political in nature, he did make effective use of the anecdote to draw attention to the political subtexts in work like Patterson's:

> …it is interesting to note that even though the inclusion of the manifesto text may not have been intentional, its (or any other "accidental" event's) link to the performance *cannot be discounted* [emphasis added]. This sense of legitimate belonging sans intention might be understood through the metaphor of the "echo," [...] In repetition, the echo is linked to the primary sound even though each reverberation has its own unique qualities and is changed by circumstances of the echo that the primary sound cannot control.[93]

Gaines makes a profound assertion here, about the relationship between a fundamental action and its subsequent resonance in circumstance. This is also a significant corollary to the development of structure in freely improvised musical performances, as will be addressed in Chapter 3. A direct connection between improvisation in art and in music becomes apparent. Absolutist or constructivist conceptions of artistic or musical practice emphasize the singular autonomy of the artistic creative act. Gaines, however, is arguing for the inclusion of *context* as critical to any thorough understanding of a work — and this includes the context created by the circumstances under which an artistic work is *received*. Likewise, subsequent evolution of a work, which also extends beyond the purview of the author(s) of the artistic experience, is nonetheless significant in the work's complete *essence.*

Gaines's words about essence are valuable in understanding conceptual spaces shared by the distinct artistic disciplines of music and visual art. His methods of articulating something about the ineffable are

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[92] Gaines: "The History of Gray Matter from the Avant-Garde to the Postmodern" from *Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of Flux/us.* Valerie Cassel Oliver, editor. Houston, TX: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2012.
[93] Ibid.

essential and under-valued perspectives on what makes both art and music engaging. Gaines has also written about the significance of *essence* in the work of his close associate Terry Adkins. In "The Smooth, the Cut, and the Assembled: The Sculpture of Terry Adkins," Gaines speaks of Adkins's concept of *essence:*

> Because the visceral experience is invisible, its dependence on materiality is particularly interesting, since our received ideas about transcendence argue a freedom from material constraints. By using the term "essence" Adkins fuses our intellectual perceptions and our emotional perceptions.[94]

While Gaines emphasizes the significance of the objective properties of his work, he is highlighting circumstantial and experiential elements in the works of Patterson and Adkins. Gaines's re-calibration of these practical, circumstantial, and experiential elements is reinforcing his concept of objectivity. *Essence* is fundamentally transgressive for Gaines and Adkins, who both place this concept at the interstices of objectivity and subjectivity, of materiality and conceptualism. By imbricating these dualities, the concept of entrainment serves to reconcile these differences and place each more functionally in service of the other. Like Gaines and Adkins, Patterson and Mitchell both reserve an indispensable role for objectivity in both art and music.

Agency, Autonomy, Structural Impositions, & The Third Mind

In her introduction to the catalog *Benjamin Patterson: Born In The State of FLUX/Us*, Valerie Cassel Oliver invoked the words of the influential early 20th century writer Zora Neale Hurston: "I feel most colored when thrown against a sharp white background."[95] One recurring characteristic of both Patterson and Gaines is that their works frequently emphasize their own willfully assumed engagement with structural boundaries of their own design (somewhat in lieu of creative autonomy) in contrast to structural impositions that are ever-present in the environments they engage.

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[94] Gaines: *The Smooth, the Cut, and the Assembled: The Sculpture of Terry Adkins.* New York, NY: Lévy-Gorvy, 2018.

[95] Hurston, "How It Felt to Be Colored Me," in *The Best American Essays of the Century,* 116.

This "engagement with structural boundaries," which both Patterson and Gaines embody in their work, offers a neutral environment in which to engage highly charged issues of selfhood, belonging, and "otherness." By defining such spaces for those who experience the artists' works, they are providing forms of agency and authorship to the audience, enabling an autonomous engagement with the works. Here, *lexical entrainment* can be seen as a perennial theme that facilitates free association through alignment within artistic endeavors. Adkins's concept of *essence*, Dick Higgins's concept of *gray matter* (both discussed in Gaines's essay on Patterson) and the concept of *posthumous embodiment* all work together to elucidate the concept of *decentralized communal authorship* (those two both original to this document).

This further extends to a third original concept for this document: *Posthumous Embodiment* describes new engagements with the legacies of artists who have passed, creating what William S. Burroughs called a "third mind" that arises from the interaction of two distinct subjectivities. The concept of the "third mind" transgresses subjectivity and objectivity when this *avant-garde practice* Gaines describes places fixed materials and concepts in the type of shared space that is borne of collaboration: a space that necessitates empathy and an entrainment where distinct subjectivities and objectivities come into alignment.

That Gaines and Patterson both graduated college at critical points in the Civil Rights era[96] is significant, since both artists use methods that, upon close inspection, reveal unambiguous connections to the human rights ethics that flourished in those years, just as they have throughout the first quarter of the 21st century. The legacy of radical performance that both artists established at the outset of their careers, one in 1960, one in the early 1970s, set a precedent for generations of conceptual performance art from African Americans.

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[96] Patterson in 1956 from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and Gaines from Jersey City State College in 1966, and subsequently the MFA program at the School of Art and Design at the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1967.

George Lewis & Ensemble Pamplemousse: *A Recital For Terry Adkins*

Lewis and Adkins had an association that began around 2010 and lasted until Adkins's passing in 2014. The nature of both artists' work addresses legacy, embodiment, and identity while reconsidering the relationship between materials and concepts. Premiered in 2014 at St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia University, Lewis's work *A Recital for Terry Adkins* engages Adkins's artworks visually through projections and sonically through Lewis's collaboration with Ensemble Pamplemousse.

In the March 2014 issue of Artforum,[97] Adkins and Lewis conducted an extensive and profoundly illuminative conversation, essentially interviewing each other about shared interests and conceptual overlaps in their respective works. Lewis recalled ideas proposed by Lowery Stokes Sims[98] about African American artists and perception within the African American community regarding abstract styles: "In her view, those artists had to struggle for recognition from certain camps of black self-image-making—and probably not only black self-image-making—with abstraction being perceived as outside the integral black identity." Similarly, Lewis recalled philosopher, scholar, and poet Fred Moten's perception that blackness and the avant-garde are often perceived as occupying oppositional spaces, or in Lewis's words, "an oxymoronic relationship."[99]

Lewis describes his own experience of being perceived as operating "outside the black identity matrix" for his lifelong attention to emerging possibilities with technology in music. Lewis described *A Recital For Terry Adkins* as "a large-scale open-form ritual with live interaction between instruments, electronic sounds, and digitized still and moving images drawn from the work of Adkins, and one of his signal influences, Romare Bearden."[100] The intermedia work mirrors the structure of Adkins's frequent practice

[97] Adkins and Lewis, "Event Scores: Terry Adkins and George Lewis in Conversation" Artforum 52/7 (2014)
https://www.artforum.com/print/201403/terry-adkins-and-george-lewis-in-conversation-45294
 (accessed June 1, 2022)
[98] Sims is a retired museum curator and director of the Studio Museum in Harlem.
[99] Adkins and Lewis, "Event Scores: Terry Adkins and George Lewis in Conversation" Artforum 52/7 (2014)
[100] "George Lewis: A Recital for Terry Adkins with Ensemble Pamplemousse," Institute of Contemporary Art University of Pennsylvania, 12 Oct. 2016.
https://icaphila.org/events/programs/george-lewis-a-recital-for-terry-adkins-with-ensemble-pamplemousse (accessed September 2, 2022)

of staging "Recitals" alongside exhibitions of his work. Adkins regarded his concept of the Recital as a kind of "abstract portraiture" wherein he would "distill qualities – and render them abstractly – that would capture the essence of these individuals who served as the central figure in his renderings "without any realistic imagery at all."[101] These abstract portraits enabled the central figure to maintain agency while serving as a subject.

On October 12, 2016 Lewis and Ensemble Pamplemousse gave a 62-minute performance of *A Recital For Terry Adkins* at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.[102] The performance was captured in an engaging multi-camera document that is available online. What follows is an overview of the central concepts associated with various works by Adkins that appear in Lewis's work. This will further explicate some of Adkins's methods and ideas, and also highlight aspects of the intersection between conceptual art and musical performance, through specific moments in this single large-scale work of intermedia. Works such as this, which have an overtly performative element, transgress the problematized relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, and between materiality and conceptualism.

The work itself engages Adkins's own concept of the *Recital* as fixing some aspects of the *essence* of an exhibition as time-based "abstract portraiture":

> This idea of portraiture as an abstract investigation [...is] a way for me to open the dialogue to a larger public and to help people to look for qualities instead of latching onto quantitative things that they would normally associate with skill-based portraiture.[103]

An important component of Adkins's working method is the concept of "potential disclosure,"[104] where a work comes together after a long period of contemplation. This process where objects reveal their *essence* to Adkins makes a distinct connection between the materiality of the artworks as *objects* and the *immaterial* embodiments of the artworks in the form of these performances Adkins called *Recitals*. The

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[101] Adkins and Lewis in Conversation.
[102] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tVqkjGo7TA (accessed June 2, 2022)
[103] Ian Berry: "Wanting more: A Dialogue with Terry Adkins," from *Terry Adkins: Recital*. Saratoga Springs, NY: DelMonico Books (2017). p57.
[104] Ibid. MoMa's website described Adkins's concept of potential disclosure as "a summoning of the innate value within the discarded materials he had assembled"

engagement with materials for Adkins is critically important, and the objects play a very *active* role in shaping the work, revealing to Adkins their role for his work only through his mindful engagement with those objects.

In Lewis's *Recital,* the opening processional shows all members of Ensemble Pamplemousse in choir robes.[105] Lewis appears onstage next to Pamplemousse composer and electronics specialist Bryan Jacobs, attending to the amplification and spatialization concerns, and manipulating the video projections. Four historical figures who are each central to Adkins's indexical lexicon each have recurring appearances in Lewis's video and audio. They are:

1. artist Romare Bearden (the primary subject of Lewis's own Recital),

2. abolitionist John Brown,

3. explorer Matthew Henson,

4. Ludwig Van Beethoven.

Aside from Adkins himself, Bearden is the figure whose work is most consistently present in Lewis's recital, appearing soon after the beginning of the work, and again at the end, as well as throughout the work. Bearden's *Odyssey* series is the primary connecting point between Bearden and Adkins. Bearden's *Odyssey* is a cycle of 20 collages and watercolors (generally miniature variations of the collages) that modulate the mythology of *The Odyssey* to engage African American history. Like Adkins, Gaines, and Patterson, Bearden was "avid reader and excavator of human history and culture" and "often took up themes of classical literature, incorporating symbolic, layered imagery into his work."[106]

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[105] The choir robes were a convenient acquisition thanks to pianist Dave Broome, who was at the time a choir director in Queens.
[106] Romare Bearden: Odysseus Series, Levine Center for the Arts, 2017
https://levinecenterarts.org/romare-bearden-odysseus-series/ (accessed Aug 3, 2023) The website for the Levine Center for the Arts's exhibition of Bearden's *Odysseus Series* explained how Bearden used "a cast entirely composed of black figures [which] illustrates the historical continuity between the ancient struggle of finding one's home and contemporary African American life."

Figure 7. *Home To Ithaca* by Romare Bearden (1979)

The final image in Lewis's *Recital* is from Bearden's *Odyssey* series: *Home to Ithaca*. It is fitting that this image that depicts a triumphant homecoming for a valiant black hero appears towards the end of Lewis's piece. The story of Odysseus summarizes a recurring theme in all of the works presented in this document: there is a mythical quality to the concept of "home," and throughout this document "home" is always cast as a social construct. It rarely offers a sense of place, but instead a concept or ethos that serves more as a compass than any static state of being. Bearden's engagement with Homer's *The Odyssey* is a fitting connecting point for Lewis's tribute to Adkins, in part because both projects are forms of collaboration across time, between one living artist and one who has already passed. As described earlier, new engagements with the legacies of artists who have passed serve as forms of *Posthumous Embodiment*.

When a work integrates subjectivities from other artists who have already passed, the subjectivities of the two artists are merged in the new work, bringing both present in the here-and-now, in the form of *posthumous embodiment.* This potential gains resonance through the words of Robert G. O'Meally, curator of the exhibition *Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey*,[107] who saw Bearden's work as a collaboration across millennia:

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[107] This exhibition brought together all 20 works Bearden created in relation to Homer's *Odyssey* in New York City for the first time since the works were created in the last decade of the artist's life.

In creating a black Odyssey series, Bearden not only staked a claim to the tales of ancient Greece as having modern relevance, he also made the claim of global cultural collage—that as humans, we are all collages of our unique experiences [...] Bearden does not merely illustrate Homer—he is Homer's true collaborator, and he invites us as viewers to inherit Homer's tale and interpret it as our own.[108]

O'Mealley points out that, in making this overt connection between ancient Greece and his own lived experience culminating in the 1980s, Bearden not only makes the past relevant in the present and future, he also makes the work personal to all people, and notably, to HIS people: all the figures in Bearden's *Odyssey* paintings and collages are of African descent, effectively making a connection between Odysseus's travels, the forced migration through abduction of Africans through the Middle Passage, and the First and Second Great Migration to northern cities by African Americans in the 20th Century.

Lewis's presentation of Adkins's indexical lexicon continues with an image of a handwritten note on the death of prominent abolitionist John Brown. Brown was executed in 1859 following an unsuccessful attempt to seize Harpers Ferry.[109] Brown counted Walt Whitman, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Herman Melville among his supporters, but none foresaw success in his attempt to initiate a slave revolt.[110] Instead his execution is seen as a catalyst for the beginning of the Civil War. Three works referenced in Lewis's video, *Hiving Be (Apis Mellifera)*[111] from 1998/1999, *Sanctuary* (2003),[112] and *Spears* (2010),[113] all relate to Adkins's engagement with John Brown.[114]

[108] Romare Bearden: Odysseus Series https://wallach.columbia.edu/exhibitions/romare-bearden-black-odyssey (accessed July 4, 2023)
[109] Walt Whitman - The Magnificent and the Iron https://exhibits.tufts.edu/spotlight/john-brown-tufts/about/walt-whitman (accessed June 6, 2023)
[110] "John Brown, No. 1 Enemy of Slavery" https://www.faena.com/aleph/john-brown-no1-enemy-of-slavery (accessed June 6, 2023)
[111] Admiration and Ambivalence: Frederick Douglass and John Brown http://ap.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/failure-compromise/essays/admiration-and-ambivalence-frederick-douglass-and-john-brow (accessed Jul 3, 2023) *Hiving Be* is a video triptych Adkins created on the grounds of the John Brown House in Akron, OH, which combines images associated with John Brown's Harpers Ferry raid. In this video work, Adkins used closeup footage of mouths with honey coming out — a reference to Brown's code word for the raid: *Bee.* During the planning, Brown hoped to assure Frederick Douglas that "When I strike, the bees will swarm," referring to enslaved persons who Brown hoped would join his mission after taking Harpers Ferry.
[112] *Sanctuary* is a video work from 2003 that also references John Brown and Harpers Ferry — in this case, specifically his incarceration prior to execution.
[113] Cathryn Drake on Terry Adkins, Artforum https://www.artforum.com/print/reviews/201005/terry-adkins-40308 (accessed June 2, 2022)
[114] John Brown's Day of Reckoning, Smithsonian Magazine https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/john-browns-day-of-reckoning-139165084/ (accessed June 9, 2022)

The third recurring character in Lewis's work appears next, as an image of Adkins at the north pole appears. Adkins's final Recital was in connection to his exhibition *Nutjuitok (Polar Star).* This project brought Adkins to the north pole — a project that enabled Adkins to embody another historical figure in African American history who played a significant role in many of Adkins's works: Matthew Henson was a black explorer who accompanied Robert Peary on his North Pole expeditions, finally succeeding in 1909.[115]

The fourth subject of Lewis's embodied portrayal of Adkins's oeuvre, Ludwig Van Beethoven, does not appear until nearly 30 minutes into the work, though Beethoven's significance for Adkins is nonetheless given ample space for elucidation in the second half of Lewis's work. *Synapse (from Black Beethoven)* is a single-channel video work (with audio), created between 2004-2012. Adkins's video sculpture investigates the long history of speculations surrounding Beethoven's moorish roots,[116] and the potential that he was a much darker skinned individual. In an interview printed in the catalog for the exhibition of Adkins's video works entitled *Soldier Shepherd Prophet Martyr,* conceptual artist Lorna Simpson spoke of Adkins's engagement with Beethoven, opening up the discussion of blackness as embodied by Beethoven's "moorish ancestry" to a wider acknowledgement of a need for greater discussion about "the various ways that American and European identity is constructed," pointing out that "the canon of history likes to have things boxed in a very tight vacuum with intended omissions of the influences, contributions, and struggles of its evolving population." Simpson spoke of Adkins's penchant for…

> …pushing back at boundaries of stances of power, and his investment in the complexity of identity is also the stance in his work. To portray Beethoven relative to North Africa was, in Terry's mind, part of the history and should not be excluded from the conversation about North America and Europe and their relationship to Africa.[117]

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[115] Henson in fact made it to the north pole when Peary himself did not, due to frostbite.
[116] https://www.theartblog.org/2004/11/black-beethoven/ (accessed June 6, 2022)
[117] "Lorna Simpson in conversation with Kendra Paitz," in *Terry Adkins: Soldier Shepherd Prophet Martyr: Videos from 1998-2013* (Kendra Paitz, editor). University Galleries of Illinois State University, 2017. Pp 72-73
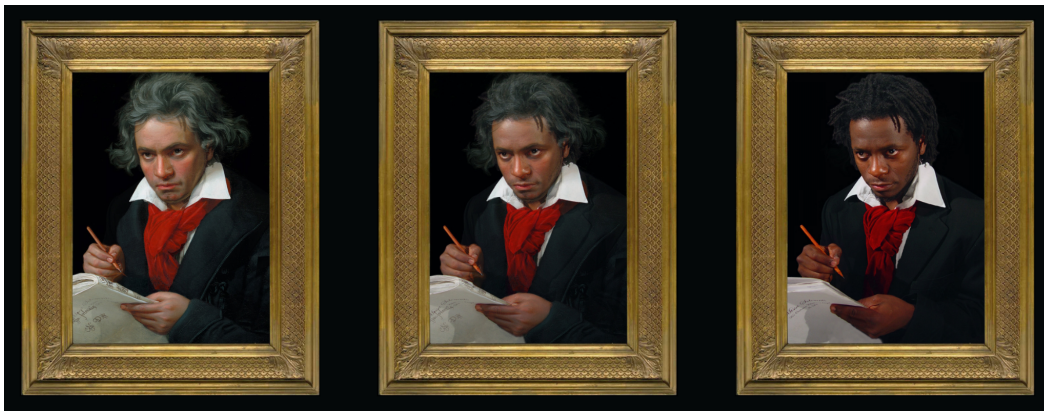
Figure 8. *Synapse (from Black Beethoven)* by Terry Adkins

The aspect of Beethoven's *essence* that Adkins most prominently featured in his numerous works pertaining to Beethoven is the composer's deafness. One can certainly interpret Adkins's engagement with Beethoven as equating Beethoven's perseverance in overcoming the affliction of deafness to create his *Ninth Symphony* with issues of racism (both institutional and societal). The perpetual affliction of racism and prejudice affects individuals and communities designated as subalterns, though particularly those with the same dark skin as that which the painting of Beethoven morphs to portray in the *Synapse* video loop.

Together with Simpson's comments about identity construction in the western world, Adkins's emphasis on Beethoven's personal affliction speaks of the type of relationship between the personal and the communal that recurs throughout this dissertation. The introduction to this dissertation discusses the capacity for personal struggle and misfortune to transform into something that can enrich and heal others through an engagement with mindfulness, compassion, and empathy. The significance of Adkins's *Synapse (from Black Beethoven)* is that the work stands as a powerful symbol for such a transmigration: Affliction can and does become "the Healing Force of the Universe," as saxophonist Albert Ayler asserted with the title of the final album of his music to be released in his lifetime.

Ensemble Pamplemousse & the Lone Wolf Recital Corps

Though many aspects of Adkins's art are featured prominently in Lewis's creation, it is also valuable to discuss the musical performance itself: while Lewis primarily functions as live video manipulator, Ensemble Pamplemousse serve as participants who fulfill the role of Adkins's cohort of frequent collaborators, the Lone Wolf Recital Corps (discussed in greater detail shortly). In many moments, percussionist Andrew Greenwald moves through the space playing a toy glockenspiel, or an extended solo section for organist Dave Broome or guest violinist Josh Modney will take center stage. At times spatialized audio bounces rapidly around the sonic environment. Elsewhere there is a pronounced free jazz feeling to the flute, cello, organ, and drums.[118]

There is a loose interaction between fully-composed material and improvised material in the score, and as instrumental textures shift, the energy and density often change dramatically, from very open spaces with plucked strings to intense cacophony. There is often a nuanced and very deliberate interplay between the video/audio, and the ensemble's performance, as with the abrupt transition at 43:00 in the video from Philadelphia's ICA. A dramatic percussion explosion shifts suddenly to a wash of mostly white video (which may in fact depict a snow storm, suggesting a connection to the aforementioned North Pole project and the story of Matthew Henson). In this very subdued moment, the white noise in the video is matched by discreet short phrases from cello, soon joined by violin, organ, drums, and flute. As the video transitions to footage of Adkins's previously discussed moving sculpture *Off Minor,* the ensemble gradually gains in density and speed (but without a change in volume).

The concept of *posthumous embodiment* is profoundly realized in Adkins's Recitals, and Lewis's tribute to Adkins fully engages that legacy: The work is collaborative with Ensemble Pamplemousse, and also collaborative with the legacy and artworks created by Adkins. The framework of the Recital is a space in

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[118] For this performance, violinist Joshua Modney joined Lewis and Ensemble Pamplemousse (who at the time primarily consisted of flutist Natacha Diels, cellist Jessie Marino, composer/guitarist Bryan Jacobs, pianist Dave Broome, and percussionist Andrew Greenwald.

which Adkins's concept of *potential disclosure* can fully inform outcome of the assembled materials (Lewis, Pamplemousse, Adkins, Bearden, Brown, Henson, Beethoven): This embodiment is a fundamental component to the function of Lewis's work, and of Adkins's work overall. Throughout all the works discussed here, the recurring theme is that both the artists and the materials themselves are creating a dialogue with others: either their contemporaries or their predecessors. In all cases, the works are intended to be in dialog with those who follow these works in the future.

For his Recitals, Adkins was typically joined by various other performers, notably Jamaaladeen Tacuma (the electric bassist who came to prominence during his tenure with Coleman's electric group Prime Time), and even his artistic associate Gaines joining him on drums.[119] Adkins called the various combinations of performers who participated in his Recitals the Lone Wolf Recital Corps: "a sound-based performance collaborative" that first performed alongside Adkins's works in Zurich in 1989. Adkins and the ensemble "staged multimedia happenings that interacted with and employed architecture, sculpture, video, music, spoken word, costumes, and recorded sound."[120] The events often included many readings of texts that made connections between the works Adkins had in that particular show, and the various dedications that each Recital had.

In conversation with curator Ian Berry, Adkins explained that he saw himself as a "composer who selects the structure, sets up the situation, but then lets it take on a life of its own to a certain degree." The Lone Wolf Recital Corps had the capacity to take on this decentralized autonomy, in that Adkins was able to relinquish a certain degree of control after assembling texts, performers, and materials, then allowing the Recital Corps to self-organize.

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[119] Interestingly, Tacuma continues to frequently joins Gaines in performances connected to Gaines's artworks. Together with Adkins and Ornette Coleman, who employed Tacuma in his band Prime Time, this association makes Tacuma a close associate of three of the artists discussed in this dissertation.
[120] Ian Berry, "Wanting More: A Dialogue with Terry Adkins," in Terry Adkins: Recitals

Native Son (Circus), Last Trumpet, **and** *Off Minor*

The final part of Lewis's work to be discussed in this dissertation is also one of three works that exist in the liminal space between sculpture and performance. It is one of Adkins's most well known works: *Off Minor* (2004), which takes its title from one of Thelonius Monk's well known compositions. The work is also connected to Adkins's *Black Beethoven* project. The work is a kinetic sculpture that responds to Beethoven's deafness as much as Monk's composition:

> The work is constructed from a motorized metal cylinder with hundreds of spike-like springs [...] As the springs strike the tuning forks, the resonant body of the structure emits a steady and percussive drone.[121]

Off Minor is an example of a work by Adkins which has a performative existence of its own, as an Automaton. This work, along with the two additional works discussed in this section, set an influential precedent for the Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array discussed in Chapter 4.

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[121] Terry Adkins - Works. Thomas Dane Gallery "...This discordant and clamorous churning noise, along with the visually menacing quality of the sculpture, are intended to recall the unsettling experience of the onset of deafness, when the familiar sounds of the external world are gradually replaced by a disruptive ringing noise." https://www.thomasdanegallery.com/artists/229-terry-adkins/works/7120/ (accessed June 2, 2022)
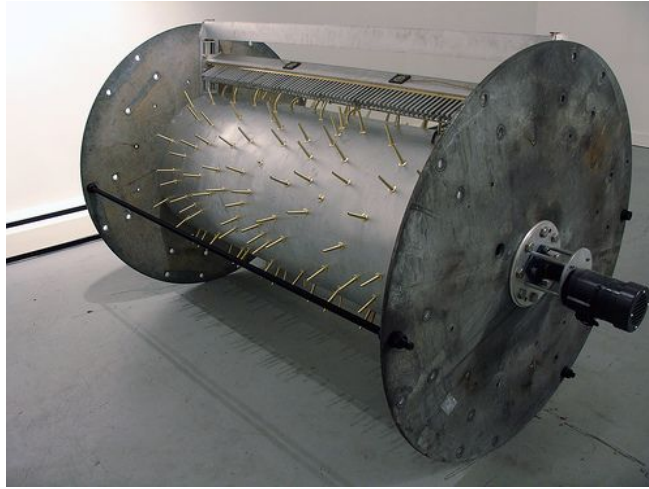
Figure 9. *Off Minor* (2004) by Terry Adkins[122]

The other two works by Adkins that imbricate the distinction between art object and musical Instrument (and hence necessitate discussion) are *Native Son (Circus)* (2006)[123] 1995 *Last Trumpet* (1995),[124] The former is an allusion to the story of saxophonist Charlie Parker during his earliest days as an aspiring musician, when veteran drummer "Papa" Jo Jones dramatically interrupted the young Parker's improvised solo by removing a cymbal from his set and tossing it on the stage, bringing Parker's performance that evening to an abrupt end. Adkins created *Last Trumpet* in 1995, and made a set of sculptures he called "Arkhaphones." These four eighteen-foot-long horns can be displayed both vertically and horizontally, in a position that enables their inclusion in Adkins's Recitals.

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[122] Terry Adkins <u>Off Minor</u> 2004 mixed media 48 x 81 x 48 inches. <u>Off Minor</u> explores Beethoven's loss of hearing (part of a larger body of work exploring Beethoven's life and identity). https://www.pinterest.com/pin/511932682629485900/ (accessed June 6, 2022)

[123] This work, began in 2006 and revised in 2015, does not appear in Lewis's *Recital*. However, the work did appear in the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art's *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now*. This substantial exhibition from 2015 focused on two organizations based in the south side of Chicago in the 1960s: The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, and AfriCOBRA: the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (formerly Coalition of Black Revolutionary Artists), while examining the legacy of contemporary artistic expression over the subsequent 50 years that drew inspiration from those innovations that originated in Chicago's south side in the 1960s. The work offered a subtle yet imposing presence at the MCA's exhibition, as the large assemblage of cymbals filled the center space of one large room, and would intermittently rattle and shake as guests walked by, with the cymbals being somewhat subtle at times, or at other times quite cacophonous. https://collection.artbridgesfoundation.org/objects/8147/native-son-circus This story is famous among jazz musicians, and was also dramatized in Clint Eastwood's 1988 biopic Bird, starring Forest Whitaker as Charlie "Bird" Parker.

[124] *Last Trumpet* is ostensibly both a sculpture and a performance piece–one that would actually be used as an instrument in some of Adkins's Recitals. This work, however, is not an Automaton, but is instead a sculpture that also is to be played by musicians. https://www.moma.org/collection/works/219383 (accessed June 2, 2022)

Figure 10. *Native Son (Circus),* 2006-2015 by Terry Adkins

Figure 11. The four Akrhaphones featured in *Last Trumpet,* 1996 by Terry Adkins

The active, participatory nature of how casual observers and/or members of the Lone Wolf Recital Corps interact with these three sculptures directly expand Adkins's own position as freely transgressing the artwork/performance/experiencer threshold. Adkins created works that are fixed but also prescribe very specific modes of interaction for the experiencer. In setting up improvisational interactions between fixed media and the (no-longer) casual experiencer, Adkins has created works that actively facilitate lexical entrainment.

David Hammons

"Operations of chance stand at the heart of Hammons's work,"[125] wrote Kay Whitney for an article in *Sculpture Magazine* about Hauser & Wirth's 2019 exhibition of Hammons's work, published in early 2020. The press release for the exhibition (seen below) was itself a critique on art establishment's practices, providing no background information on the exhibition other than that its dedicatee was the revolutionary saxophonist, composer, and *Harmonic Thinker* Ornette Coleman:

Press Release

This exhibition is dedicated to Ornette Coleman

Harmolodic Thinker

David Hammons

Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles
18 May – 11 August 2019

901 East 3rd Street Los Angeles CA 90013 Tel (213) 943-1620 www.hauserwirth.com
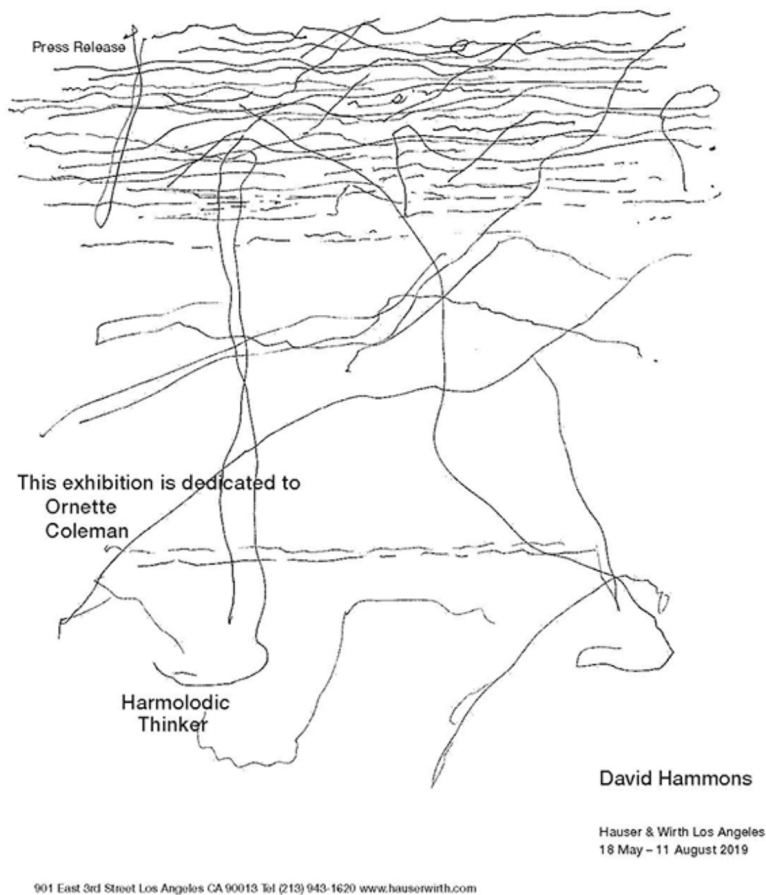
Figure 12. Press release for Hammons's exhibition[126]

[125] https://sculpturemagazine.art/david-hammons-2/ (accessed June 9, 2022)
[126] https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/24162-david-hammons-los-angeles/ (accessed June 9, 2022)

Like Gaines's *Manifestos* series and Adkins's *Recitals* series, Hammons's exhibition transgresses boundaries between material and conceptual embodiments of his dedicatee, Ornette Coleman. Titles of Coleman's albums, such as "The Shape of Jazz to Come," "The Change of the Century" and "Free Jazz"[127] prefigure Hammons's antagonistic regard for the art establishment. The exhibition's engagement with Coleman's legacy was at times quite literal, with inclusions of outfits he wore in performances and recordings of his music in one particular room. If one aspect of Hammons's work embodies Coleman's legacy to a greater degree than other details in the exhibition, it is in the directness with which Hammons challenges the establishment.

In his evocatively titled article "Is David Hammons Trolling His Gallery?," reviewer Jonathan Griffin's more overtly musical reference about the work came when describing the "loudest and most clashingly discordant notes" of the exhibition: a reproduction of a tent city, just blocks from Skid Row. In an article about the exhibition entitled "David Hammons Taunts The Art World in Los Angeles,"[128] Rachel Wetzler asserted,

> the installation posed a problem for would-be visitors: to walk right by the piece en route to the exhibition would reproduce a kind of everyday callousness; to solemnly admire it would be perverse and self-congratulatory; and to feel offended by its hypocrisy or aestheticization of a social crisis would be equally so: imagine being preoccupied by the dubious politics of an artwork about homelessness when there's a real tent city down the street—care about that instead.[129]

Proactively ambiguous gestures towards the general public notwithstanding, the attention the exhibition received was nonetheless still focused squarely on celebrating the exhibition itself, however sharp the Hammons's criticisms may have been. Griffin was also direct about the exhibition's engagement with the creative aspect of Coleman's legacy, as he pointed out that Hammons's work "clears a space for a kind of expansive free association between objects, images and context that is akin to Coleman's democratizing

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[127] https://www.norecessmagazine.com/single-post/2017/08/29/the-ornette-coleman-concert-that-never-happened-or-did-it (accessed June 9, 2022) This title may seem unproblematic in the present era, but at the time it was not simply a stylistic descriptor. Coleman's band notoriously went all the way to Cincinnati to perform the music from the album "Free Jazz", only to have the concert canceled because the concert goers refused to pay for admission. In 1961 this was a tremendously difficult predicament for artists and promoters, who all suffered a major loss.
[128] https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/david-hammons-hauser-wirth-62704/ (accessed June 12, 2022)
[129] Ibid.

approach to music."[130] Whitney suggests that the exhibition "parallels the aesthetics of Arte Povera and conceptualism but adds a personal level of associative abstraction that mirrors the mechanics and eclecticism of jazz music and the dream world."[131]

Hammons has created work that crosses the threshold between performance and artwork, or between conceptualism and abstraction (as observed by Whitney) at least as far back as his project selling meticulously crafted snowballs during a snowstorm in New York in 1983.[132] His close association with the LA creative art community in collaboration with such notable figures of the 1970s as UCI faculty emeritus Ulysses Jenkins.[133] These boundaries between performance and fixed media are enforced by default in both the art world and the music communities, though part of the aim of this dissertation is to emphasize how these boundaries have a long tradition of being transgressed by conceptual artists, performance artists, and musicians whose works are decidedly theatrical, conceptual, or overtly programmatic in their presentation or structure.

Gaines, Hammons, Jenkins, Adkins, and their predecessor Patterson all engage the problematic relationship of African American identity as a commodity that is all too frequently capitalized upon by western artistic, creative, and discursive establishments. African American artists, theorists, and musicians whose work crosses into the realm of objective logic is almost universally considered to have imported such ideas from a domain that's found outside of the realm of subjectivity: an area more readily understood to be applicable for Afrological structures. The work of Gaines is especially critical of this trend in criticism in particular.

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[130] https://www.frieze.com/article/david-hammons-trolling-his-gallery (accessed June 9, 2022)
[131] https://sculpturemagazine.art/david-hammons-2/ (accessed June 9, 2022)
[132] https://publicdelivery.org/david-hammons-snowball/ (accessed June 9, 2022)
[133] Jenkins's Hammer Museum exhibition (Feb 6 – May 15, 2022) "Without Your Interpretation" featured his colleague David Hammons in numerous video works. https://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2022/ulysses-jenkins-without-your-interpretation (accessed June 9, 2022)

Process, Material Embodiment, and the Transpersonal

The move towards materialism, conceptualism, politically-informed artistic expression, and systems aesthetics discussed in this chapter reveals how expression and process connects the transgressive activities of not only Gaines, Patterson, Adkins, and Hammons, but also Coleman, Mitchell, and Roberts, as discussed in the preceding and following chapters. Process is the true site of both conceptual and material embodiment, and subjectivity and expressivity are shown to be contributors, rather than central agents, in the embodiment of the interpersonal. The ambiguity that would seem to problematize Gaines's suspect regard for expressive intent such as one associates with Free Jazz actually foregrounds the transpersonal nature of artistic process and recognizes creative expressions and subjectivities of the performers as articulations of objective systems.

Lexical entrainment, in this context, describes these artists' engagement with forms and systems. This can be seen with Adkins's treatment of history as a site for reconfiguring temporality and materiality, Gaines's sequential numbering and deconstructions of form, Hammons's critique of museums as sites for mobilizing empathy, and Patterson's outlining of methods and processes. In the following chapter, this same capacity for deconstructing and re-combining materials is considered through the a discussion of the improvisational process by which composer/performers Matana Roberts and Roscoe Mitchell manipulate musical materials such as tempo, dynamics, articulations, timbral complexity, musical dialog, narrative, and orchestration as sites for lexical entrainment.

Chapter III

Entrainment in Motion, Sound, & Situation: Improvised Music As Conceptual Art

"Sound for me is just as physical, tactile and experiential as any other material"
— Kevin Beasley[134]

"Black futures perpetually reroute us to the here and now."
— Malik Gaines[135]

Chapter 3 looks at two innovative African American improvising musicians whose works engage notions of conceptualism and materiality that are often more easily recognized in the art world. This includes:

● Saxophonist, composer, and visual artist Matana Roberts, whose concept of *panoramic sound quilting* informs their elaborate 12-volume project *Coin Coin*. Analysis of Coin Coin Chapters 1 and 3 brings additional discussion of bell hooks, *the Quilts of Gee's Bend, mise en abyme*, Layered Narrative, and Recursion.

● Roscoe Mitchell, the saxophonist and composer, who founded the Art Ensemble of Chicago over 50 years ago. For his *Conversations for Orchestra* project Mitchell adapted transcriptions of improvisations with his trio into settings for orchestras and chamber ensembles of various sizes. This iterative process of transcribing, performing, and re-transcribing is an extension of a practice that began with Mitchell's multiple complementary arrangements of his solo saxophone work *Nonaah*. This dissertation also discusses Mitchell's work *Angel City,* and draws comparisons to Mitchell's *Cards* series and the experimental literary practice of the Cut-Up. Finally, concepts of Entrainment, verisimilitude, and The Ship of Theseus are addressed through their engagement with the materiality of sound.

Matana Roberts: *Coin Coin I & III*

Composer, Saxophonist, and intermedia artist Roberts began their long-form work *Coin Coin* in 2005. The fifth chapter is due to appear in late 2023. Central to this project is a concept Roberts developed called *Panoramic Sound Quilting*. This concept invites a consideration of the relationship between

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[134] https://caseykaplangallery.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/PRESS-KIT.e7.pdf (accessed May 1, 2023)
[135] Malik Gaines (2017). In *Black performance on the outskirts of the left: A history of the impossible*. essay, New York University Press.

Roberts's work as a visual artist as well as their work as a composer and performer, though this dissertation will focus on recordings of two sections of *Coin Coin*.

The first, second, fourth, and fifth iterations of *Coin Coin* have involved different ensembles, while the third iteration is a solo project that finds Roberts performing on saxophone, voice, electronics, and more. With 12 chapters planned, the project is now almost half completed.[136] Roberts has indicated that this project is primarily a storytelling vehicle, which places the extremely diverse array of sounds, musical genres, and approaches to narrative (both sonic and text-based) in a multifaceted yet focused and deliberate position from which Roberts navigates the boundaries of continuity, multi-voicing, and allusive associations.

It is important to describe the method that Roberts uses to establish their multifaceted textures: Roberts developed the term "Panoramic Sound Quilting" around 2005 when the Coin Coin project was in its initial stages of inception.

> I needed words to root myself, when I wanted a sense of centering. And one of the things that I really enjoyed about playing live improvised music were [sic] the different sound panoramas that I could create. Dealing with history, there was so much data to manage that I needed a way to remind myself that what I'm doing is turning data into sound […] I would love to learn how to quilt using fabric but, then, I wanted to figure out a way to do that using sound and images of graphic notation as my fabric.[137]

Roberts's positioning themself at the center of the panoramic sound fabric establishes a clear connection between Roberts's meticulous orchestrations of sonic materials in the Coin Coin project, and the grounding of that ethos in the busking tradition. In the 2000s Roberts maintained a regular practice of performing solo in parks, on sidewalks, and in subway stations. In an interview from 2010 for the *Ten Thousand Hours Podcast,* Roberts discussed the importance of architecture in shaping their musical vocabulary.[138] Roberts explained that busking on the sidewalk in midtown Manhattan or in the financial

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[136] Roberts explains that the third part is one of two sections that will be a solo creation, whereas the others will all feature ensembles. https://bombmagazine.org/articles/matana-roberts/ (accessed June 18 2023)
[137] Ibid.
[138] The 10,000 Podcast began in 2010 and concluded in 2011, combining interviews and musical duets between host James Ilgenfritz and various guests, including Matana Roberts, Pauline Oliveros, Robert Dick, Nate Wooley, and approximately a dozen more. This conversation was published along with some duo improvisations in the Ten Thousand Hours Podcast, and those

district offered an opportunity to interact with the architecture itself - a perspective that shows how a musician can relate the world of sound to that of the visual. A comparison like this highlights the value of regarding architecture in aesthetic terms rather than purely functional ones.

Roberts's assertion about these structural implications also reveals the value they place on systems: "As rebellious as I am by nature, I like having a system. Each physical score in the *Coin Coin* series is following this particular system I've set up."[139] This statement shows that all iterations of the *Coin Coin* project are distinct realizations of a system that was outlined at the beginning of this project in the mid 2000s, and is revised through the creation of each new score and each new chapter in the series.

Roberts's capacity to define their own position as orchestrator of the various ensembles expands their position as the primary soloist and storyteller in each chapter. By placing themself as storyteller in these intersecting narratives, Roberts is establishing a practice that responds to the voicelessness that comes from an entire global community being ignored. Anthony Reed, in his book *Soundworks: Race, Sound, and Poetry in Production*, asserts that Roberts's Coin Coin project…

> …seems to be a literary project of recovery concerned with the singularity of a life held between the competing, abstracting logics of synecdoche and metonymy, and an interrogation of the limits of a freedom forged in and defined by slavery.[140]

Reed emphasizes Roberts's assertive embrace of narrative agency, calling the project a "meditation on the texts and other media that make slavery knowable in the first place, with the understanding that such knowledge, necessarily incomplete, partially occludes its object."[141] The narrative of historical slavery and contemporary oppression interpenetrating in a continual feedback of reckoning between past, present,

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recordings are, for the moment, lost to the aether of outdated hardware and software. The computers that house these recordings are not currently functioning, and there is no way to access the website where these podcasts (which also included conversations and improvisations with Pauline Oliveros, Nate Wooley, and others) were posted. The retrieval of these files will be an essential component to this dissertation project. Roberts's comment has remained in the foreground of my psyche for nearly 15 years now, which shows that there is a valuable resonance in their words.

[139] The use of systems is a critical object of inquiry elsewhere in this document, particularly in regards to the work of Gaines discussed in Chapter 2, and the original work discussed in Chapter 4. The use of systems to organize both creative works and methods of control, includes a particular look at the works of Patterson, Gaines, and briefly, William S. Burroughs.

[140] Reed. *Soundworks: Race, Sound, and Poetry in Production.*

[141] Ibid.

and future is a central theme that resonates through every component of the *Coin Coin* project. Reed also

suggests that "tradition itself"…

> …names the ways communities apprehend—chart and fight over—the fugitive voice of
> past historical practices, impulses, values, languages, and so on, making the present
> appear to have a continuous, evolutionary relationship with the past.[142]

Roberts's work is an ongoing meditation on the ways communities grapple with this "fugitive voice of

past historical practices." By integrating diverse compositional and performative strategies, Roberts is

effectively embodying their own projected concept of "panoramic sound quilting." The following two

sections discuss *Coin Coin Chapters I* and *III*, respectively. Rather than including the section-by-section

analysis of these two chapters in this dissertation, these two sections highlight indexical and conceptual

frameworks that Roberts uses to structure the interplay between narrative, adornment, and ethos in their

storytelling.

Zora Neale Hurston's discussions of African American storytelling traditions are pertinent to Roberts'

Coin Coin project. In her two essays "The Characteristics of Negro Expression" and "Shouting," Hurston

explicates numerous methods by which African American storytelling traditions connect subjectivity and

objectivity. In describing "angularity" and "The Will To Adorn" (in the former) and the significance of

"Shouting" (in the latter), Hurston highlights the extent to which storytellers' material realities are

embedded in the narratives being told. Hurston explained that after *drama*, "The will to adorn is the

second most notable characteristic in Negro expression. Perhaps his idea of ornament does not attempt to

meet conventional standards, but it satisfies the soul of its creator."[143] This concept of *adornment*

describes an approach to systematization that is both intuitive and embodied.

As a key feature of participatory devotional practices, Huston describes *shouting* as "a sign of special

favor from the spirit that it chooses to drive out the individual consciousness temporarily and use the body

for its expression."[144] The choice to focus this dissertation's research on *Coin Coin Chapters I* and *III*

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Hurston, Zora Neale, and Cheryl A. Wall. *Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings*. Library of America, 1995.
[144] Ibid.

emphasizes the relationship between adornment and shouting as dual expressions of the relationships between the individual, the internal, and the communal that are discussed throughout this dissertation. These relationships are expressed by Roberts's orchestrational methods of layering voices and instrumental vocabularies in both the ensemble work of Chapter I and the multi-tracked work in Chapter III. The "intuitive and embodied" approach to systematization described in the preceding paragraph emphasizes an intensely personal articulation of Roberts's approach to systems and conceptualism.

Coin Coin I: Gens de Couleur Libres

The first chapter of Coin Coin features an ensemble that includes many Montreal-based instrumentalists.[145] This record particularly presents Roberts as bandleader, with their storytelling, saxophone improvisations, and ensemble direction continually shaping the direction of the work. Upon its initial release, Roberts described the project as:

> …a compositional sound language that I have been developing since 2006. My initial interest in creating this work came from my childhood fascination with ghosts, spirits, spooks, and the faint traces of what they leave behind. I have a deep interest in old, antique objects of human existence, mostly because of the variety of stories that can be created, factual or not, from the possibility of their being.[146]

The ensemble enriches Roberts's narrative as a sonic embodiment of the type of ephemeral detritus implied by Roberts's invoking of a "childhood fascination with ghosts, spirits, spooks" and so forth. The music is a form of conjuring, with an assembly of trusted constituents.[147]

Solo saxophone opens the first track "Rise." As others enter, the work builds into a piano feature, then full ensemble. It eventually recedes to piano and strings at the end of the 7-minutes. After this prelude, Roberts quickly transitions to an intense vocal improvisation, followed by saxophone. More so than with

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[145] Roberts spent many years remaining quite itinerant, while maintaining Montreal as a "home base," so the musicians who appear in this chapter also document a particular phase in Roberts's life and career.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Along with Roberts performing on reeds and with voice, the ensemble includes: Gitanjali Jain (voice), Lisa Gamble (musical saw), Fred Bazil (tenor sax), Jason Sharp (baritone sax), Hraïr Hratchian (doudouk), Ellwood Epps (trumpet), Brian Lipson (bass trumpet), Marie Davidson (violin), Josh Zubot (violin), Nicolas Caloia (cello), Xarah Dion (prepared guitar), David Ryshpan (piano/organ), Thierry Amar (bass), Jonah Fortune (bass), and David Payant (drums/vibes).

the opening, the overture-like "Pov Piti" outlines the expansive array of textures that adorns Roberts's role as storyteller/narrator:

1. Roberts's use of their own voice as a complex multi-voiced kaleidoscope of inter-connected subjectivities.
2. Ensemble drones.
3. Meditative repetition-based vamps (often with vocal chants from the ensemble).
4. Non-idiomatic free improvisation that recalls the textures of the Art Ensemble of Chicago.
5. Lush ensemble heterophonic melodies for bowed strings.

In all four chapters of *Coin Coin* that have been released thus far, slight variations on these central themes are present in a myriad of combinations. March rhythms, intense moments for instrumental soloist and rhythm section, and frequent fluctuations between angularity and mellifluous expressiveness immediately recall precedents set by the work of Alice and John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Muhal Richard Abrams, and Anthony Braxton. What sets Roberts's work apart from that tradition is a very overt interconnectedness with blues and New Orleans traditions and her deft use of the vocal lament. Traditions of vocal lament span every culture, and connecting experimental practices with folk forms has always been a familiar component for the AACM, and also Albert Ayler in particular. Roberts's work foregrounds this tradition with shocking clarity, and references precedents set by Amina Claudine Myers, Jeanne Lee, Julius Eastman, Linda Sharrock, Abbey Lincoln, Pharoah Sanders, and June Tyson.

The first chapter concludes with a provocative query: "How Much Would You Cost?" It is a lullabye, and Roberts recites "I wrote these words for my mother" before singing the lyrics "I know how precious our lives can be" and later "reach for the sky / keep up your fight." To end *Coin Coin Chapter One* in such a personal way underscores the relationship between the personal, internal, and communal that Hurston's concepts of "The Will to Adorn" and "Shouting" that were discussed earlier.

Coin Coin III: River Run Thee

The third chapter of Coin Coin appeared in 2015, and is a solo creation that Roberts constructed using multi-tracked voice, saxophone, percussion, and electronics. The first piece, "All Is Written" is just over

ten minutes long and the longest track. The words "Your sadness grows as years roll by / You'll grow remorse may even die" set the tone in an almost prophetic vision of the journey that follows.

The third and fourth pieces, "Clothed to the Land, Worn by the Sea" and "Dreamer of Dreams," respectively, are closely connected, as "Clothed…" anticipates "Dreamer…" and vice versa. On "Clothed" Roberts intones softly over a continuous drone of a perfect fifth, built on two multi-tracked saxophone long-tones. As the melodic contours of Roberts's voice fade in and out, foley sounds enter, implying walking, rustling, others in the distance, and notably, train tracks. This texture remains in "Dreamer…" but the transition is announced by a new, more active layer of saxophone with a distinct resonance of room tone that places it in a different space than the droning perfect fifth (which remains). Intermittent melismatic sweeping sine tones and other comparatively more erratic electronic sounds also distinguish the fourth section from the third. While the sustained saxophone harmony remains in background, the third layer of saxophone gradually becomes increasingly energetic and even begins to border on the ecstatic. The increasingly indecipherable speaking floats toward the foreground and then away again.

By the arrival of "Nema, Nema, Nema," the listener's attention is totally on the saxophone, which begins repeating So-Do perfect 4th interval and a low wobbling synth ostinato. The drone shifts toward a new ambient clutter for the sonic palette, offering this sixth section of Chapter Three an atmosphere that contrasts strongly with what has come before. This again fades to a more familiar saxophone-based drone that nonetheless provides a more dissonant shade to the words in this section (seen below in footnotes).[148]

This text, situated in the middle of this third chapter of Coin Coin, offers a more ruminative, somewhat ambivalent mid-journey reflection on the story being told. The penultimate track "With Me Seek" is just under one minute long and provides a disorienting narrative pre-climax. There is a low drone the entire

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[148] "The good one never came along / one destined for the other home / I could not stand it all alone / perched atop my steeple / I wandered along with them one day / and found it jolly jolly play / so now we three can truly say / I sailed, alas, my people / The taught me tricks / Though we never called it quits / that was the bitter end / to deal with that and be your cross / you first must learn the double cross / not only on the souls of lost / but onward my friend / but one she, my friend, be carried til the end / to where the loss can now be divide / where the holy cannot hide / because you cannot have them / that was bitter end / between thee my friend / that one's bitter end."

time, though at the very end a filter sweep modulates the delay, signaling the beginning of the final section: the narration in "J.P." stands resolutely on the outside of the narrative of Chapter 3, commenting on what has been discussed, and specifically speaking of contrasting notions of the "the legal slave trade."

Coin Coin Chapter 3 concludes with a recording from a speech by Malcolm X, given in Detroit on February 14, 1965 — the day after his house was bombed: "Distinguished guests, brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, friends and enemies, I must ask you to excuse my appearance. I don't normally come out in front of people without a shirt and tie. I am not a racist." And then, finally, the chapter ends with a fade out on the most consonant saxophone drone of the entire piece.[149]

Collage and Abstraction in *Coin Coin* and *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*

Roberts's *Coin Coin* project serves as a meditational practice, speaking of an inherited past that is defined by slavery and present in the now, particularly for those for whom that inherited history is a material reality. Roberts's "panoramic sound quilting" fixes that meditational practice in a form that can then be transferred to others who participate as engaged listeners. There is a long history of abstraction as a devotional practice in the tradition of quilting. An understanding of that history elucidates ideas of materiality, collage, multivoicing, and embodiment in Roberts's compositional methods. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Blackness as a material presence in historically white spaces presents challenges in both large-scale compositional projects like *Coin Coin* and in museums.

Scholar, author, and curator Bridget R. Cooks discusses the paradoxes inherent with exhibiting Black folk arts in the museum. In her book *Exhibiting Blackness: African American and the American Art Museum*, Cooks presented a detailed account of the "anthropological interpretation of African American creativity through the popular traveling show *The Quilts of Gee's Bend (2002)."[150]* Cooks addresses the complexity of an exhibition that attempts to transgress the interstices between the anthropological and the artistic,

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[149] http://www.sojust.net/speeches/malcolm_x_bombing.html (accessed June 23, 2023)
[150] Cooks. *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum* University of Massachusetts Press, 2011.

noting the shortcomings of how "the art museum's appropriation of the traditional practice of quilt making engages in typical modernist discussions of transgressing the hierarchical boundaries of high and low art." Cooks locates the dilemma in exhibitions' regard for the artists themselves. Cooks argues that "although the Gee's Bend quilts are treated as artwork, the women who created them are not treated as artists." The fact that those who created the works are not conceptually invited into the gallery space along with the works they created "invokes the lens of anthropological discovery used to introduce the sculpture of William Edmondson in 1937."[151] Sixty-five years later, little had changed in 2002.

The narrowmindedness of some art critics notwithstanding, the exhibition itself was organized so as to enhance the viewer's capacity to recognize both the *artfulness of the quilts*, and the *artistry of the quilters*. Placards made this clear: "In their hands, drab-colored blue, brown, and gray trousers, occasionally inflected with a bit of white or color, became compelling works of art that speak volumes about Gee's Bend lives." The placards did also assert that the quilters should be recognized as artists: "One of the qualities that defines an artist is the creativity to see beyond the mundane, the capacity to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, an ability Gee's Bend quilters clearly share." Other placards featured "primary texts of the women's own words [which] privileged their perspectives within the exhibition." Roberts's engagement with abstraction and collage also imbricates the space between folk art (where practical/functional art like quilting can end up unless considered from a place of mindfulness) and the decidedly high-art (though not quite institutionally valued) space of avant-garde jazz, consequently heralding the subjectivities and objective realities at work in both forms.[152]

Roberts's own chosen words are similarly privileged in *Coin Coin*. Their method of continually reinscribing their position as storyteller throughout the evolving, multivoiced, and collaged narrative of *Coin Coin* serves to disallow any deliberate or accidental decoupling of Roberts's subjectivity and those found within the work itself. In this respect Roberts preemptively resolves the dilemma of the *Gee's Bend*

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[151] Edmondson's work came to prominence in the 1930s. Following a religious conversion, he began creating devotional and secular images chiseled from limestone and other rocks.
[152] Ibid.

exhibition: by weaving together narratives directly inherited from family members, and through the artfulness and musicianship with which Roberts presents these narratives, these displays of "panoramic sound quilting" are both unmistakably virtuosic and authoritative (especially in their most vulnerable moments).

Roberts's engagement with narrative in *Coin Coin* is anything but ambiguous, despite their kaleidoscopic, ecstatic, and at times nonlinear interweaving of subjectivities and abstractions. It is through these intricately woven sonic textures that Coin Coin invites comparison to the Gee's Bend quilts, which Cooks notes have long been "a part of American homes for warmth, individual expression, and storytelling in the seemingly endless improvisation of design, pattern, fabric, stitching, and embroidery."[153]

As a way of underscoring the *Panoramic Sound Quilting* concept, Roberts's scores for the *Coin Coin* project are themselves an essential part of the project. The seamless integration of graphic notations, traditional staff notation, and evocative painting and drawing blur the line between overtly prescriptive notation and obliquely descriptive notation.[154] *Coin Coin* was from its outset conceived in a way that transgresses established boundaries, as Roberts maintains a visual art practice in addition to their work as a composer and instrumentalist. The *Coin Coin* project exists at the point of convergence for these disciplines. As with all other work discussed in this dissertation, the interaction between conceptualism and materiality is central to this transgressive capacity. In an interview for this dissertation, Roberts explained that they began *Coin Coin* "so I could challenge myself as a composer…" They write,

> …but also I'm very interested in musical notation and the ways in which conceptualizing sound can sit as ephemera. It's one of my favorite things. I collect old ephemera, and I like thinking about the essence of things that are left behind. And I like that I create work that can do that, and can activate and re-activate space in a different kind of way. Visual work sounds a space too, in the same way that live performance sounds a space. So I like thinking about those contradictions.[155]

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[153] Cooks, *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2011.
[154] Though many examples of Roberts's visual art can be found through online search engines and their own website, they have requested that representations of those works do not appear in academic texts such as this. It is highly recommended that interested parties seek out opportunities to experience these works in person.
[155] Matana Roberts, email exchange with the author.

Roberts insists, however, that a deeper reading of *Coin Coin* is necessary; that a "surface reading" that focuses on family history and ancestral elements is only a starting point. "It's a sort of immersive experience one can have when all these aspects are woven together." Roberts is quick to point out that though there is a strong visual and tactile aspect of *Coin Coin*, the work largely exists "outside the gallery space." One may find corollaries between themes and materials in both Roberts's works for the gallery space and in *Coin Coin*, but the temporalities of the two practices remain independent: "I use the gallery space to activate other score work [...] The *Coin Coin* work is relegated to my interest in history and the past and how it moves cyclically with history that's happening now."[156]

Coin Coin, bell hooks, and *mise en abyme:* Layered Narrative and Recursion

In the 21st century, opera continues to embody a conceptual space that is designated for the inter-relations of artistic disciplines, perpetually directed towards an ineffable non-reality expressed through narrative form. Roberts's *Coin Coin* also succeeds in this respect, where cyclical narrative is an iterative meditation on an inherited history of loss, and the quotidian struggle to embody selfhood brings a sense of community within contemporary life. There is simultaneously a mission to respond to the challenges of the day and also to consider history's potential to offer a compass with which to navigate the challenges that lie ahead.

While Roberts does not explicitly draw a connection between *Coin Coin* and opera, the capacity for Roberts's storytelling to communicate simultaneously to the *subject* (those who inherit the legacy of the narrative of slavery) and the *indirect addressee* (those for whom this history is not their own history) is operatic in that the vastness of the twelve-part iterative structure has its own internal logic. The form tells its own story–a narrative *mise en abyme*, wherein the stories are told to the listener as they are being passed down within the story. This quality is mirrored in others' works that present the narrative of slavery to an audience comprised primarily of indirect addressees.

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[156] Ibid.

For example, Mac Wellman's libretto for the opera *The Difficulty of Crossing A Field* (presented by Long Beach Opera in 2014)[157] was structured in such a way as to present the trauma of enslavement and the implication of those who aided and abetted that history, by way of a chorus (representing not only the enslaved people, but also women and children who were not enslaved, but still lived in a society that deprived them of selfhood). The chorus acted in its traditional role and always kept a critical eye on the actions of the primary, white characters. Amy Bauer writes, "The opera's libretto, music, and the Long Beach Opera's particular staging all work to deny the redemptive power of narrative even as they offer repetition, remembrance, and re-reading as an ethical act." Like Roberts's cycle of works, *The Difficulty of Crossing A Field* offers "a marriage of hallucinatory images, cyclic repetition, and stagecraft [which bears] witness to a lack that—in the present—drives the creation of new musical theater in a culture confused about opera's relevance in the twenty-first century."[158]

Both *Difficulty* and *Coin Coin* deal with interwoven narratives and an almost compulsive repetition in the continuous retelling of narrative, suggesting a sonic corollary to early 20th Century Cubism (itself a not unproblematic engagement with forms of art and culture whose origins can be found in Africa and its diaspora. Embedded in the recursion of the *mise en abyme* is a form of internal logic that is self-perpetuating and inherently resistant to resolution through external systems.

Similar ideas are summarized by activist and theorist bell hooks, who identified both a conceptual chasm between art and its subject and a perennial dilemma of gendered voicelessness in her book *Art On My Mind.* hooks draws a comparison between the "silencing […] the censoring, the anti-intellectualism in predominantly black settings" and the "silencing that takes place in institutions wherein black women and women of color are told that we cannot be fully heard or listened to because our work is not theoretical enough."[159] hooks further articulates the problematic relationship between creative expression and critical

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[157] https://www.longbeachopera.org/gallery/repertoire/2014_The_Difficulty_of_Crossing_a_Field/179 (accessed June 6, 2022) Composer David Lang translated Wellman's libretto to music.
[158] Bauer, AM. (2018). "The Mysteries of Selma, Alabama": Re-telling and Revelation in David Lang's The Difficulty of Crossing a Field. In *'Great American Opera': Trends in American musical theatre. UC Irvine*. Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1m08m06t
[159] hooks, b. (1995). Art on My Mind: Visual Politics. The New Press.

theory in *Teaching To Transgress,* where she directs some criticism at "elite academics who construct theories of 'blackness' in ways that make it a critical terrain which only the chosen few can enter."[160] In drawing on such evocative source material that is at once painstakingly researched and fully embodied, Roberts's *Coin Coin* seamlessly combines ethos, pathos, and formal rigor to communicate with both precision and artfulness.

bell hooks offers a perspective on formal rigor and artistic practice that also articulates the previously discussed "quotidian struggle to embody selfhood" at work in Roberts's *Coin Coin* when discussing "collective liberation" in *Art On My Mind*:

> When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to the process of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice […] Theory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end.[161]

hooks also emphasizes the relationship between gender and voicelessness, and emphasizes an elusive connection between activism and theory, partially grounding this in a perceived contradiction at the community level:

> Within feminist circles, many women have responded to hegemonic feminist theory that does not speak clearly to us by trashing theory, and, as a consequence, further promoting the false dichotomy between theory and practice. Hence they collude with those whom they would oppose.[162]

Roberts communicates directly both to the subject and to the critical terrain that stands at a distance, and both *Coin Coin* and *Difficulty…* offer intricate combinations of form, meaning, and theoretical principles. Thus the experiencer inevitably is immersed in the seamless integration of message and medium. In this respect, Roberts's artistic discipline has firmly established the conceptual bridge for the "gap" between "theory and practice" described by bell hooks, creating work that fundamentally communicates to a specific addressee (the community represented in the narrative Roberts presents) and the universal

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[160] hooks, Bell. *Teaching to Transgress*. Routledge, 2014. p68
[161] hooks, b. (1995). Art on My Mind: Visual Politics. The New Press.
[162] Ibid.

audience who is presented with an ethos to which one can relate even when fundamentally remaining apart from the subjecthood of those whose individual and collective stories are being told.

Returning to opera, a comparison, particularly in regards to *Coin Coin Chapter 3,* can be made to composer Elliott Sharp's words about his work *Filiseti Mekidesi*, a work that similarly layers narratives to invoke the universality of humanity's continual capacity to evolve (and remain the same) as it migrates over generations*:*

> The words 'Filiseti' and 'Mekidesi' mean shelter and migration in the Amharic language spoken in Ethiopia and Eritrea where modern humanity is supposed to have originated. [...] We are all immigrants. Filiseti Mekidesi does not tell a linear narrative but is, instead, a meditation on the search for safety and neutrality, a place free from danger.[163]

Though Sharp's text is taken from his words about his work, and Roberts's are uttered within the context the story being told, Sharp and Roberts both use language that invites a vicarious form of self-reflection in moments when opposing forces are briefly in enough equilibrium for an awareness of place in time and space that borders on the uncanny. The search for self-awareness and self-care described in the works, and the listener's own self-awareness, begin to interpenetrate.

This uncanny awareness of one's own position in the narrative occasions a pause to consider how entrainment can also refer to one's ability to locate their own subjectivity in relation to those of others, whether in historical time or in artistically fabricated environments. It is reminiscent of the words of author and theorist LaMarr Jurelle Bruce in discussing W.E.B. DuBois's concept of double-consciousness: "DuBois was talking in 1903 about double-consciousness as a condition of estrangement when one feels estranged from oneself. One might need to direct compassion toward oneself in the project of self making and self-repair."[164] It speaks to the capacity for self-awareness to shepherd the experiencer towards a conceptual space that can be ideal for fostering the betterment of oneself.

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[163] Filiseti Mekidesi was composed for the Köln-based Musikfabrik. This live recording is from the premiere at Ruhrtriennale, Bochum. The recording was released as a 2-CD volume on Infrequent Seams in December 2020. https://elliottsharpoperas.bandcamp.com/album/filiseti-mekidesi
[164] From Black Nonsense (Or, Black Radical Utterances in the Idiom of Madness).

Bauer, Bruce, and Sharp all articulate principles that drive the recursive, iterative reflection on inherited histories that characterize *Coin Coin,* further expressing that for all these works, there is an element of self-care that is essential on both personal and artistic levels. On the personal level, there is simply the notion of a survival strategy at work. On the artistic level, there is an extent to which each artist must attend to innumerable forms of maintenance as the creative work necessitates an extended gaze into the abyss during the quest for more resonance in building narrative. With each new iteration, Roberts's *Coin Coin* project continually adds new dimensions to the kaleidoscopic refraction of personal and artistic temperaments. The capacity to locate one's own subjective and objective self within others' artistic temperaments offers a critically important understanding of lexical entrainment for this dissertation.

Mitchell's *Conversations for Orchestra* Series

On September 13 and 14, 2013, Mitchell recorded trio improvisations with Kikanju Baku (percussion) and Craig Taborn (piano/electronics), and these recordings were released in 2014 as two albums: *Conversations I* and *II*. Over the ensuing decade Mitchell worked closely with colleagues to create transcriptions and orchestrations of these performances, resulting in works for various orchestral and large chamber ensemble situations.[165] Numerous works in this series made use of automatic transcription software: Daniel McKemie described how "doing the analysis in SPEAR [Sinusoidal Partial Editing Analysis and Resynthesis software], I got the spectrogram and saw the most prominent frequencies."[166] Other participants in the *Conversations for Orchestra* project also used Artificial Intelligence -driven transcription software, though in each case the data that was collected was subsequently hybridized through the subjectivity of each orchestrator, in dialogue with Mitchell. The resulting process-based creative practice engages notions of *entrainment* and *decentralized communal authorship*.

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[165] Often the transcriptions were made in collaboration with Mitchell's graduate students at Mills College, including Nathan Corder, Stephen P. Harvey, John Ivers, Christopher Luna-Mega, and Daniel McKemie, but others as well. *Ride The Wind* is a recording by the Montreal-Toronto Art Orchestra, and features a 20-person ensemble comprised of players from both cities (together with Mitchell) performing works from the *Conversations For Orchestra* series. This includes additional transcriptions by Shirantha Beddage, Marc Hannaford, and Daniel Steffey, as well as an arrangement of *Nonaah* by Nicolas Caloia.
[166] https://soundamerican.org/issues/roscoe-mitchell/roscoe-mitchell-mills-college-daniel-mckemie (accessed Sep 8, 2023)

Works in this series include *Ride The Wind, Distant Radio Transmission, Rub,* and *Splatter* from *Conversations I,* and *Wha-Wha, Frenzy House,* and *They Rode For Them* from *Conversations II.* Many of these new works have been performed multiple times by orchestras and large ensembles of varying sizes, and in many cases, new variations on the orchestrations are created for each occasion. There are varying degrees of openness in the scores: some works are fully notated, while others have spaces for select ensemble members to improvise. *They Rode For Them* and *Distant Radio Transmission* in particular were both orchestrated with space for Mitchell himself to improvise with vocalist Thomas Buckner and with *Distant Radio Transmission,* James Fei performing on modular synthesizer.[167]

Three contexts in which works from this series have appeared include orchestras under the direction of conductors Petr Kotik (SEM Ensemble in New York and Ostravska Banda the Czech Republic), Steed Cowart (Mitchell's colleague during his time on faculty at Mills College and after), and Ilan Volkov (Israeli-born conductor of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Glasgow, and director of the Tectonics Festival). While all three of these conductors have worked with Mitchell frequently over the years, the longest association is with Petr Kotik, who began presenting concert music by composers from the AACM in the late 1990s.

One of Mitchell's students at Mills was John Ivers, who transcribed and assisted in orchestration of *Distant Radio Transmission.* Ivers's work depended less on technologically -assisted transcription software, but Ivers nonetheless developed an expansive and also nuanced body of scholarship around his particular project. Ivers calls this process of collaborating with Mitchell to create a new score *Hybrid Practice,* which he describes as "an effort to unravel and explore the complex, recursive, and time-based musical developments exemplified by Mitchell's creative output."[168] In the *Roscoe Mitchell* issue of *Sound American*, Ivers spoke about his concept of *Hybrid Practice* in relation to his work with Mitchell on *Distant Radio Transmission.* Ivers described their iterative process of creation and revision:

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[167] *Both They Rode For Them* and *Distant Radio Transmission* were performed by the SEM Ensemble under the direction of Petr Kotik, concepts discussed in this dissertation benefit from the author's first-hand experience as bassist on those performances.
[168] This quote is taken from Ivers's Masters Thesis at Mills College, submitted in 2018.

> The point about Roscoe's work, in hybrid practices, is there's all these nodes of feedback happening. He might listen to it and re-compose it and then re-improvise over it, or hear something from somebody else and ask us to recreate it. It's a complicated network of input versus output. His whole creative process is about that network and those connections.[169]

It is notable that Ivers's descriptions of "nodes of feedback" and Mitchell's tendency to "re-improvise over" the material in the notation software bears resemblance to descriptions of Mitchell's engagement with his saxophone embouchure. Both scholar Paul Steinbeck and saxophonist Ken Vandermark describe this in their discussions of Mitchell's *Nonaah* below.[170]

By returning to works and creating new versions, Mitchell is embracing a generative and iterative process that also engages dialogues with collaborators who assist in transcription and orchestration of these works, Mitchell is creating multiples — a recurring practice in the conceptual art world, as well as in photography and printmaking, which both bring this process to the fore.[171] Moreover, this practice directly connects to concepts of materiality versus conceptualism discussed throughout this dissertation, particularly with the work of Gaines, Lewis/Adkins, and Patterson.

Such process-based artistic disciplines bear resemblance to printmaking, and the strongest connections may exist between Gaines and Mitchell — particularly Mitchell's *Conversations for Orchestra* series, *Nonaah,* and *Angel City*. In computer science terms, such process-based score realization is more *iterative* than *recursive*, because the process itself is not always identical: each new process is performed not on the original computer transcription (in printmaking terms, the Matrix), but on a score that was generated from an earlier process. Recursive processes do produce variation, and each new realization is distinct, but the process becomes iterative when the *means* change. Based on conversations and interviews between Zeena

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[169] Zeena Parkins and John Ivers: "Expanded Expansion 2 - Roscoe Mitchell at Mills College: John Ivers" in Sound American 29: The Roscoe Mitchell Issue. New York: 2022.

[170] James Fei and William Winant, whose work with Mitchell on *Angel City,* both make similar observations, and this will be discussed following the discussion of *Nonaah*

[171] Conceptual corollaries between music and printmaking will be discussed later in this chapter, while Chapter three will similarly draw comparisons with experimental photographic techniques developed by Darrel Ellis in the 1980s.

Parkins and some of the composers who collaborated with Mitchell to create the orchestral works, it is apparent that most of these works follow a process that goes something like this:[172]

1. Initial conceptual investigative work
2. Score or performative strategy
3. Initial documentation in fixed form (recording)
4. Selection of material
5. Transcription
6. Orchestration
7. Performance of new work
8. Print becomes new Matrix: Materials from performance of orchestration are incorporated into a new orchestration

At many of these points, Mitchell and his collaborators have introduced variables or mutations, and this process of necessity bringing about new forms is a direct outcome of Mitchell's improvisationally-informed approach to notation. This is the case with the many iterations of *Nonaah* that have come about over the last few decades. Ivers noted that extending the work "through multiple iterations and performances allowed Mitchell's relationship as improviser within *Nonaah* to be generative in nature."[173] Thus, Mitchell's practice does include systems that result in forms that are fixed, even as a given realization may implicitly necessitate variation. In this respect, Ivers's *Hybrid Practice* descriptor reveals how Mitchell's method "emerges as a functional process that expands beyond singular definitions of role, medium, performance, and scoring."[174]

Mitchell's *Nonaah*

The process with the works in the *Conversations for Orchestra* series finds its antecedent in the numerous solo and ensemble iterations Mitchell has made of his iconic solo saxophone piece *Nonaah*. Mitchell's own performances of *Nonaah* vary dramatically, with numerous solo versions appearing on record, as

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[172] *Expanded Expansion I, II, and III* were published in the Roscoe Mitchell issue of Sound American, and feature discussions between Zeena Parkins and Christopher Luna-Mega, John Ivers, and Daniel McKemie, respectively. Each composer discusses aspects of Mitchell's creative practice and its influence on the scores they helped generate: *Splatter* (Luna-Mega), *Distant Radio Transmission* (Ivers) and *Ride The Wind* (McKemie). All articles published in Sound American 29: Roscoe Mitchell can be found here: https://soundamerican.org/issues/roscoe-mitchell (accessed Aug 2, 2023)
[173] Ivers's Masters Thesis at Mills College, submitted in 2018.
[174] Ibid.

well as multiple ensemble versions with the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the Sound Ensemble, and versions for saxophone quartet, mixed chamber ensemble, and even full orchestra.[175] There is a direct connection between the evolution of this piece and the "practiced solo improvisations" that Mitchell and other AACM members all developed over the decades, as Mitchell explained: "...the point of playing solo is to prove you can sustain a structure for longer and longer periods of time, so I develop exercises to increase my power of concentration, starting off with small sections at first, and while I'm doing that, I'm also working on technique—things like . . . breathing and fingering."[176]

In his essay about *Nonaah*, scholar Paul Steinbeck addressed the harsh reception Mitchell received in Willisau in 1977, when he was asked to perform a solo set due to the delayed arrival of scheduled performer Anthony Braxton. Some members of the audience were especially vocal in their disapproval of the substitution, and the heckling was not at all subtle. Mitchell chose to take the situation and "transform the sounds of the crowd's reaction into material for a musical interaction."[177] Thus Mitchell's performance becomes a material embodiment of the tension that erupted between Mitchell and those vocal audience members who were disappointed at Braxton's absence.

Mitchell's playing and the audience's heckling create a distinct form of entrainment, as the clip of Mitchell's and the hecklers' exchange is framed by extended silences that initially heighten, but then gradually dissipate the tension as Mitchell slowly wins the audience's approval, developing *Nonaah*'s initial phrase over a remarkable 90 repetitions.[178] Saxophonist and composer Ken Vandermark also wrote of this recording for the *Roscoe Mitchell* issue of *Sound American*, noting that Mitchell's own recollection of the situation was that:

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[175] Two notable versions of Nonaah created independently of Mitchell's direct hand (though in both cases with Mitchell's emphatic approval) include Darius Jones and Bryan Jacobs. Jones's interpretation appeared on his 2021 album *Raw Demoon Alchemy (A Lone Operation)*: https://www.allmusic.com/album/raw-demoon-alchemy-a-lone-operation-mw0003592778 And Jacobs's unorthodox version with balloon and air compressor: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32Wh6yEvzgw

[176] Davis, Francis. 1983. "Roscoe Mitchell: The Art Ensemble's Sage Saxist Brings Order out of Improvisatory Chaos." *Musician* 62: 32.

[177] Steinbeck, Paul. (2016). Talking Back: Performer-Audience Interaction in Roscoe Mitchell's "Nonaah"

[178] See below for a discussion of the term entrainment as it is used in this dissertation.

I had to make the noise and whatever was going on with the audience part of the piece. The music couldn't move till they respected me, until they realized that I wasn't going anywhere, and it helped to create the environment the piece was to take place in.[179]

Steinbeck notes that it was only "after nine minutes and ninety-six statements of the opening phrase" that Mitchell was satisfied that the audience was able to meet him on his own terms, and thus he was able to proceed with the rest of his set. Steinbeck also recognizes the instrumental role the situation itself played in shaping the material reality of the piece:

> The audience members' reaction when Mitchell appears onstage, the musical decisions Mitchell makes in response to their antagonism, and the crowd's eventual embrace of the saxophonist—all of these interactions take place in the sonic domain, and all are essential to the performance. Indeed, it could be said that the sonic exchanges between Mitchell and the audience are the performance, more so than the compositional sketch that the saxophonist brought with him to the festival stage.[180]

Steinbeck's words underscore materiality of the near-impasse with which Mitchell was confronted, and the recording is a material embodiment of that entrainment process. In Vandermark's words, through the "intensity with which Roscoe pushes against sonic conventions,"[181] Mitchell's playing at Willisau in 1977 and his playing now both reflect an engagement with the physicality of the instrument, and Mitchell's remarkable facility with circular breathing offers a particular tension that underscores the role of entrainment at the interstices of materiality and conceptualism.

Mitchell's *Angel City*

Saxophonist and composer James Fei was Mitchell's colleague during Mitchell's years at Mills College in Oakland, CA. During this time they collaborated in numerous projects, including Fei's participation in most versions of the previously discussed *Distant Radio Transmission*, but also in a trio project with percussionist William Winant entitled *Angel City*. This work debuted at the Angel City Jazz Festival in 2011 and while the score remained fixed from that point, the work continued to evolve in performance.[182]

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[179] Terry Martin, *Nonaah* (Michigan: Nessa Records, 1977 and 2008), 4 and 5.

[180] Steinbeck, Paul. "Talking Back: Performer-Audience Interaction in Roscoe Mitchell's 'Nonaah.'" Music theory online 22.3 (2016): n. pag. Web.

[181] Ken Vandermark: "Roscoe Mitchell and the Path of Most Resistance," in *Sound American No. 29: The Roscoe Mitchell Issue* https://soundamerican.org/issues/roscoe-mitchell/roscoe-mitchell-and-path-most-resistance

[182] Two readily available documents of this piece exist: a multi-camera video production (documenting a late 2013 performance for the Exploratorium series) can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7I9UwLkljDs

Fei described the process of developing *Angel City* over a series of one-on-one and group meetings between Mitchell, Winant, and Fei:

> …we rehearsed for months as he worked on it. We always recorded the rehearsals, and Roscoe would study them to shape our improvisations in subsequent sessions. The score, then, is a mixture of notation and open elements that are partially composed through rehearsals, built on particular combinations of our languages.[183]

The development of this piece has much in common with the process John Ivers has labeled *Hybrid Practice*. In this context, however, the score that was developed was not for large ensembles, but rather three specific performers: Fei, Wiant, and Mitchell himself. The process of meeting to improvise, then notate, and repeat/revise was a continuous process in the development of *Angel City*, which progresses through a fixed form. Fei explained that "in *Angel City* the notated material is all played as written, i.e. there are no suggestions for improvisation, sound-types, instrumentation." He also pointed out that the score Mitchell developed "indicates where the improvisations happen, but what we play was worked out in rehearsals." Fei articulated this "gray area" directly:

> These sections for me fall somewhere between composition and improvisation - they are not notated, nor are they "open improvisation," but areas defined over time through working out ideas (rehearsals were usually recorded).[184]

The ambiguity of the space between improvisation and notation Fei describes is closely tied to the notion of *Hybrid Practice* that Ivers describes. Moreover, this "gray area" (recalling Gaines in Chapter 2) between composition and improvisation also relates to the process of *entextualization* described by Williams in Chapter 2, and also the concept of entrainment as it is used in this volume.

On Entrainment, *Cards*, and *Cut-Up*

It is a form of entrainment to modulate the ephemeral, subjectively-experienced sensation of sound into fixed, objective, material forms such as binary code, musical notation, quantifiable voltages, or the grooves in vinyl or shellac. This phenomenological consideration of artists' and musicians' engagement

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The other version was released as a sound recording (recorded in late 2012) by the Rouge Art label in France. https://roguart.com/product/angel-city/84

[183] James Fei. "There's So Much To Learn In Music." *Sound American 29: The Roscoe Mitchell Issue* (2022)

[184] James Fei: Email exchange with the author.

with *process* elucidates the ambiguities surrounding the relationships between materiality and conceptualism, or creative expression and social justice. Process continually reveals itself as a site for deconstructing both subjectivity and objectivity. Here materiality becomes intertwined with *craft,* and systems enable an engagement with craft in the practices of Mitchell.

The ephemerality of sound resists entrainment, because the present moment itself resists any observation outside of the present moment itself. Ornette Coleman, in an interview with French philosopher Jacques Derrida in 1997, asserted that "In improvised music I think the musicians are trying to reassemble an emotional or intellectual puzzle, in any case a puzzle in which the instruments give the tone."[185] Coleman's description of improvised music highlights the elusive nature of music made in the present moment. Musicians who mediate a robust improvisational practice such as that of Mitchell with material forms of music such as notation all maintain a practice that involves a cyclical engagement with structure and intuition–one with endless variation.

The capacity for endless variation within a fixed system is given substantial room for development with Mitchell's ongoing compositional series *Cards*. Saxophonist James Fei noted that Mitchell began developing the many iterations of *Cards* "for musicians who are not as fluent in improvisation—it serves as a starting point so musicians have written material to work on and can develop."[186] Fei outlined four ways one might develop the cards:

1. You may start primarily with the notated material, simply choosing when to play parts of the Cards during an improvisation;
2. you can begin to develop, cut/paste, repeat the material;
3. you can extrapolate improvisations based on the material;
4. you can work on timbral/sonic elaborations.[187]

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[185] Timothy S. Murphy; The Other's Language: Jacques Derrida Interviews Ornette Coleman, 23 June 1997. *Genre* 1 June 2004; 37 (2): 322
[186] Interview with the author.
[187] Ibid.

The *Cards* series has been a part of Mitchell's work since the 1970s, with the earliest recording appearing on *Live at "A Space" 1975*. So although the material on the cards is all fixed in terms of pitch and rhythm, the performers engage the materials in ways that fit the occasion.

Mitchell's *Cards* materialize subjectivity in ways not unlike the Cut-Up methods developed and popularized by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs.[188] Like *Cards*, Burroughs's *Cut-Ups* engage materiality as a path towards the conceptual. Scholar Katharine Streip characterizes Burroughs's use of the cut-up technique as an engagement with material that reaches to the ephemeral and beyond, approaching contemporary concepts of transhumanism. Streip argues that this reach beyond the material "can be seen in forms of posthumanism that seek to transcend materiality through fantasies of immortality, autonomy, and disembodiment inherited from humanism." This understanding of ephemerality as accessed through materiality can be seen in Mitchell's use of *Cards* and in Gaines's investigation of the grid as the site of transcendence through entrainment. In all these cases, artists' engagement with systems brings about a "profound awareness of how meaning and experience only become possible through physical bodies within densely interconnected habitats."[189]

On Verisimilitude, The *Ship of Theseus,* and the Materiality of Sound

The *Conversations for Orchestra* series bears a notable resemblance to the iterative process in printmaking. This is particularly true with *Distant Radio Transmission*, which has been revised each time it has been performed and recorded.[190] Just as an existing print can become a matrix for a new print, each performance — through a new transcription — becomes the reference for the next iteration of the score.

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[188] This work began with *Naked Lunch* (1959) and continued in the "Nova Trilogy:" *The Soft Machine* (1961), *The Ticket That Exploded* (1962) and *Nova Express* (1964).
[189] Streip, Katharine. "William S. Burroughs, Transcendence Porn, and The Ticket That Exploded." *William S. Burroughs Cutting Up the Century* (2019)
[190] The piece has been performed at least four times, and three of those performances have subsequently been released on commercial albums of Mitchell's concert music. This work is distinct in the *Conversations for Orchestra* series because it has been designed specifically as a performative vehicle for Mitchell as soloist alongside his longtime collaborator, vocalist Thomas Buckner, and a third improviser in either James Fei (Mitchell's colleague during his time on faculty at Mills College, performing on modular synthesizer) or oboist Kyle Bruckmann (who took part in a performance at the de Young Museum in San Francisco in 2017). The work was again performed at Mills on April 21, 2022 for the Music At The Fault Zone Festival. At nearly 29 minutes, this version is the longest.

The resemblance between transcription and printmaking emphasizes the interaction between the intuition of Mitchell and the arranger/orchestrators. This is also the point where subjectivity and objectivity come into critical dialog. Here, the *Ship of Theseus* thought experiment comes into play: as parts of a seafaring vessel are replaced, the ship eventually is no longer the same ship: if at some point every part of the ship has been replaced, it can be said to no longer be the same ship, and it is a copy of the original ship. The point at which this change takes place, however, is hard to define. Similarly, the relationship between these orchestral works and their source material is not simply a matter of original versus copy, but rather, *Simulacrum* — a copy with no original.

The performed orchestrations all bear verisimilitude in regards to the original trio performances, and moreover the elements of improvisation in these new performances reinscribe the urgency of the present moment that would otherwise serve to distance the orchestrations from the trio performances. So in this respect, what is added in performance provides a connection to the original that is more material than conceptual. This iterative musical development reveals a cyclical form of repetition that consistently produces change, underscoring the "status of both print and music as technologies that alternate between impression and matrix, storage and release."[191] This relationship between sound in time and print in space was explicitly investigated in a recent exhibition at The Print Center in New York City, in the 2022 exhibition *Visual Record: The Materiality of Sound in Print*. Jennifer L. Roberts, in her exhibition catalog essay "Listening To Print," describes "an ongoing chain of material agency in which prints can themselves become matrices, generating new impressions":

> Every print is a recording of a contact event between a matrix (the surface that "gives" the image) and a support (the surface that "takes" it). That transfer is a haptic one: in a printing press, for example, the press "feels" the image (by sensing differences in the plate's topography or chemistry) in order to transmit it from one surface to another.[192]

Mitchell's work as a composer in these projects brings materiality and conceptualism together as *entrained* practices. In this situation, entrainment actually resolves the problematic duality of

[191] *The Visual Record: The Materiality of Sound In Print* catalog, The Print Center. 2022.
[192] Ibid.

conceptualism and materiality, because his improvisational and compositional practices are both predicated on the rigor of his iterative process. It is a highly conceptual form of lexical entrainment to materialize processes in these ways, where artistic temperament itself is the site of alignment.[193] This is an expansion of the traditional conception, which focuses on rhythm and the body: entrainment as a process by which procedures materialize the ephemeral qualities of sound-making. The collaborative process through which Mitchell, Winant, and Fei arrived at the score for Mitchell's *Angel City* is perhaps a textbook example of lexical entrainment.

Mitchell's lexical entrainment through artistic temperament is discussed further in the concluding chapter of this dissertation, where the Art Ensemble of Chicago's use of "little instruments" is relatable to Mitchell's own concept of improvisation, labeled *multi-centered improvisation* by Art Ensemble of Chicago scholar Paul Steinbeck In his book *Message To Our Folks*.[194] That concluding chapter's discussion of Mitchell's improvisational practice is in dialog with this chapter's look at Mitchell's work as a composer. As the concluding chapter will explain, *multi-centered improvisation* and the AEC's use of "little instruments" both materialize the conceptualism that has driven Mitchell's work since the 1960s.

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[193] Lexical entrainment is a concept in conversational linguistics that investigates the process of the parties adopting the reference terms of others in the conversation. Cooperation is the catalyzing element in these exchanges, as this evolution of shared vocabulary is a collaborative process.

[194] Steinbeck, Paul. *Message to Our Folks : the Art Ensemble of Chicago* / Paul Steinbeck. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017. Print.

Chapter IV

Temporality as Entrainment: Ambigram Series, Alien Generator, Proprioceptions, and the Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array

"If time begins and ends with zero, what is in-between?"
— Benjamin Patterson, 1986[195]

"Death needs time for what it kills to grow in."
— William S. Burroughs[196]

This chapter discusses entrainment as an ensemble of temporally embodied logic systems, realized through original compositions created for the April 8, 2023 capstone concert. These systems organize lexicons for discrete forms of gesturality and the semiotic implications of distinct performance vocabularies. The music offered three methods of integrating concepts, methods, and materials, all of which were presented at the capstone concert:

1. The *Ambigram Series* of solo intermedia works, seven of which appeared in solo and ensemble contexts on the concert.

2. A pair of solo works titled *MRI Dark* (2023) and *Almostness* (2022), both of which combine two practices that emerged in the development of this dissertation:

    a. The alternate tuning system for 5-string contrabass called *Alien Generator*.

    b. The ensemble of computer-mediated semi-autonomous instruments called the *Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array*.

3. The series of instruction-based ensemble compositions called *Proprioceptions*, the second of which was presented at the concert.

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[195] "If Time Begins And Ends With Zero" *A Selection of Ben Patterson's Works* 1986.
[196] Burroughs, William S. "Ah Pook The Destroyer" from Dead City Radio, 1990

Alien Generator Harmonic Vocabulary

The tuning of the contrabass in the two solo works *MRI Dark* and *Almostness* replaces the standard 4:3 ratio-based G-D-A-E tuning with one based on other simple ratios. The focus on harmonics rather than stopped pitches brings many sonorities beyond those associated with equal temperament.

Harmonics are all based on whole number multiples of the open string: For string X, where X is the fundamental frequency of the open string, the harmonic frequencies are based on integer multiples. An Illustration of this on musical staff will look like this:
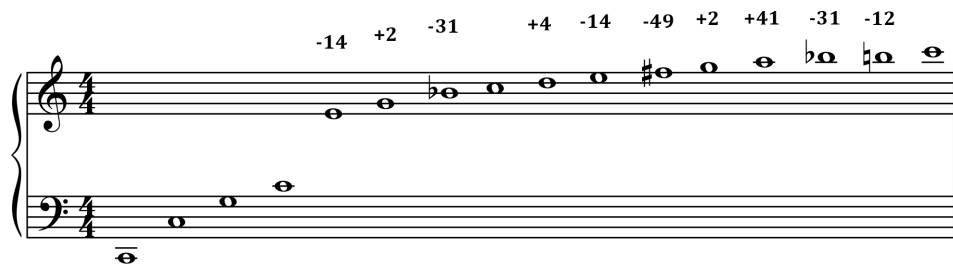
Figure 13: notes in the harmonic series with cent deviations indicated

The deviations in the tuning are expressed in X number 1/100ths of a half-step (i.e., cents), which frequently in the 21st century is included along with the notehead to make the necessary microscopic adjustment in pitch.[197] If the note C-natural is replaced with a pitch resonating at 55 Hz, it is possible to show the harmonic series using whole number integers:

Harmonic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Frequency	55	110	165	220	275	330	385	440	495	550	605	660
Pitch	A	A	E	A	C#	E	G	A	B	C#	D#	E
Deviation	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**-14**	**2**	**-31**	**0**	**4**	**-14**	**-49**	**2**

Figure 14: standard frequencies for notes in the harmonic series

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[197] In standard practice, the deviations from equal temperament (all marked in dark green above) are rounded off, though it did become increasingly common in the 20th Century to represent the 11th partial by indicating a quarter-tone (usually a sharp with only one vertical line).

The *Alien Generator* tuning system has specific ratios between the five strings on the contrabass. In standard tuning, the lowest note B note (matching B0, 30.86771 hertz), is one whole step above A0, the lowest note on most pianos. The Alien Generator series instead sets the fundamental of the V string at 32 Hz — a slightly lowered C. The adjacent IV string is tuned to a 5:4 ratio to that lowered C (a lowered E with a fundamental frequency of 40 hz); the III string has a 9:7 ratio to the IV string (a lowered Ab with a fundamental frequency of 51.42857143 hz);[198] The II string is tuned a 7:5 ratio to the III string (a lowered D with a frequency of 72 hz); and finally, the highest I string has a 5:4 ratio to the next lowest string (a lowered F# with a fundamental frequency of 90 hz), repeating the relationship between the two lowest strings.

	c1	c2	c3	c4	c5	c6	c7	c8	c9	c10	c11	c12	c13	c14	c15	c16	c17	c18
I							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
F#-47							F#-	F#-	C#-	F#-	A+	C#-	Eb+	F#-	G#+	A+	B	C#-
hz							90	180	270	360	450	540	630	720	810	900	990	1080
cents							-47	-47	-45	-47	39	-45	21	-47	-43	39	4	-45
5:4																		
II						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
D-33						D-	D-	A-	D-	F#-	A-	B+	D-	E-	F#-	G+	A-	
hz						72	144	216	288	360	432	504	576	648	720	792	864	
cents						-33	-33	-31	-33	-47	-31	36	-33	-29	-47	18	-31	
7:5																		
III				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
G#-16				Ab-	Ab-	Eb-	Ab-	C-	Eb-	Gb-	Ab-	Bb-	C-	Db+	Eb-			
hz				51.42857143	102.8571429	154.2857143	205.7142857	257.1428571	308.5714286	360	411.4285714	462.8571429	514.2857143	565.7142857	617.1428571			
cents				-16	-16	-14	-16	-30	-14	-47	-16	-12	-30	35	-14			
9:7																		
IV		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
Eb+48		Eb+	Eb+	Bb+	Eb+	G+	Bb+	Db+	Eb+	Gb-	G+	A	Bb+					
hz		40	80	120	160	200	240	280	320	360	400	440	480					
cents		49	49	51	49	35	51	18	49	53	35	0	51					
5:4																		
V	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12						
C	C1	C	G	C	E-	G	A+	C	D-	E-	F+	G						
hz	32	64	96	128	160	192	224	256	288	320	352	384						
cents	-37	-37	-35	-37	-51	-35	32	-37	-33	-51	14	-35						
cents	0	0	2	0	-14	2	-31	0	4	-14	-49	2						

Figure 15: notes in the harmonic series on all strings of the 5-string contrabass in the Alien Generator tuning

The tuning system in the *AMIA Dark* solo string music (and other works using the Alien Generator tuning) is based on what composer and theorist Ben Johnston called *Extended Just Intonation*.[199] Each string of the contrabass is tuned to a frequency that has a ratio-based relationship to the other strings. The term "extended" refers to higher prime limits. This refers to a prime limit of 7 or higher. Much of the scholarship around pure ratio-based Just Intonation has developed in the wake of the tremendously

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[198] This 8-decimal value may not immediately reveal the simple whole-integer relationships that the other strings exhibit, but at a later point in the sequence it does, and that will be discussed later in this document.
[199] Fonville, John. "Ben Johnston's Extended Just Intonation: A Guide for Interpreters." *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1991, pp. 106–37. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/833435 (Accessed 2 Aug. 2023)

influential work of Harry Partch in the first half of the 20th century.[200] In his essay "On Ben Johnston's Notation and the Performance Practice of Extended Just Intonation," contemporary composer and theoretician Marc Sabat explained how Johnston's work was based on that of composer Harry Partch:

> To organize this expanded pitch system Partch introduced the concept of various prime limits: he referred to Pythagorean tuning as 3-Limit, Ptolemaic tuning as 5-Limit, and his own system as 11-Limit.[201]

Because the pitch set makes extensive use of the 7th harmonic, the relationships between harmonics in the *Alien Generator* series extends beyond the Ptolemaic 5-Limit system, but not 7-Limit Just Intonation. A chart showing the frequencies of the first twelve partials on all five strings appears in the Appendix.

Included here is a list of all 53 frequencies produced by the harmonics on the five strings when tuned to a fundamental of 32 hz (37 cents below C1). The following chart shows the open strings and harmonics across all strings on the 5-string contrabass, arranged from lowest to highest:

---

[200] Partch based much of his own research on that of the 19th century theoretician Hermann von Helmholtz. Partch's seminal volume *Genesis Of A Music* was published in 1949.
[201] https://marsbat.space/pdfs/EJItext.pdf (accessed Jun 8, 2022)

Figure 16: Notes in the Alien Generator Tuning system, arranged lowest to highest

The aim of this harmonic system is not to define territories, but give license to embrace ambiguity and uncertainty; to consider an *ecology sounds and gestures*; to emphasize the relationships rather than objects themselves; and to consider the semiotic implications of the sonorities and gestures. This is important in this dissertation because the potential for this set of 53 pitches to generate their own relationships and alignments is being placed directly in service of a distinct lexicon of *harmonic entrainments.* This "ecology of sounds and gestures" places the 53-tone set in a shared space with the "contiguity" invoked by Cohen in his analysis of Gaines's use of numerical grids.

The title *Alien Generator* used for this series is taken from the title for the first three works composed for this tuning.[202] Two developments took place immediately after completing the original three works in the series. The first was the arrival of the 5-string contrabass in May 2023, commissioned from Denver-based luthier (and professional bassist) Kent McLagan. The second was the July 2017 brain surgery and the temporary condition called Aphasia, which occasioned a very deliberate re-centering of cognitive abilities in the mythology of these works.[203]

The intention in connecting this tuning system to these personal experiences is twofold. First was to focus on sonorities that are grounded in material engagements and empirical observations discovered through direct engagement with the instrument. And second, because almost all pitch relationships exist outside the twelve-tone equal temperament system, and because of the restriction to use natural harmonics almost exclusively, there is little opportunity to exploit the conventions of western tonal harmony. A much more effective and practical approach is to think of these intervals as creating one 53-note mode, which extends over six octaves with no symmetry between octaves.

Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array

AMIA stands for *Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array*. At the time of the dissertation capstone concert, there were twelve servo motors, each of which were attached to a homemade instrument that performed simple repetitive tasks that produced subtle noises, ranging from crinkling cellophane to ringing tiny bells.

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[202] The first suite of pieces were *I: Alien Generator, II: Magnetic Resonance, and III: Uncanny Presence,* all composed in 2017 for four-string contrabass.

[203] This condition is caused by damage to one or more areas of the brain, and is common among people who have had a stroke. Often this condition is far more severe and permanent than in my case. Speech and use of both limbs both returned after therapy, though numbness in the right foot, difficulty concentrating, and a slight stutter are all chronic effects of this condition that remain as of this dissertation, six years after the procedure.

Figure 17. *MRI Dark* performance, April 8, 2023

Figure 18 is a chart showing the twelve characters in the AMIA, with three grouped together on one of four Arduinos:

	Arduino 1 (mr krinkly)	Arduino 2 (mr klinky)	Arduino 3 (mr klunky)	Arduino 4 (miss wibbles)
Servo Motors	Mr Krinkly A	tiny bells	Toca Seed Pod Shaker	salt shaker / tin bowl
	Mr Krinkly B	Tea Lid Jar	Wood Shim Mobile	Balloon+Marbles
	Mr Krinkly C	Friction Jars	Plastic Cups Mobile	Plastic Triangles

1. Arduino 1 is connected to *Mr Krinkly*:

    a. Three different servo motors that each crinkle cellophane wrapping.

2. Arduino 2 is connected to a trio of servo motors called *Mr Klinky*:

    a. One rings a pair of tiny copper bells.

    b. One rattles the copper lid of a tea strainer (attached to a chopstick via packing tape) inside a glass jar.

> c. One slowly rubs two glass jars together (also connected to the servo via chopstick and packing tape).

3. Arduino 3 is connected to *Mr Klunky*:

> a. One drags a toca seed pod shaker back and forth across a flat surface.
>
> b. One causes a chandelier of wooden shims to gently bump into one another.
>
> c. One causes two red plastic soda cups to gently bump into each other.

4. Arduino 4 is connected to *Miss Wibble*s:

> a. One rotates a glass salt shaker, turned on its side, against an aluminum bowl.
>
> b. One (somewhat violently) shakes a balloon that has marbles inside.
>
> c. One raises and lowers a mobile of four plastic triangles.

Figure 19 on the next page shows images of each of the twelve AMIA characters, grouped into four stations (Mr Krinkly, Mr Klinky, Mr Klunky, Miss Wibbles), each with three characters:

Mr Krinkly A, B, C
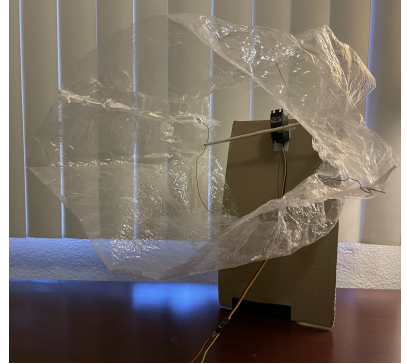
Mr Klinky A, B, C
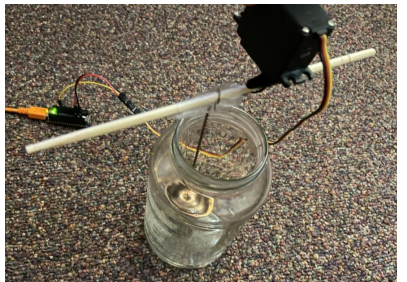
Mr Klunky A, B, C

Miss Wibbles A, B, C

Gomi No Sensei: *ASMR, AMIA*, and "Little Instruments"

A more colloquial name for this *AMIA* would be the *ASMR Junk Robot Gamelan*, as the intention is for these mechanical instruments to produce very small sounds associated with an almost 15 year-old trend in close listening called Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (or ASMR). The term was coined by Jennifer Allen in an online forum in 2010, and discussed in a 2018 co-authored article published in PLOS ONE in the United Kingdom: "ASMR occurs involuntarily in response to certain external (and often social) triggers, including: whispering, soft-speaking, tapping, scratching, slow and expert hand movements and close personal attention."[204]

The characterization of the AMIA as "junk" is an intentional component of the "ASMR junk robot gamelan" nickname, in that the focus on such simple materials as cellophane, chopsticks, masking tape, and cardboard is meant to invoke transient qualities of bricolage. It also is a practical matter of relying on simple materials when a project is in the prototype phase.[205]

This engagement with simple materials offers a comfortable reference point for the use of paper and found objects in the early and late work of Patterson discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. It is also a consistent theme of operating on the threshold of performativity in the music created for the capstone concert, particularly in the (aptly named) *Almostness*, where all aspects of the work are kept at one threshold or another: at the threshold of audibility, of demonstrative expression, or at the threshold between the "steadiness" and "energy" information being tracked by violinist and UC Irvine professor Mari Kimura's MUGIC™ motion sensor.[206] Patterson's focus on materials and materiality

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[204] Poerio GL, Blakey E, Hostler TJ, Veltri T (2018) More than a feeling: Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) is characterized by reliable changes in affect and physiology. https://doi.org/10.1371/Journal.pone.0196645

[205] One might also consider this project to be somewhat autobiographical, in that it was conceived and developed with an absolute minimum of familiarity with basic concepts that inform the fields of engineering, robotics, and instrument building. Ironically, this characteristic is itself transient, as continued engagement with this system will inevitably develop a fluency that obscures the perfunctory nature of the project in its realization circa 2023. The use of these materials holds a potential to conjure notions of precariously-conceived and executed childhood science projects, replete with a rich childlike wonderment.

[206] Developed by a Guggenheim award-winning violinist/composer Mari Kimura, MUGIC® (Music/User Gesture Interface Control) is a small, versatile and affordable prototype motion sensor that enables you to use your movements to control virtually anything in software. A small electronic gadget, MUGIC® has been used by musicians, dancers, artists, actors on stages around the world. More information about the MUGIC is available at https://mugicmotion.com/ (accessed Aug 2, 2023)

prioritizes this "threshold," as embodied by the materiality of ephemera, and by the performers themselves.

The emphasis on simple material also references *Gomi No Sensei,* which translates roughly to "master of junk" in Japanese. The expression is most frequently associated with William Gibson, a "cyberpunk" author and devotee of William S. Burroughs. In the short story "The Winter Market," Gibson*,* described a character named Rubin: "What he's the master of, really, is garbage, kipple, refuse, the sea of cast-off goods our century floats on. Gomi no sensei. Master of junk."[207] The intense focus on materials that would logically find their way into the trash is both an expression of a ubiquitous ambivalence about contemporary society, and an embrace of a form of abject materiality that parallels the emphasis on unorthodox performance techniques on the contrabass in all the work on the April 9, 2023 Capstone Concert. The shared qualities of being fit for discard connect the physical materials, the playing techniques, and also the approach to gesture in the performer's engagement with the electronic sound (and AMIA) by way of the MUGIC™ sensor.

The reference to *Gomi No Sensei* invokes a comparison to the Art Ensemble of Chicago's engagement with small objects and instruments that have come to be known as "little instruments." In the mid-1960s The Roscoe Mitchell Art Ensemble began using small African percussion items such as bells and small membranophones, as well as other (sometimes non-musical) objects in performance. Art Ensemble bassist Malachai Favors recalls this practice to have originated from an epiphany after witnessing a performance that included African dance:

> I saw this African ballet, and I just felt that this music belonged in jazz [...so] from then
> on, after that, we just started elaborating on little instruments. Pretty soon Roscoe and
> Joseph and Moye, they were little instrument kings![208]

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[207] Gibson, William. *Burning Chrome / William Gibson.* 1st EOS pbk. ed. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003. Print.
[208] Lewis, George. *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 160. Malachai Favors is quoted from a conversation with Ted Panken during an interview with members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago at WKCR-FM at Columbia University in New York.

The Art Ensemble of Chicago's use of "little instruments" embraces seemingly directionless gesturality and places these discrete sounds in deliberate dialog with the silence that surrounds them. This meditative, mindful engagement with space reveals the capacity for discrete sounds to conjure notions of emptiness. The mindfulness with which the Art Ensemble places sound and space in dialog can be called *purposeful purposelessness*. There is an inherent materiality in the almost "post-performative" approach to gesturality of the Art Ensemble's engagement with "Little Instruments," and *purposeful purposelessness* emphasizes an approach to performativity that seeks to avoid transforming an *object* into an *instrument,* instead allowing the object to retain its inherent materiality even in action. The Art Ensemble, from almost the very beginnings of the group, included spaces for allowing materials' objective realities to govern their engagement with humans, rather than the more familiar procedure where human behavior governs the behavior of the objects. This is a form of lexical entrainment through materiality.

Multi-centered improvisation is scholar Paul Steinbeck's term for Mitchell's concept of improvisational dynamics, and can be applied as readily to "little instruments" as to his ensemble's more familiar instruments. Steinbeck described how in *multi-centered improvisation* performative scenarios, "...the musicians attempt to remove all external constraints on their decision-making. They need not adhere to the performance practices associated with a given musical style, or to their instruments' standard playing techniques." Steinbeck emphasizes that this approach facilitates new layers of complexity, as the members of the Art Ensemble thereby layer independent subjectivities that are in fact dependent on the materiality of the toy whistles, bike horns, brake drums, and other objects (some musical, some not) for their trajectories.

Mitchell seeks to avoid restricting the ensemble to *overt forms* of musical gesturality. He asserts these are "built around a particular center" and proposes that "to diffuse that whole thinking, and create a pure music, would be more along the lines of what I would be thinking about." Mitchell's concept is one where

"the musicians must be as autonomous as possible in order for a *multi-centered improvisation* to reach its potential."[209]

Steinbeck further quotes Mitchell directly in an explanation of his *multi-centered improvisation* re-considering of performative trajectory in a way that relates to the "thingness of the human" and the exploration of "consciousness, feeling, affect, and other circulatory and shared social phenomena" Tomkins described earlier:

> The instruments function completely independently. You don't have to back me up and I don't have to back you up either. And I really would prefer your not following me. That cuts down on the full dimension of the music. It makes the music one-dimensional.[210]

The necessity to be "as autonomous as possible" that Mitchell describes above relates directly to the creation of the Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array. The AMIA inherently circumvents the one-dimensionality Mitchell cautions against, while specifically invoking the performance practices for which the Art Ensemble of Chicago has been so well known.[211]

Almostness (2022)

The first work for solo contrabass that incorporates both the AMIA and the Alien Generator tuning system was *Almostness*, which first was performed on the May 20, 2022 ICIT Showcase at Winifred Smith Hall. A slightly altered version that expanded the use of one cellophane-crinkling character to a trio of three was premiered on the April 8, 2023 capstone concert discussed in this dissertation. The two-page score is mostly presented on a conventional 5-line staff with some internal repeat structures and box notation:

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[209] Steinbeck. Message to Our Folks : the Art Ensemble of Chicago / Paul Steinbeck. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017. Print. p201-202.

[210] Mitchell, quoted in Baker, "Roscoe Mitchell," 19.

[211] As of 2023, the AMIA is only partially autonomous, as the actions of the mechanical instruments can still be directly traced to degrees of *steadiness* or *energy* coming from the performer wearing the MUGIC sensor (though it is certainly possible to have difference in the degrees of energy or steadiness between the right and left hand). *Randomness* and *Artificial Intelligence* are related but vastly different. Thus the name AMIA is to some degree aspirational
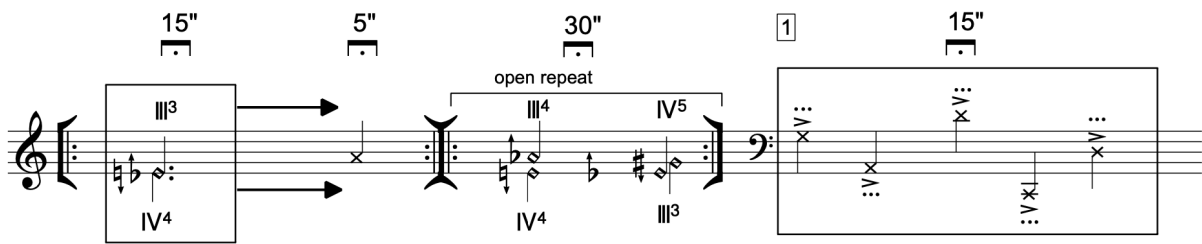
Figure 20: opening measures of *Almostness*

The bass part is broken into four sections, each of which concludes with a pizzicato phrase:

Figure 21: Final measure of Section D in *Almostness*

The fourteen numbered boxes that appear above the staff indicate each time the foot pedal is to be pressed, triggering changes in both the electronic sound and in the AMIA characters. The piece uses specifically the three Mr Krinkly characters, moving either independently or in unison. Approaching a similar type of minimal approach to sound and gesture, the electronic sounds are all based on sped up or slowed down recordings of ASMR sounds. They include:

- Coins jingling inside a jar (played back at two different speeds).
- Wooden shims rattling (the same ones that appear in Mr Klunky).
- Plastic wrap and cellophane being scrunched and flattened (similar to Mr Krinkly).
- Glass jar rubbing against a tin bowl (as with Miss Wibbles).
- Two tiny bells ringing (as with Mr Klinky).

With all four stations of the AMIA represented in the electronic sounds, and the trio of cellophane characters called Mr Krinkly all working in tandem with the live performance on the bass, *Almostness* engages concepts of representation and embodiment that respond to Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* from 1965 (discussed briefly in Chapter 1) and with René Magritte's two well-known works *The Treachery of Images* (from 1929) and its companion work, *Les Deux mystères* (1966):

Figure 22: René Magritte's *La Trahison des Images* ("The Treachery of Images, 1929) and *Les Deux mystéres* (1966)

In his essay on Magritte's work, Michel Foucault discusses how the second work "multiplies intentional ambiguities before our eyes,"[212] directing all signification towards contradiction. Translator James Harkness described, in his introduction, Foucault's fascination with "visual non sequiturs," for their capacity to disrupt syntax, "which causes words and things (next to but also opposite one another) to 'hang together.'"[213] This is the exact intention driving the juxtaposition of the recorded sounds of the AMIA against the actual onstage presence of the AMIA in *Almostness.* A closely related juxtaposition is the intended outcome in the Ambigram Series, which will be discussed later in this dissertation.

In *Almostness*, each of the four sections have one main theme around which the other materials in that section are oriented. The sections, however, do not relate to each other, save for the shared characteristic of the repeating pizzicato phrase that ends each section.

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[212] Foucault, Michel. *This Is Not A Pipe* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1983, p. 15.

[213] Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*, a translation of *Les Mots et les choses* (New York: Pantheon), 1970, p. 48

Figure 23 has four excerpts that show the main theme of each section:

The first and last main sections are both more gestural. Each of these four fragments are the longest material in each section, and while the less active material in the first and final sections support the more gestural material seen in the examples, the inverse is true in the middle two sections: the more gestural material supports the subtler, more meditative material shown in the examples.

As an epilogue after the fourth and final appearance of the pizzicato phrase, there is an additional forty-five seconds where the performer makes his or her own ASMR sounds by rubbing and scraping fingers on the body of the instrument (and also specifically along the edge of the f-holes). Following the four main sections, this epilogue further investigates the dialogue between embodiment and representation in the piece.

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Figure 24: Final measure of *Almostness*

Throughout the piece the performer exists in a space between stasis and action (hence the title *Almostness*) while the ASMR sounds are engaged in their own dialogue between presence and absence, as the acousmatic sound of the electronics serves as a foil for the diegetic sounds of the onstage AMIA. Throughout the four main sections of the composed material, there is pronounced rhetorical interplay between the bassist, the electronic sound, and the AMIA. When, in the epilogue, the performer engages in the softest sounds in the entire piece, it does not resolve tension between action and object so much as reinscribe the tension, right at the threshold of audibility.

The validity of *Almostness* as a piece of art is contingent on the idea that the bass techniques, the AMIA, and the real-time temporally modulated recorded sounds of the AMIA are engaged in a cyclical loop, existing specifically to reference each other. In this way it recalls comments earlier in this dissertation about Verisimilitude, Simulacrum, and Ship of Theseus, from the end of the previous chapter. The intention is for this discussion of *Almostness* to emphasize the relationship between Mitchell's work in Chapter 3, Gaines's work in Chapter 2, and also the solo works in the *Ambigram Series* (which are all Simulacrum - the first in the series is not the "matrix", so to speak, and in fact each solo is a copy of the others in the series).

Lewis's Voyager, Automata, and the AMIA

The AMIA was born of the idea that MAX/MSP and Aurduino programming might support autonomy and independent interactivity for objects and instruments that not only respond to but also artfully influence the development of musical materials that reside primarily in the "critical band" of the ASMR

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threshold. There is an important precedent in scholarship regarding autonomy that is relevant at this stage of development for the AMIA. Lewis's *Voyager* software is a direct influence on this project. Observing a performance at Le Poisson Rouge in the West Village where Lewis and saxophonist, composer, and Wet Ink Ensemble director Alex Mincek interacted with the *Voyager* software performing on Disklavier led directly to the question, "what if instead of Disklavier or recorded sound, Voyager was able to perform on small instruments in the ways one associates with the AACM or Musica Elettronica Viva?"[214] Thus the goal of the AMIA is to develop an ensemble of collaborative mechanical performers who autonomously interact with performers, while remaining in the ASMR vocabulary.

The status of the AMIA as "automata" is of importance because it connects the use of non-musical objects in the original improvised music activities that began in the late 1990s (and developed directly into the work being done in this dissertation) to the engagement with computer programming that began once studies for this PhD began at UC Irvine in the Fall of 2019. The move from having onstage performers using these objects to manipulating the objects with the AMIA serves the purpose of entrainment of the performative actions. The entire material engagement with these objects is now integrated with the systems and processes that take place when human movements are encoded, translated into a set of variables, multiplied, and distributed to the different objects, rather than a conventional arrangement where a performer simply picks up a shaker and makes sound.

Lewis, in his 1999 article "Interacting with Latter-Day Musical Automata," considered the expanding domain of autonomy and intuition among technologically-mediated performance practices:

> The activity of improvisation can be viewed as a domain-specific, structure-generating interaction within a particular environment complex. [...] Musical improvisation is one domain among the various possible domains of improvisation – an interaction within a multi-dimensional environment, where structure and meaning arise from the analysis, generation, manipulation and transformation of sonic symbols.[215]

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[214] Comprised primarily of Italy-based American composer-performers Fred Rzewski, Richard Teitelbaum, and Alvin Curran, MEV began in the 1960s to integrate improvisation and the use of objects in ways not unlike those of the AACM. Lewis and Anthony Braxton are two members of the AACM who had substantial collaborations with MEV as a group, and with its members individually.

[215] Lewis (1999) "Interacting With Latter-Day Musical Automata." Contemporary Music Review, 18:3, 99-112, DOI: 10.1080/07494469900640381

Lewis emphasizes the importance of a "structure-generating interaction" that is also "domain-specific" and in which "structure and meaning arise from the analysis, generation, and manipulation and transformation of sonic symbols."[216] As the AMIA develops in the complexity of the programming that mediates the syntax for the ensemble of characters, the degree to which the AMIA is "domain-specific" can also evolve accordingly. And if the audio playback and the actual mechanical instruments in *Almostness* are both considered to be part of an expanded understanding of domain specificity, the AMIA may already be engaging in self-referential recursion.

Golem, *Rossum's Universal Robots*, and the AMIA

In 1921, Czech intellectual and playwright Karel Čapek premiered *Rossum's Universal Robots* (*R.U.R.*): a play about industrial expansion that went out of control, leading to the demise of modern society at the hands of artificial workers. This play introduced the word *Robot*, which translates roughly to "forced labor." Together with the Czech legend of the *Golem*,[217] Čapek's play *R.U.R.* offers an early investigation into the potential for Artificial Intelligence to overtake mankind. Čapek's play certainly has a notable relationship to the legend of the *Golem*, but with notable differences.

The city of Prague is the location where the myth of the *Golem* originated, three centuries before Čapek's play. The Golem myth is attributed to a Rabbi Loew in Prague in the 15th century. Norma Contrada, in her essay "Golem and Robot: A Search for Connections," noted that Čapek readily acknowledged the debt (though this debt was omitted in most scholarship around the very popular play, both during and after Nazi occupation of Prague):[218]

> R.U.R. is, in fact, my own rendering of the legend of the Golem in modern form. It [the play] came to mind, of course, only because a piece of it was already at hand. "But my Heaven, for all that it's still my own Golem," I said to myself, "the Robot is the Golem made flesh by mass production…"[219]

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[216] Ibid.
[217] Also Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and more contemporary narratives such as *Terminator*, HAL 9000 *in 2001: A Space Odyssey*, the "replicants" from *Blade Runner*, and the machines in the *Matrix* trilogy.
[218] Contrada, Norma. "Golem and Robot: A Search for Connections." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, vol. 7, no. 2/3 (26/27), 1995, pp. 244–54. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43308245. Accessed 20 July 2023.
[219] Ibid.

The Golem and The Robot both share many qualities, particularly in regards to their position of servitude:

> Just as golem and robot were meant to serve their makers and masters, so were they expected to obey them [...] That this expectation was frustrated in both instances is a critical component of each story.[220]

As the quote above implies, both creations eventually fail in their expectation of obedience, but while in the Golem legend, the creation is eventually laid to rest, the Robot in Čapek succeeds in replacing humankind, and robots become the dominant species on this planet. In neither situation, however, where the creators intended not to create equals - rather: a servant class was the intention from the outset. This is the point where the concepts become relevant for this dissertation, as the parallel to this nation's history of slavery is quite apparent. The AMIA project itself may more readily draw comparisons to The Golem and to R.U.R. but the less-obvious correlation to concepts of race explored in the dissertation, particularly in Chapters 1 and 2, is very much intentional, and has the potential to become quite overt as the AMIA project develops beyond this dissertation.

MRI Dark (2023)

The opening piece of the dissertation capstone concert is the first iteration of a multifaceted intermedia project that integrates robotics, solo contrabass (re-tuned to the *Alien Generator* scordatura), interactive computational processes, video projections, and spatialized multichannel audio.[221] A prominent feature of this project is an improvisational dialog between the solo contrabass and the *AMIA*. The solo contrabassist engages with the AMIA in two ways:

1. Data collected through the use of Mari Kimura's MUGIC motion sensor is distributed to the AMIA through MAX/MSP, engaging between one and three characters at any given time.

2. The semi-random selection of which AMIA characters are participating at any given moment is determined by pressing one of two buttons on a wireless foot pedal designed to turn pages of an electronic document.

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[220] Ibid.

[221] Future iterations of this project will include video projections and ambisonic multichannel audio. Both the audio spatialization and projection components of this project are actively in development as of April 2023.

Additionally, as the foot pedal changes which AMIA characters are engaged, it also changes which musical materials are displayed for the performer. So each time the foot pedal is pressed, a new segment of musical notation is chosen from the available bank, and a new combination of AMIA characters is also selected. Pressing the left button has two functions:

1. It adds a new (randomly selected, previously inactive) character from the list of twelve available, assigning it either *Energy* or *Steadiness* information from the MUGIC. When a new character is selected by pressing the left button, that character is the only one that is engaged (until the next time a button is pressed).
2. It selects a new (randomly selected, previously inactive) segment of musical notation to display for the performer.

Both functions of a left button press are then added as new available options for a future recall that is initiated by pressing the right button. Pressing the right button also has two functions:

1. Between one and three characters are selected from the list of characters that are available, having been previously randomly selected when the left button had been pressed.
2. Each of the 1, 2, or 3 characters that are chosen are assigned either Energy or Steadiness information from the MUGIC.

Once all twelve characters are engaged, the left button no longer sends valid commands, and the piece advances only by pressing the right button on the foot pedal.
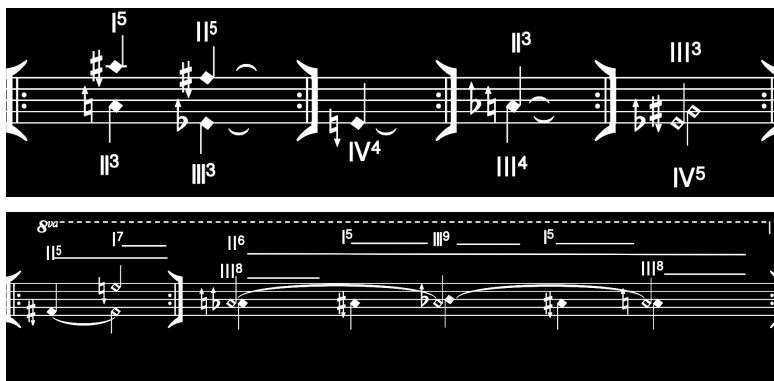
Figure 25: Two possible options for the randomly chosen notated material in *MRI Dark* (2023)

*Ambigram Series II Numbers 1-4 (*2023**)**

Work on the *Ambigram Series* began in Fall 2022. The series is a response to the work of Charles Gaines — in particular, his method of translating movements and facial features into numerical grids. *Ambigram Series I* and *II* are both composed of solo works that are exactly 420 seconds (7 minutes) in duration. Any

number of the solo works in either *Series I* or *II* can be performed simultaneously as ensemble works. Though both series follow a strict seven-minute timeline, different approaches are used in organizing time in *Series I* and *II*. *Series I* focuses on sets of simple written instructions that progress at a rate of once per 30 seconds, whereas *Series II* divides time more finely: primarily at the level of the second hand of a clock. This is primarily communicated via a standard 5-line staff (with notational variations appearing when needed), with a consistent time signature of 5/4, and fourteen sections (each of which have 6 measures), thus bringing the total time for each section to 30 seconds. So while both the more improvisation-centered *Series I* and the more notation-oriented *Series II* are structured around 30-second units of time, *Series I* embraces this unit of time while *Series II* subdivides time more finely and often carries gestures over the threshold of the 30-second subdivisions.

Helpful here is more background on the concept itself. An *Ambigram* is a concept initially posited by American scholar of cognitive science Douglas Hofstadter.[222] Though similar to a palindrome, the symmetry of an Ambigram is more visual than literary, either changing meaning or retaining meaning as the object changes orientation:

Figure 26: Two examples of ambigrams

There are 17 solo works in development for *Series II,* all written for colleagues around Southern California. A central concept for both *Series I* and *II* is that the works combine the artists' onstage performance with a video of the piece, which is playing backwards. The delicate timing of these 7-minute works plays with structure and intuition, because there is an audiovisual crossfade between forwards time onstage and backwards time in the video. Harmonies and composite rhythms are carefully chosen to coordinate between the live performer and the backwards video.

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[222] Hofstadter's 1979 book *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* won both the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction.

When the solo works are combined to make duos or larger combinations, the backwards videos are layered on top of each other. This concept of layering representations of these artists' identities was developed specifically in response to the influence of artist Gaines, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The process of transcribing personal characteristics in this way also has a strong connection to how a patient struggling with Aphasia struggles to overcome verbal disfluency and re-establish an effortless engagement with physical and psychological space and time.

Figure 27: backwards video for Ambigram Series II Numbers 1-3
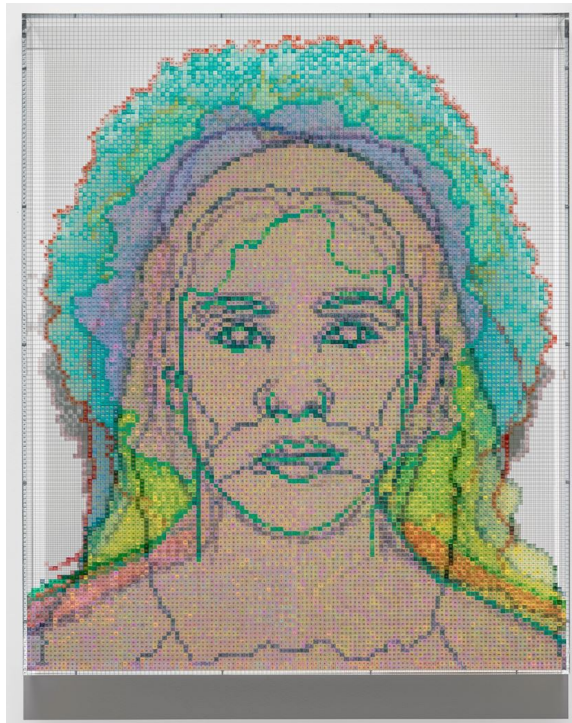
Figure 28: Numbers and Faces: Multi-Racial/Ethnic Combinations Series 1:
Face #13, Ellen Yoshi Tani (Japanese/Irish/Danish/English), 2020

The sequential numbering systems of Charles Gaines's grid-based artworks are a direct influence on the *Ambigram Series I* and *II*, which began in Fall of 2022 and was presented in the April 8, 2023 capstone concert event discussed in this dissertation. *The Ambigram Series* works follow similar methods to those of Gaines in that as new works are added to the series, new harmonies and new cubist perspectives are added. Each new work in Gaines's series layers a new color palette on top of those from the previous works in the series, so while the number grid remains consistent throughout, the colors and shapes continue to evolve. Likewise, each new work in the *Ambigram Series* produces new harmonies and gestural alignments with preceding works in the series.

With all works in the *Ambigram Series* being exactly seven minutes long, all works share the same mid-point of three minutes and thirty seconds. This detail was specifically designed to reflect the significance of the consistent appearance of the number 0 at the center of Gaines's grid works. Just as the numbers in Gaines's works progress from 0 to 1 to 2 to 3 and so on, in either direction, this *fulcrum* at the center of the Ambigram Series works represents the moment when forward time onstage and backwards time in the accompanying videos are aligned, before diverging again, with what had happened onstage taking place in reverse on the video, and what had happened on the video taking place in real-time onstage.

In their essay on Gaines in *Four Generations: The Joyner Giuffrida Collection of Abstract Art,* Jamillah James pointed out that works by Gaines such as those in the *Numbers and Trees* series, "challenge viewers to set aside preoccupations with qualifying art objects by their aesthetic or emotional appeal. True beauty comes from the artist's commitment to an intense, conceptual rigor, embedded, in this instance, with a critique of painting's dominance in the hierarchy of creative practices."[223] A corollary here can be made both to Mitchell's embodied investigation of the interface of embouchure and breath on woodwind

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[223] "Jamillah James on Charles Gaines", in *Four Generations: The Joyner Giuffrida Collection of Abstract Art.* Martin, Courtney J. editor. Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2019.

instruments, and to the relationship between notation, instrumental technique, and the intersection of contrasting temporalities that are central to the *Ambigram Series*.

Structure of Ambigram Series II

The solo works in *Series II* are all notated as 84 measures of 5/4 time at 60 beats per minute. This enables the performer to closely follow "clock time" and a performer can either follow an actual clock or a conductor listening to a click track. Notation can be however prescriptive, complex or open to interpretation as is appropriate for the performer for whom the work was composed. The moments of performer-determined openness use a two-line staff (seen in Figure 29 below) that indicates low, middle, and high range on the performer's instrument, with one of five basic symbols to indicate the improvisation parameters in Figure 30:
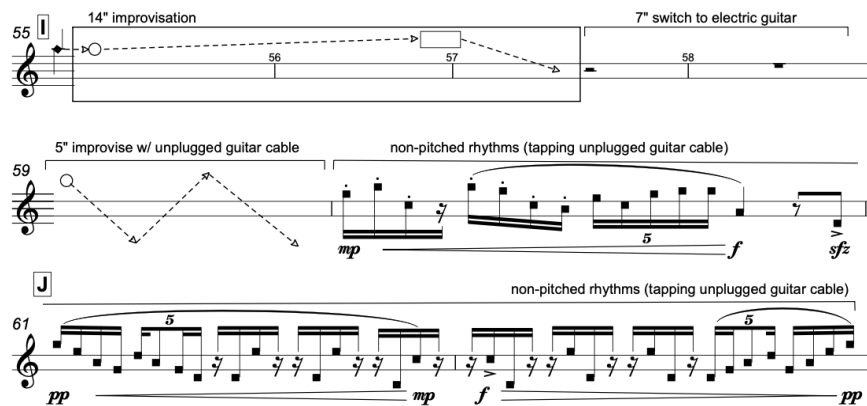
Figure 29: *Ambigram Series II: Number 2* (excerpt)
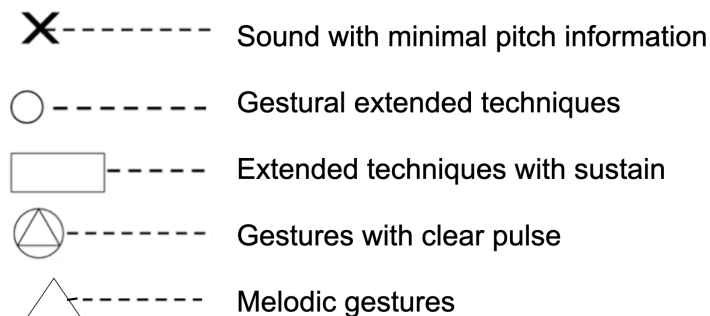
Figure 30: Five symbols for improvisation parameters in Ambigram Series II

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With the potential for systems to restrict as well as facilitate cooperation between groups with different backgrounds as a recurring theme in this dissertation, these symbols represent the potential for an arbitrary semiotic to fulfill this very function. The notation system in Figure 30 was first developed in November 2021 for *Lightning Trapped In Sand,* a work developed for and premiered in the context of the *Two-0-Nine* concert, presented at 2220 Arts+Archives in Los Angeles. Drawing on the influence from practical experience with languages for conducted improvisation learned through direct interactions with innovators such as Lawrence D. "Butch" Morris (Conduction), Walter Thompson (Soundpainting), Anthony Braxton (Language Musics), and Sarah Weaver. For a notation system to be accessible to performers with disparate musical backgrounds, it must allow access to readily available embodiments of the parameters at work. These five symbols were chosen for their potential to allow the performer to differentiate between possible approaches to improvisation without prescribing any specific stylistic associations (other than those that are performer- or context-determined). One objective in developing a notation for improvisers has been to provide structure and coordinate performers' actions while avoiding being overly deterministic in terms of vocabulary.

To organize the materials in Ambigram Series II, nine notational/gestural parameters were defined, and match to a color coding system:

note	
nonpitch rhythm	
long rest	
long hiss	
long buzz	
long improv	
short crinkle	
long gliss	
polyrhythm	

Figure 31: Color coding for Ambigram Series II structural chart

Each of these nine defined parameters were each given one long (three measures or 15 seconds) appearance and also three additional medium (one measure or five seconds) occurrences:

# occurrences:	beats:	event:
1	15	long note
3	15	med note
1	15	long non-pitch rhythm
3	15	med non-pitch rhythm
1	15	long rest
3	15	med rest
1	15	long hiss
3	15	med hiss / med rest
1	15	long buzz
3	15	med buzz / med rest
1	15	long improv
3	15	med improv
1	15	long crinkle (alternate rest/note)
3	15	short crinkle
1	15	long gliss
3	15	medium gliss
1	15	polyrhythm
3	15	polyrhythm

Figure 32: Color coding for Ambigram Series II structural chart

The 84 five-beat measures were then grouped into fourteen rehearsal marks (beginning, followed by A through M), with a new rehearsal letter every six measures. With 84 measures of 5/4, there are 420 beats in each seven-minute piece. The nine long sections (three measures, 15 beats) total 135 beats (27 measures of 5/4). With each of the nine sections also receiving three short (one measure, 5 beats) occurrences, this adds an additional 135 beats, or once again, 27 measures.

The final component that brings the piece to exactly seven minutes is an additional 30 measures of material that is completely composer-determined for each piece in the series:

420	total beats in 84 measures
150	beats in 30 open measures
135	total beats in 9 long sections
135	total beats in 3 appearances of the 9 parameters

Figure 33: Number of measures and beats in Ambigram Series II

Following these guidelines, an outline of the form for each piece was made:

measure			Live Josh	Vid Josh	Live Lily	vid Lily	Live JI	Vid JI			
1	Top	0:00	med hiss		1	30	1		6:55	end	84
2		0:05	long note		med hiss 1	med hiss 2	denman	30	6:50		83
3		0:10			med gliss 1	29			6:45		82
4		0:15			long note	med improv 1			6:40		81
5		0:20	med non-pitch rhythm			med note 1	med rest 2		6:35		80
6		0:25	med improv	30		28	med improv 3		6:30	M	79
7	A	0:30	1		2	27	long buzz	29	6:25		78
8		0:35	2	29	med rest 1	med buzz 1			6:20		77
9		0:40	3	28	3	26		28	6:15		76
10		0:45	long note		med buzz 2	med rest 2	2	27	6:10		75
11		0:50	4		med note 2	25	med gliss 1	long krinkle	6:05		74
12		0:55	long hiss		4		med note 1		6:00	L	73
13	B	1:00		27	denman		3		5:55		72
14		1:05		26			denman 2		5:50		71
15		1:10	med gliss			24	long improv	26	5:45		70
16		1:15	5	25	5	med note		25	5:40		69
17		1:20	6		short crinkle 1	med rest 3			5:35		68
18		1:25	7	24	6	23	4	24	5:30	K	67
19	C	1:30	med note	23	long buzz	**22**	med hiss 3	long note	5:25		66

Figure 34: Outline for live and backwards video for all three performers in the first (and last) 19 measures of *Ambigram Series II*

In the figure above, the three leftmost columns show information about what happens *onstage*: 1) measure number; 2) rehearsal letter; and 3) time progressing forward from the beginning at 0:00 (and measure 1). Likewise, the three rightmost columns show information about what happens in the *video*: 1) time moving backwards from the final full measure (6:55-7:00); 2) the rehearsal letters regressing from the end, onto M, then L, and continuing down to the beginning; and 3) measure numbers regressing from the final measure (84) to the first measure (1). This information correlates to the second (video) column for each player. This is an elaborate representation of the overlap of time progressing onstage for the three players (Joshua Rubin, Lily Guarneros Maase, and James Ilgenfritz) while it also regresses towards 0:00 (and measure 1) for the video component to the piece.

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The brief moment where forwards (onstage) time and backwards (video) time align is called the *fulcrum* — the brief moment where the video and the live performance are, for just one instant, the same. After that moment, everything that happened onstage begins happening in the video, continuing in reverse towards the first moment of the piece; and everything that had happened on the video up to that point begins to happen onstage, in reverse chronological order (though of course time continues to move forward).

Along with the beginning and end, this *fulcrum* moment in the piece is particularly crucial. It occurs in measures 42 and 43:

measure			Live Josh	Vid Josh	Live Lily	vid Lily	Live JI	Vid JI			
33		2:40	med non-pitch rhythm			17	med crinkle 4	long rest	4:15		52
34		2:45	med polyrhythm		9	med buzz 3	long hiss		4:10		51
35		2:50	13	19	10	denman 3			4:05		50
36		2:55	med note		11	16		17	4:00	H	49
37	F	3:00	14		short crinkle 2		denman 3		3:55		48
38		3:05	15		12		10		3:50		47
39		3:10	med non-pitch rhythm	18	denman 2			med improv 2	3:45		46
40		3:15	long rest	17	13	15	11	16	3:40		45
41		3:20			long gliss	14	12	15	3:35		44
42		3:25		16			13	14	3:30	G	43
43	G	3:30	16				14	13	3:25		42
44		3:35	med crinkle		14	long gliss	15	12	3:20		41
45		3:40	17		15	13	16	11	3:15		40
46		3:45	18		long hiss	denman	med improv 2		3:10		39
47		3:50	med rest	15		12	med rest 1	10	3:05		38
48		3:55	med hiss	14			med gliss 3		3:00	F	37
49	H	4:00	med polyrhythm		16	11	17		2:55		36
50		4:05	19	13	denman 3	10	long rest		2:50		35
51		4:10	med buzz		med buzz 3	9		long hiss	2:45		34

Figure 35: Measures surrounding the Fulcrum in measures 42 and 43

In the middle of this image it is possible to see how measure 42 is followed by measure 43 (and the beginning of rehearsal letter G), while in the video, measure 43 is followed by measure 42. For each of the three players, this moment has a different realization in the score.

- For clarinetist Joshua Rubin, the *long rest* that begins in measure 40 is followed by the 16th measure of open (composer-chosen/notated) material, while in the video, the 16th

measure of open material is followed by the long rest. This means that when Rubin plays measure 43, the video has just finished showing Rubin play measure 43 backwards.

- For Lily Guarneros Maase, the *fulcrum* moment occurs in the middle of a long glissando, which begins in measure 41 at 3:20, and then the onstage and video glissandi crossfade between measures 42 and 43 from 3:25 to 3:35.

- For video and live James Ilgenfritz, composer-defined measures 13 and 14 crossfade during the 10 seconds of the *fulcrum.* Onstage, this means multiphonics in m42 are followed by pizzicato polyrhythms, while in the video, the (backwards) pizzicato polyrhythms are followed by (backwards) multiphonics.

Figure 36: *Ambigram Series II Number 3: James Ilgenfritz* measures 40-45.

The six-measure excerpt in Figure 35 shows the three measures on either side of the *fulcrum*, which occurs exactly on the downbeat of rehearsal letter G. The switch from *arco* to *pizzicato* at the exact moment of the *fulcrum* emphasizes the symmetry between the video and onstage performances. The second staff shows the music for the video part, which is a retrograde of the entire piece (e.g., each

note and the duration of each note that appears in measure 42 is matched in retrograde in the video staff in measure 43).

Ambigram Series II Number 4: Malcolm Marvin Moses McGee

A very different notation strategy was employed for *Ambigram Series II Number 4*, composed for vocalist Malcolm Marvin Moses McGee. Though this piece was premiered in simultaneous performance with three pieces from Ambigram Series I, the emphasis on integrating explicitly-timed, specific compositional materials distinguishes it from the more fluid progressions of improvisational frameworks in Series I. The central, organizing principle in the performance directions for *Ambigram Series II Number 4* is counting, out loud, both forwards and backwards:

1.	(0:00-0:15)	"Fdddddddd"	<15>
2.	(0:16-0:30)	Count 16 - 29	
3.	(0:30-1:09)	Shaker+voice	<40>
4.	(1:10-1:29)	Count 70 to 89	
5.	(1:30-1:50)	Whistle	<20>
6.	(1:50-2:05)		

(110)	Nett	Dehrdnuh No
(111)	Nivellah	Dehrdnuh No
(112)	V-lehwwt	Dehrdnuh No
(113)	nee-triith	Dehrdnuh No
(114)	Neet-rorf	Dehrdnuh No
(115)	Neet-fif	Dehrdnuh No
(116)	Neet-skiss	Dehrdnuh No
(117)	Neet-nivess	Dehrdnuh No
(118)	Neet-yeah	Dehrdnuh No
(119)	Neet-nyne	Dehrdnuh No

Figure 37: *Ambigram Series II Number 4: Malcolm Marvin Moses McGee* first 119 seconds

In these first two minutes of the seven-minute piece, the four main parameters of the work can be seen:

1. Vocal improvisation (numbers 1, 3, and 5)

2. Counting seconds (numbers 2 and 4)

3. Improvisation with objects (number 3)

4. Counting backwards (number 6)

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Figure 38: Still image from layered video for Ambigram Series II Number 4: Malcolm Marvin Moses McGee

The final two minutes of the work corresponds to the first two minutes of the video:

17.	(5:10-5:29)	Cout 310-329	
18.	(3:30-3:59)	Whirley-tube	<30>
19.	(6:00-6:15)	Count backward: 60-45	
20.	(6:15-6:44)	Open soda can, pour <30>	
21.	(6:45-7:00)		

(15) Neet-fif
(14) Neet-rorf
(13) neet-riith
(12) V-lehwwt
(11) Nivellah
(10) Nett
(9)   Nyan
(8)   Tyeay
(7)   Nivess
(6)   Skiss
(5)   Vee-aff
(4)   Rrof
(3)   Eeerth
(2)   Oot
(1)   No

Figure 39: Final 90 seconds of *Ambigram Series II Number 4: Malcolm Marvin Moses McGee*

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When this work is performed in conjunction with the backwards video of the work, a continuous exchange between temporalities occurs, as either counting forwards towards 420 or counting backwards towards 0 is always present. Whether the counting is happening onstage or in the video, with forward speech or backward speech, or using ascending or descending numbers, the counting is always present in one form or another. The following eight possible scenarios all appear at least once in the piece:

1. Counting forwards, from 1 to 420, in person

2. Counting forwards from 1 to 420, in person, but reciting the numbers backwards

3. Counting backwards from 420 to 1, but still reciting the numbers forwards

4. Counting backwards from 420 to 1, but reciting the numbers backwards

5. Counting from 420 to 1 on video, heard as forward counting

6. Counting from 420 to 1 on video, heard as backwards counting

7. Counting from 1 to 420 on video, heard as forward counting

8. Counting from 1 to 420 on video, heard as backwards counting

All eight of these procedures appear in this seven-minute work, but in reversing the video, the counting acquires unique properties for embodying notions of continuity. For example, in event 21 when the onstage performance has counting from fifteen towards one, this functions as an inversion of the beginning of the piece when the performance on video is heard as counting from one towards fifteen, because the final three seconds "eerth, oot, no" sound like "one, two, three" when the video is playing backwards. Similarly, in Figure 36 above, one hundred and ten pronounced backwards is "Nett Derdnuh No," which is said live one hundred and ten seconds after the start of the piece.

Gaines's Influence on the Ambigram Serieses

Gaines explained to interviewer Cherise Smith that *time* and *the grid* are already intimately

connected to the concept of time even in works that would more conventionally be experienced as

two-dimensional, because "time is represented two-dimensionally in the spatial organization of the

grid, but time has to be a factor three-dimensionally because they're actually physically layered."

Gaines's works bring time, labor, and systems into dialogue. Gaines looks to draw attention to

"labor" as an inherited artifact of servitude and as a form of entrainment, embodied in the numbers

on the grids. The element of time is implied in the sequentiality of the numbers on the grid and in the

process of layering. The labor involved in these grids is plainly evident in the juxtaposition of each

new grid on top of the previous grids, and in the changes in coloration that result when a given point

on the grid intersects with each new layer. Gaines explains that this process shows:

> …how layering is a consequence of the work that's put into it. To that degree, there's
> a three dimensionality, which, to me, is the time. So, the horizontals and verticals are
> spatial, and then the three-dimensionality is time, which I think is an effort of the
> viewer's being aware of how systematically these pieces are put together.[224]

Though the *Manifestos* series does not follow the grid structure that serves as the model for most of

his paintings and as the model for the time structure in the *Ambigram Series*, his words about time in

the *Manifestos* intermedia works relates closely to how time and structure share reference points in

the *Ambigram Series* and Gaines's Gridworks:

> My argument is that, within the framework of the musical notation, these are not the
> usual terms and conditions by which subjectivity is expressed. For example, you can
> get a computer to do those kinds of things if you set the rules to do it. It's not being
> driven by impulse or intuition[225]

Gaines always remains conscious of when and if subjectivity has the potential to obscure objective

truths. His work primarily calls attention to objectivity because, in his view, problems arise when

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[224] Gaines, Charles, David Platzker, and Cherise Smith. *Charles Gaines : Palm Trees and Other Works / with Contributions by David Platzker and Cherise Smith.* Zürich: Hauser & Wirth Publishers, 2019. Print. P. 118-120.
[225] Ibid.

objectivity is often overlooked. This issue becomes especially prevalent in western society (and in improvised music) where intuition is the organizing principle. Gaines creates work that invites those experiencing the works to be more mindful of how objectivity *influences their subjective and intuitive engagement with their surroundings:* "I don't mean to erase the reality of intuition or even the reality of subjectivity but to pose questions about how our preconceptions about these forces influence the way we view and value art."[226]

Proprioceptions II (2022)

The *Proprioceptions* series began in 2022 as a way for groups of performers to engage time with more attention to mindfulness, but with an emphasis on layering *temporalities.*[227] *Proprioceptions II: Context Clues* appeared on the April 8, 2022 Capstone event. An ensemble of seven performers[228] each chose one or more of the seven concentric circles. Because each circle indicates a different number of repetitions, each performer engages periodicity and cyclical form through their own establishment and simultaneous destabilization of difference through repetition. As with all original work discussed here, there is a critical dialogue between composer-defined parameters and performer-defined materials/actions. Here, *Clock Time* is readily available in the form of a lattice of timings in the score that show when each temporal plane returns to the 12 o'clock position in the graphic score.[229]

An ideal performance, however, would not involve a clock. Rather, the performers would practice together and learn to recognize the passage of time accurately through purposeful movement and attention to each other. This process of coordinating trajectories and velocities in order to enable synchronization between separate bodies or individuals is a functional definition for the word *entrainment.*

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[226] Ibid.

[227] *Proprioceptions I: As Above So Below* was composed in the first half of 2022, for the group 4tet2duos, which features Teerapat Parnmongkol (electric guitar, oud, pedals & voice); Lucie Vítková (accordion, harmonica, synthesizer, hichiriki & voice); Katie Porter (clarinet, bass clarinet & voice); and James Ilgenfritz, bass & objects. The group performed the piece numerous times on tours in Spring 2022 and in Fall 2022.

[228] This performance included Jiryis Ballan (buzuq), Fabricio Cavero (viola), Isaac Otto Hayes (clarinet), Rebecca Larkin (flute) Malcolm McGee (saxophone), Matthew Nelson (saxophone), and Lisa Yoshida (violin)

[229] The one-page score can be found in the Appendix of this dissertation.

The *Proprioceptions* series fosters a mindfulness that puts coordination between performers at the center of artistic practice. Notions of temporality, cyclical form/repetition, and awareness of the passage of time (and space) all play central roles in *Proprioceptions*. This relationship between time and place relates both to Matana Roberts's performative engagement with architecture in the early days of their time in New York City, and also to the theories of British anthropologist Tim Ingold.

In his essay "Weather-World," Ingold highlighted the relationship between physical space and the passage of time. He observed, "The overwhelming ambition in the post Renaissance history of architecture has been to keep the weather out. In making a mockery of reason, in its refusal to be contained, in its erosion of structure and its disdain for progress, the weather has long figured in the modern imagination as architecture's nemesis."[230] Ingold noted that variations on the Latin word *temperare* reveal diverse applications of the concept of both social and ecological interrelatedness: *tempo* (music), *temperature* (climate and weather), *temper* (mood or disposition): "That a whole suite of etymologically cognate words should refer interchangeably both to the characteristics of the weather and to human moods and motivations amply demonstrates that weather and mood are not just analogous but, more fundamentally, one and the same."[231] Also embedded in the iterative temporality of *Proprioceptions* works is a version of Ingold's notion of the *Taskscape*: an "array of related activities" not unlike the "ensemble of tasks, in their mutual interlocking,"[232] that formulate and structure the quotidian frameworks that govern engagement with physical space (monotonous or otherwise).

This awareness of ecological interrelatedness is central to the approach with the *Proprioceptions* series, and the cyclical interactions of discrete subjectivities is a form of *lexical entrainment*. This term has been used in conversational linguistics to describe an intuitive or even unconscious process during verbal communication where commonalties between distinct vocabularies are enhanced in order to facilitate more effortless communication. The importance of the graphic notation element in this piece is that

[230] Ingold, Tim. "Footprints through the Weather-World: Walking, Breathing, Knowing." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 16, 2010, pp. S121–39. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40606068. Accessed 18 July 2023.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.

through repetition and awareness of others' engagement with cyclical form, each performer will inevitably evolve their own relationship to the notation, depending on their experience of others' reactions to their own graphic notations.

Entrainment is a central active agent in *cyclical form*. American humanities academic Kara Keeling speaks of time in cyclical forms*,* and recalls Herman Melleville's "Bartleby The Scrivener," invoking both Bartleby's willingness to simply "prefer not to" as a desire to claim exception to the pervasive drive towards commodification. Keeling posits that "poetic knowledge returns the body to the living organism,"[233] perhaps implying that Bartleby's disconnection from *task* provides the character with a resource for transcending the *corporeal entrapment* that so often appears a leitmotif that connects corporeality to temporal and material forms of entrainment in this dissertation.

Keeling considers Sun Ra's "imaginative positing of a colony for Black people 'up under the stars' [as raising] ethical questions about spatial relations." Keeling suggests that, "…By introducing desire and the senses into knowledge production [poetic knowledge] disrupts the common, habitual relationship of signification that allows for prediction and reconciliation between things [...providing a] queer way of knowing that flies in the face of calculation and commensuration–an empiricism that invites surprises."[234] Keeling also looks at the work of Alice Coltrane, recognizing in the writings of Eudouard Glissant,[235] an understanding of both the "poetics of Relation," which Keeling describes as a "mobile, fugitive perception of the interconnectedness of all things," and also "'being' as a constant process of change, a permanent process that he refers to as 'creolization.'"[236]

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[233] Keeling, Kara. *Queer Times, Black Futures*. NYU Press, 2019. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/book/76057.
[234] Ibid.
[235] *Proprioceptions* also engages aspects of Edouard Glissant's ideas of circular nomadism, which "resists a generalizing universal, and soon begets specific and local sense of identity, in concentric circles (provinces and nations) [...] The root is not important. Movement is. The idea of errantry, still inhibited in the face of this mad reality, is too functional nomadism." Like a person grasping in the dark for furniture that will help them find the way to the light switch, any work in the *Proprioceptions* series asks performers to mediate the ambiguous dialogue between their own autonomous actions and those of the other performers, with whom they are at once cooperating and struggling for independence. In a successful performance of *Proprioceptions II,* each performer would able to engage their own task within the taskscape, but also nonetheless in constant communication with with the "mad reality" of "too functional nomadism": Whether following clock time or relying exclusively on a cooperative or communal sense of time, a performance of this work is effective when those involved are constantly engaged with the task of mediating their own reality with those of the other performers, whether or not this is done with the aid of a (mechanical or digital) timepiece.
[236] Keeling, Kara. *Queer Times, Black Futures*. NYU Press, 2019. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/book/76057.

Keeling uses Glissant's concept of 'creolization' to illustrate the extents to which both Coltrane and Sun Ra hybridized and restructured systems of logic, creative expression, and cultural exchange to assert a form of simulacrum: a hybridization that was rooted in Africa and realized through articulations that originated in the Caribbean. Embedded in this reading of Ra's and Coltrane's mythologies is a time-based understanding of the simulacrum. For humans time is a continually evolving perception that is predicated on memories that inevitably invoke variations of earlier, more distant memories, until memory is no longer derived from any of the experiencer's original experiences, but instead, a network of inherited associations: an entrainment of subjective and historical time. It is this time-based conundrum that each performer and audience member is asked to contemplate in the *Proprioceptions* series.

Charles Gaines's previously mentioned statement that "layering is a consequence of the work that's put into it" is reflected in the form of all the original music discussed in this chapter. Though temporality and repetition function quite differently in *Proprioceptions*, *the Ambigram Series*, and *MRI Dark*, all three works highlight different dimensions of memory and mindfulness. Time scales are layered in *Proprioceptions,* while in the Ambigram Series, temporalities are directly juxtaposed (forwards and backwards time, or in stacked layers of different performers' 7-minute timegrid). *MRI Dark*, meanwhile, relies on machine-driven randomness to recall material for the performer, continuously pairing that material with new combinations of the AMIA characters, alongside the gradual accretion of the twelve characters.

All the original works in Chapter 4 were designed to investigate the relationships between structure and intuition, and to generate poetic and musical articulations of the visual, sonic, and performative nature of both artistic practice and scholarly investigation. Each work investigates different social and internal dynamics, all informed by an engagement with social ecology and lexical entrainment with an emphasis on the roles for compassion, empathy, and mindfulness in facilitating a performative dynamic that is directly informed by the intensely personal experiences that have shaped all the scholarship in this document.

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, the concept of *lexical entrainment* has served to imbricate the dualities of materiality and conceptualism; structure and intuition; and subjectivity and objectivity. This blurring of conceptual borders is articulated through investigations of the artistic practices of African American conceptual artists and improvising musicians active since the 1960s. Subsequently these same dualities and the influence of those artists' and musicians' creative practices are then related to the original artistic work created for my April 8, 2023 creative capstone concert.

All the concepts discussed in this dissertation (both those that are analyzed herein and those that are original to this document) articulate the insights on compassion, mindfulness, and empathy that developed not only during my decade of teaching music to young children in Brooklyn, NY, but also though subsequently directing those insights towards a more embodied engagement with my traumatic personal experiences of multiple brain surgeries during the 2010s. The most positive engagement with such challenges is to direct those insights towards a more compassionate or mindful engagement with others — both colleagues and strangers alike.

The original concepts of *Decentralized Communal Authorship* and *Corporeal Entrapment* both articulate the limitations of understanding the personal experiences of others. These terms not only reflect my specific approach to understanding socially-enacted structural challenges that disproportionately affect individuals and communities that are different from my own, but those terms also provide two specific examples of how my expanded concept of *lexical entrainment* offers a concise linguistic framework for understanding how the dualities mentioned in the beginning of this conclusion can be mapped (or scaled) onto a spectrum of engagements, from the intra-personal to the inter-personal to the global (or infinite).

As a performer/composer, these inter-personal engagements can be seen as an embodiment of experimentation and self-inquiry through performance. In sharing this process with others through performance or through the creation of directions (a score) for others to recreate the process of

self-inquiry through their own performance, a process of lexical entrainment emerges that is not only cyclical but also simultaneously personal and also communal.

Positive, transformative growth emerges from the tension between one's lived body experience and the connection with the shared entrainment of subjective and historical time.[237] The capacity to transgress the threshold between subjectivity and objectivity suggests a path to transcending Corporal Entrapment. The capacity for transformative growth articulates my understanding of how my own personal medical challenges provide insight into a more mindful engagement with the challenges of others.

The theories and creative works of Charles Gaines, Benjamin Patterson, Roscoe Mitchell, and Frank B. Wilderson all present a conundrum for artists who seek to more fully engage in the most elusive truths about the lived experiences of not only the artists discussed in this dissertation, but *all people* (including oneself). Mindfulness towards the material realities of others' subjective experiences and objective realities will always present a challenge, necessitating continuous reinvestment, as it is a non-fixed, continually evolving pursuit. Though this dissertation focuses on the artistic and musical practices of a few specific individuals, this truth about the necessity to *challenge oneself,* or to *check oneself*, continues to elude direct engagement for everyone, because like any moving target, the truth about compassion, empathy, and mindfulness can only be approached, and never truly attained.

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[237] This tension between subjective and historical time also serves as a catalytic element in both the *Proprioceptions* and *Ambigram* serieses discussed in Chapter 4.

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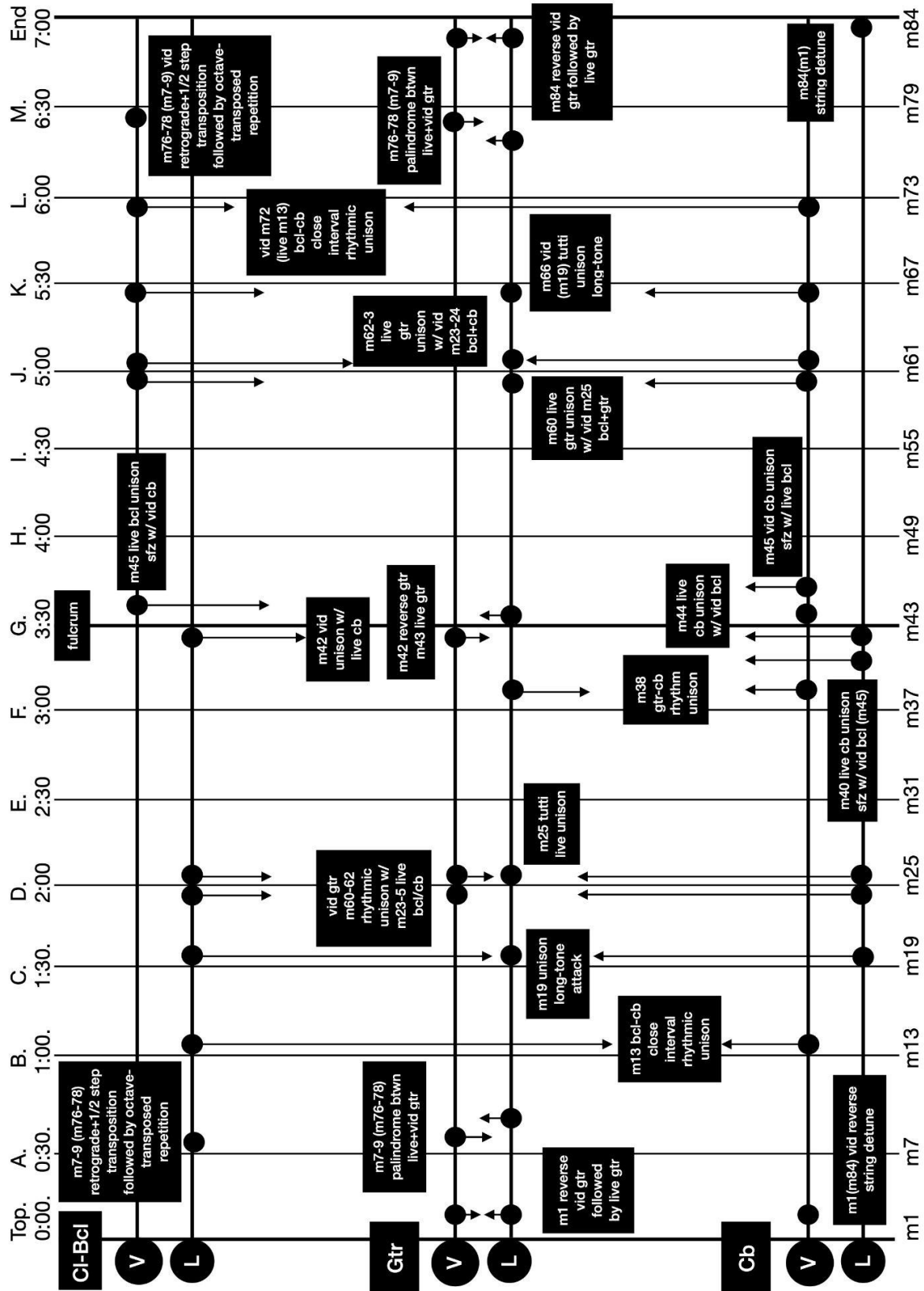
Appendix I: Ambigram Series II Figures

Ambigram Series II Numbers I-3: All 84 measures for all three performers:

measure			Live Josh	Vid Josh	Live Lily	vid Lily	Live JI	Vid JI			measure
1	Top	0:00	med hiss		1	30	1		6:55	end	84
2		0:05	long note		med hiss 1	med hiss 2	denman	30	6:50		83
3		0:10			med gliss 1	29			6:45		82
4		0:15			long note	med improv 1			6:40		81
5		0:20	med non-pitch rhythm			med note 1	med rest 2		6:35		80
6		0:25	med improv	30		28	med improv 3		6:30	M	79
7	A	0:30	1		2	27	long buzz	29	6:25		78
8		0:35	2	29	med rest 1	med buzz 1			6:20		77
9		0:40	3	28	3	26		28	6:15		76
10		0:45	long note		med buzz 2	med rest 2	2	27	6:10		75
11		0:50	4		med note 2	25	med gliss 1	long krinkle	6:05		74
12		0:55	long hiss		4		med note 1		6:00	L	73
13	B	1:00		27	denman		3		5:55		72
14		1:05		26			denman 2		5:50		71
15		1:10	med gliss			24	long improv	26	5:45		70
16		1:15	5	25	5	med note		25	5:40		69
17		1:20	6		short crinkle 1	med rest 3			5:35		68
18		1:25	7	24	6	23	4	24	5:30	K	67
19	C	1:30	med note	23	long buzz	22	med hiss 3	long note	5:25		66
20		1:35	8			long improv 2	5		5:20		65
21		1:40	9			21	med rest 3		5:15		64
22		1:45	10		7	20	6	23	5:10		63
23		1:50	long non-pitch rhythm		med hiss 3		long gliss	22	5:05		62
24		1:55			med gliss 2			21	5:00	J	61
25	D	2:00			med non-pitch rhythm			20	4:55		60
26		2:05	11		short crinkle 3	19	7		4:50		59
27		2:10	12	22		18	8		4:45		58
28		2:15	med buzz	21	long improv 3		med note 2	n-pithch rhyt	4:40		57
29		2:20	med rest				med buzz 1	19	4:35		56
30		2:25	long crinkle	20	8		med crinkle 3	18	4:30	I	55
31	E	2:30			long rest	denman	med buzz 2		4:25		54
32		2:35				med gliss 3	9		4:20		53
33		2:40	med non-pitch rhythm		17		med crinkle 4	long rest	4:15		52
34		2:45	med polyrhythm		9	med buzz 3	long hiss		4:10		51
35		2:50	13	19	10	denman 3			4:05		50
36		2:55	med note		11	16		17	4:00	H	49
37	F	3:00	14		short crinkle 2		denman 3		3:55		48
38		3:05	15		12		10		3:50		47
39		3:10	med non-pitch rhythm	18	denman 2			med improv 2	3:45		46
40		3:15	long rest	17	13	15	11	16	3:40		45
41		3:20			long gliss	14	12	15	3:35		44
42		3:25		16			13	14	3:30	G	43
43	G	3:30	16				14	13	3:25		42
44		3:35	med crinkle		14	long gliss	15	12	3:20		41
45		3:40	17		15	13	16	11	3:15		40
46		3:45	18		long hiss	denman	med improv 2		3:10		39
47		3:50	med rest	15	12		med rest 1	10	3:05		38
48		3:55	med hiss	14			med gliss 3		3:00	F	37
49	H	4:00	med polyrhythm		16	11	17		2:55		36
50		4:05	19	13	denman 3	10	long rest		2:50		35
51		4:10	med buzz		med buzz 3	9		long hiss	2:45		34
52		4:15	long improv		17	long rest		med crinkle 4	2:40		33
53		4:20			med gliss 3		med improv 1	9	2:35		32
54		4:25			denman 1		med hiss 2		2:30	E	31
55	I	4:30	20		long crinkle	8	18		2:25		30
56		4:35	med crinkle				19		2:20		29
57		4:40	21			long improv 3	non-pitch rhythm		2:15		28
58		4:45	22	12	18			8	2:10		27
59		4:50	med hiss	11	19	short crinkle 3		7	2:05		26
60		4:55	long gliss		non-pitch rhythm	d non-pitch rhy	20		2:00	D	25
61	J	5:00				med gliss 2	21		1:55		24
62		5:05				med hiss 3	22	long gliss	1:50		23
63		5:10	med buzz	10	20	7	23	6	1:45		22
64		5:15	med rest	9	21	long buzz		med rest 3	1:40		21
65		5:20	med improv	8	long improv 2			5	1:35		20
66		5:25	23		22		long note	med hiss 3	1:30	C	19
67	K	5:30	24	7	23	6	24	4	1:25		18
68		5:35	med crinkle	6	med rest 3	short crinkle 1	med crinkle 1		1:20		17
69		5:40	25	5	med note 3	5	25		1:15		16
70		5:45	med gliss		24	denman	26	long improv	1:10		15
71		5:50	26		long improv		med hiss 1		1:05		14
72		5:55	27				long krinkle	3	1:00	B	13
73	L	6:00	long buzz			4			0:55		12
74		6:05		4	25	med note			0:50		11
75		6:10			med rest 2	med buzz 2	27	2	0:45		10
76		6:15	28	3	26	3	28		0:40		9
77		6:20	29	2	med buzz 1	med rest 1	med gliss 2		0:35		8
78		6:25	med polyrhythm	1	27	2	29	long buzz	0:30	A	7
79	M	6:30	30		28		med rhythm		0:25		6
80		6:35	med gliss		med note 1				0:20		5
81		6:40	med improv		med improv 1		med crinkle 2		0:15		4
82		6:45	long polyrhythm		29	med gliss 1	denman 1		0:10		3
83		6:50			med hiss 2	med hiss 1	30	denman	0:05		2
84		6:55			30	1	med note 3	1	0:00	top	1
		7:00							0:00		

Timelines of Ambigram Series II Numbers 1, 2, 3:

Top. 0:00. | A. 0:30. | B. 1:00. | C. 1:30. | D. 2:00. | E. 2:30. | F. 3:00. | G. 3:30. | H. 4:00. | I. 4:30. | J. 5:00. | K. 5:30. | L. 6:00. | M. 6:30. | End 7:00.

m1 | m7 | m13 | m19 | m25 | m31 | m37 | m43 | m49 | m55 | m61 | m67 | m73 | m79 | m84

Cl-Bcl

V

L

m7-9 (m76-78) retrograde+1/2 step transposition followed by octave-transposed repetition

m45 live bcl unison sfz w/ vid cb

fulcrum

m76-78 (m7-9) vid retrograde+1/2 step transposition followed by octave-transposed repetition

Gtr

V

L

m1 reverse vid gtr followed by live gtr

m7-9 (m76-78) palindrome btwn live+vid gtr

m19 unison long-tone attack

vid gtr m60-62 rhythmic unison w/ m23-5 live bcl/cb

m25 tutti live unison

m38 gtr-cb rhythm unison

m42 vid unison w/ live cb

m42 reverse gtr m43 live gtr

m44 live cb unison w/ vid bcl

m60 live gtr unison w/ vid m25 bcl+gtr

m62-3 live gtr unison w/ vid m23-24 bcl+cb

m66 vid (m19) tutti unison long-tone

vid m72 (live m13) bcl-cb close interval rhythmic unison

m76-78 (m7-9) palindrome btwn live+vid gtr

m84 reverse vid gtr followed by live gtr

Cb

V

L

m1(m84) vid reverse string detune

m13 bcl-cb close interval rhythmic unison

m40 live cb unison sfz w/ vid bcl (m45)

m45 vid cb unison sfz w/ live bcl

m84(m1) string detune

140

Appendix II: Score for *Proprioceptions II*

Proprioceptions II: *Context Clues*

1	0:00													13:00
3	0:00				4:20				8:40					13:00
5	0:00		2:36			5:12		7:48			10:24			13:00
7	0:00	1:51		3:42		5:34		7:25		9:17		11:09		13:00
11	0:00	1:11	2:22	3:33	4:44	5:55	7:06	8:17	9:28	10:39	11:50			13:00
13	0:00	1:00	2:00	3:00	4:00	5:00	6:00	7:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00

- Performer chooses at least one circle to follow.

- Each circle is numbered, and the number of the circle corresponds to the number of cycles to be completed in the allotted time (13 minutes)

- A performer can play any combination of any number of circles, but must follow the timecode for that circle from beginning to end.

- Parameters for the symbols that appear in the circle are undefined. The performer should consider sounds or actions that relate to the symbols in a way that feels appropriate to the performer.

- When completing multiple cycles within the 13 minutes, the performer(s) should consider the role of change or repetition in how the symbols are interpreted on in each cycle. It may or may not feel appropriate to maintain some relationship between each cycle - be it intentional or arbitrary.

- It is ideal if a performer is able to follow more than one cycle at one time. This may require a great deal of concentration, or perhaps auditory proprioception.
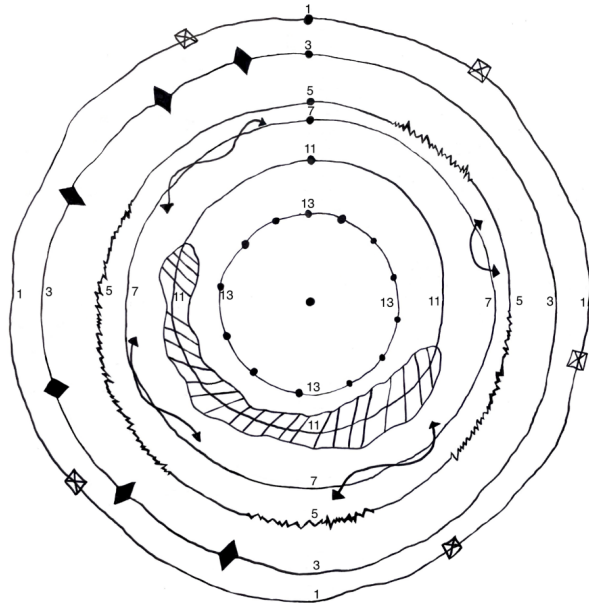
Appendix III: Capstone Multimedia, Concert Program, Flier, Stage Diagram

April 8, 2023 Audio

MRI Dark
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/t10l7lh277zgzqu3iqckr/1_capstone_april_8_2023_mri_dark.wav?rlkey=uogzuygix315urkuqnv2sxl21&dl=0

Ambigram Series II Number 1: Lily Guarneros Maase
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/c1vuvkvp2ygps7d27ruxs/2_capstone_april_8_2023_ambigram_serires_II_lily_guarneros_maase.wav?rlkey=6wqa40x1vgd5gfxxisqmbjthp&dl=0

Ambigram Series II Number 2: James IE Ilgenfritz III
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/sksxsbwaejeny23ks5kfe/3_capstone_april_8_2023_ambigram_serires_II_james_ilgenfritz.wav?rlkey=0no5ns1bt4rysit2qh40e7cwj&dl=0

Ambigram Series II Number 3: Joshua Rubin
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/6ktbio73zy16c9qhnrg82/4_capstone_april_8_2023_ambigram_serires_II_joshua_rubin.wav?rlkey=vr228f94cy13xjkb82g6wh0du&dl=0

Proprioceptions II: Context Clues
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/mdi6slj03rji12xcmmfqz/5_capstone_april_8_2023_proprioceptions.wav?rlkey=gltj83hs45z6ldjb9own7cgm3&dl=0

Almostness
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/y8osl6jho0vihpgbizn8n/6_capstone_april_8_2023_almostness.wav?rlkey=zuh584s2o88piqahum4zqd7j4&dl=0

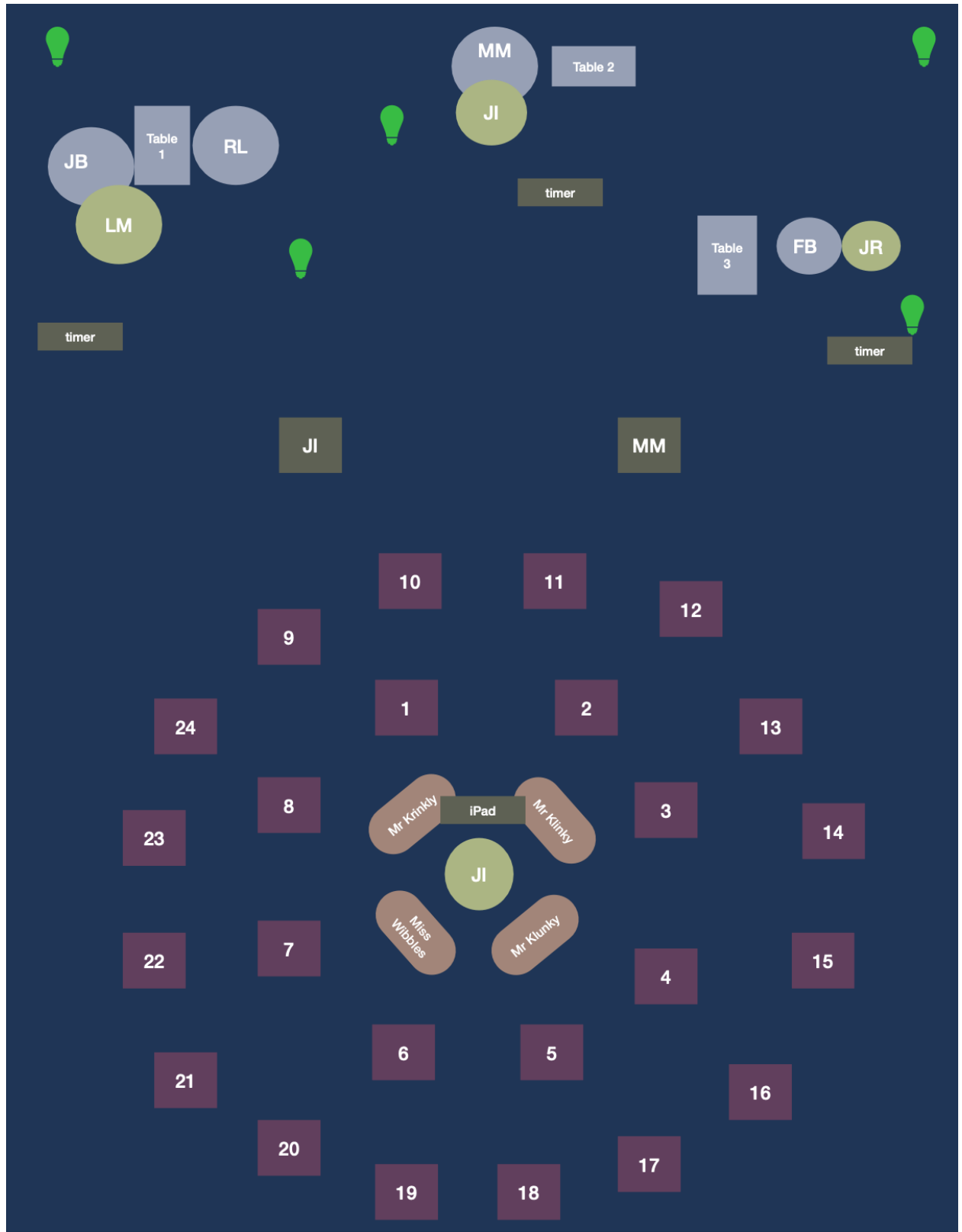**Video Documentation: YouTube Playlist**
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsWaHZtpMCIuzS2SFYVWXa6WWqgpMLMMu

Scores:
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/w09v1h32l92mwa7sorftj/h?rlkey=8cfs55uny2ibsgrj5m00jodmv&dl=0

April 8, 2023 Stage Diagram

James Ilgenfritz III ICIT Dissertation Recital

April 8, 2023

MRI Dark (15')

James Ilgenfritz (bass) w/ AMIA*

Ambigram Series II Number 1 (7')

Lily Maase (guitar)

Ambigram Series II Number 2 (7')

James Ilgenfritz (bass)

Ambigram Series II Number 3 (7')

Josh Rubin (clarinets)

Ambigram Series II Numbers 1-3 (7')

Josh Rubin/Lily Maase/James Ilgenfritz

Ambigram Series II conducted by Malcolm McGee

INTERMISSION (10 minutes)

Proprioceptions II (13')

Rebecca Larkin (flute)

Fabricio Cavero (clarinet)

Lisa Yoshida (violin)

Jiryis Ballan (buzuq)

Isaac Otto (clarinet)

Matthew Nelson (sax)

Malcolm McGee (viola, voice)

Almostness (8')

James Ilgenfritz (bass) w/ AMIA*

Ambigram Series I Numbers 3-6 (7')

Rebecca Larkin (flute and objects)

Fabricio Cavero (clarinet and objects)

Jiryis Ballan (buzuq and objects)

Malcolm McGee (voice and objects)

* AMIA - Autonomous Mechanical Instrument Array