



MARYANNE AMACHER:
PERCEPTUAL GEOGRAPHIES

I believe a lot of music, particularly as it developed from the past, was really a rearrangement of the figures of other men's music—I'm not talking about sampling—but it's just snatching little things and doing your own personalized sequence in time. Whereas, I think my tendency was to become much more involved in the so-called physics—I don't like the word psychoacoustics—both of music and how our perceptual experience changes when sounds are just traveling around here and it sounds like it's miles away, when it seems like it's only in your head...

-Maryanne Amacher

from an interview conducted by

Frank J. Oteri for NewMusicBox,

April 16, 2004 in Kingston, New York.





bowerbird and blank forms present

MARYANNE AMACHER: PERCEPTUAL GEOGRAPHIES



Above: Maryanne Amacher at the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts in the State University of New York at Buffalo, circa 1967. Previous page: Maryanne Amacher on Pier 6 of the Boston Harbor, site of the remote link for City-Links #4 (Tone and Place, Work I) and City-Links #14. Circa 1974. Credit: Photographer unknown.

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CONCERT PROGRAM

FRIDAY - 7:30PM

April 12, 2019

Supreme Connections

performance installation by

Bill Dietz, Sergei Tcherepnin, Keiko Prince,
Woody Sullender, Nora Schultz, and Amy Cimini.

Maryanne Amacher: *Adjacencies* (1965)

Robert Cosgrove, percussion; Russell Greenberg, percussion;
Daniel Neumann, electronics; Woody Sullender, electronics

Maryanne Amacher: *Petra* (1991)

Marianne Schroeder, piano and Emily Manzo, piano

SATURDAY - 7:30PM

April 13, 2019

Maryanne Amacher: *Petra* (1991)

Marianne Schroeder, piano and Emily Manzo, piano

Maryanne Amacher: *Adjacencies* (1965)

Robert Cosgrove, percussion; Russell Greenberg, percussion;
Daniel Neumann, electronics; Woody Sullender, electronics

Supreme Connections

performance installation by

Bill Dietz, Sergei Tcherepnin, Keiko Prince,
Woody Sullender, Nora Schultz, and Amy Cimini

at **HOLY APOSTLES AND THE MEDIATOR** 260 S 51st St (at Spruce) Philadelphia, PA 19139

PROGRAM NOTES

Maryanne Amacher (1938 – 2009) was a composer of large-scale fixed-duration sound installations and a highly original thinker in the areas of perception, sound spatialization, creative intelligence, and aural architecture. She is frequently cited as a pioneer of what has come to be called “sound art,” although her thought and creative practice consistently challenge key assumptions about the capacities and limitations of this nascent genre. Often considered to be a part of a post-Cagean lineage, her work anticipates some of the most important developments in network culture, media arts, acoustic ecology, and sound studies.

Amacher was born in 1938 in Kane, Pennsylvania, a small town in the northwestern part of the state, just south of Erie. Her formative years were spent in Philadelphia, where she enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania in 1955. As a music major, she studied with composer and theorist Constant Vaclain, George Rochberg, and the prominent German avant-garde composer Karlheinz Stockhausen during his tenure in Philadelphia in 1964 and 1965.



Above and the following pages: Amacher in her studio at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, MIT, in the early seventies. Courtesy Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

After her work at University of Pennsylvania, Amacher went on to hold a series of fellowships at the University of Illinois' Studio for Experimental Music, MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies, SUNY Buffalo, Capp Street Gallery in San Francisco, and many others, also internationally. In the late 1960s, while a part of the Creative Associates at SUNY-Buffalo, Amacher pioneered what she called “long distance music,” or telematic, site-related works that would later crystallize into her renowned *City Links* series. During her time as a fellow at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies (1972-1976) she began developing her “ear tone” music with the help of Marvin Minsky's Triadex Muse, a synthesizer and compositional tool utilizing principles of artificial intelligence. Amacher's “ear tone” music emerged from creative use of combination and difference tones, along with otoacoustic emissions, or sounds produced spontaneously within the cochlea. She followed developments and debates in otological research on OAEs and other psychoacoustic phenomena closely. Such independent scholarship was an important stimulus to Amacher's career-long research into “ways of hearing” and the creative potentialities of how the ear itself processes sounds both of itself and in situ.

By her own account, Amacher's work is best represented by three multimedia installation series produced in the United States, Europe, and Japan between the late 1960s and her death in 2009. In these major works, *City Links* (1967-1980), *Music for Sound Joined Rooms*, and the *Mini Sound Series*, Amacher refashioned composition as a dramatically staged creative undertaking in experimental acoustics. She was fascinated with the physicality of sound, the way it

Right: Maryanne Amacher at work on her 1985 “Mini Sound Series,” Sound House, during her residency at the Capp Street Project in San Francisco.



propagated in space, and the unexpected ways that it provoked images and sensations in the "mind's ear." Her approach was slow, deliberate, and empirical. She would spend hours listening to seemingly unchanging tones or making minute adjustments to loudspeaker placement. For Amacher, these things were not details or minutiae: they were the very heart of her work, the equivalent to the painstaking working out of themes or harmonic progressions in traditional music. In *City Links*, Amacher transmitted live sonic feeds from multiple cities (or multiple sites in the same city) via high-quality telephone lines and mixed these sources live during exhibitions, concert presentations, or radio broadcasts. In *City Links* (1967), a 28 hour live mix, connected eight locations around Buffalo via phone lines to WBFO. The program was recognized by the Institute for Education by Radio and Television for its innovative, experimental approach to radio's role in fostering social community. In *City Links*, Amacher reflected upon the changing sense of place created by the general public's access to air travel and telecommunications. Work titles often reflected these themes (e.g. *No More Miles* and *Tone of Place*). It was a prescient tremor of the "network culture" thematics to come in recent media art. Through 1979, she realized 21 iterations of her *City Links* series, many of which were collaborations with visual artists and/or architects. They took

the form of installations, performances, and combinations of both.

The second work group is a site-specific series called *Music for Sound Joined Rooms*. In these works, Amacher used idiosyncratic speaker placements (facing walls or the floor of her installation space) to send sound through the solid medium of built space before allowing it to circulate in air, creating multiple, overlapping acoustics. Opposed to the usual air-borne transmission of sound waves (the single carrier medium for all traditional Western music), she referred to this practice in her writing as structure-borne transmission. In such works, the architectural site of the installation itself became the physical medium of the work, shaping and coloring the sounds as they propagate through it. The first piece in this series was *Living Sound: Patent Pending* (1980), presented as part of the Walker Art Center's New Music America programming. Amacher described it as follows:

The house, on a hill in St. Paul with its panoramic view of Minneapolis, was lit by tall quartz spots, as if a movie set. The time: midnight. [In the] music room, where two grand pianos had been, was now an "emergent music laboratory," there were 21 petri dishes with something growing in them – the musicians and instruments of the future. DNA photos and biochemical diagrams were placed on music stands. Meanwhile, the entire house was full of a spectacular sound – incredibly loud and unbelievably dense – sound, circulating throughout the rooms, out the doors and windows, down the hill, past sedate Victorian mansions. It seemed to contain the energy of all frequency ranges at once,



yet never approached white noise. [Listeners] felt themselves pushed, as if by acoustic pressure, out into the garden, where the entire house was heard, sounding, as a gigantic instrument.

Finally, Amacher's *Mini Sound Series* is comprised of a group of multimedia installations based on the television miniseries format. In the *Mini Sound Series*, an ensemble of "sound characters" distinguished by unique timbral, gestural, and contour profiles interact and develop in relation to each other over several days or weeks, following dramatic narrative techniques drawn from television and other popular forms in a serial format. *Mini Sound Series* was an important departure from the conventions of endless-duration sound installation practices, which Amacher found to be asking overly diffuse attention of the listener, as well as from the conventions of fixed-seating concert listening, which she found aggressively disciplinary. Instead, Amacher explains, the *Mini Sound Series* allows, "people to return and identify certain characters, having gotten to know them in [previous] features." Uniting all of these works is a holistic concern with the entire network of processes that comprise the experience of music—in her own words, such a set of processes emphasizes that,



"how certain sounds are to be perceived in a sonic world becomes as important as the sounds themselves."

As the spatial "staging" in both *Music for Sound Joined Rooms* and *Mini Sound Series* became increasingly critical to the work series' articulation, Amacher began developing visual components that functioned to both heighten the overall aesthetic experience of a visitor and to also guide visitors through the series of rooms that would frame a given work. These visual components were comprised largely of original videos and slide projections, but also included scrolls, 3D-images, objects, and texts.

Though Amacher is known primarily as an electronic composer, early on she wrote a handful of pieces for classical instruments using experimental forms of notation. *AUDJOINS*, a *Suite For Audjoined Rooms* was a collection of such works, from the early to mid-'60s, for various spatially staged ensembles. *Adjacencies*, a graphic score for two percussionists and electronics, was written in 1965 (during her time in Philadelphia) and is the only known extant score of that series. The work directs performers by sending their microphone signals to a changing array of speakers

surrounding the audience, combining otherwise distinct worlds of sound. Not performed since 1966, Lawrence Kumpf's New York City based presenting organization Blank Forms collaborated with Amacher scholars Amy Cimini and Bill Dietz to unpack and analyze the score for its posthumous realization. The work was given its modern premiere at The Kitchen in 2017 with Ian Antonio and Russell Greenberg of the experimental piano-percussion quartet Yarn/Wire, with sound distribution by Daniel Neumann and Woody Sullender.

Starting in the late seventies, the central focus of Amacher's practice shifted to the site-specific transformation of architectural space, involving the measured, oblique placement of speakers behind walls and under floors to reimagine manmade structures as massive analog sound filters. Moving from the entire-building scale of her *Music For Sound Joined Rooms* to the *Mini Sound Series*, Amacher strategically incorporated a variety of visual elements as cues for suggested spatial navigation. Requiring prolonged venue access as well as considerable equipment, Amacher was almost never able to mount these costly works in the US before her death in 2009, presenting them largely in Europe and Japan. Inspired by vernacular serial formats, she emphasized that the architecturally staged pieces, as distinguished from a continuous installation or traditional concert genre, were intended as "an evolving sound work 'to be continued.'"

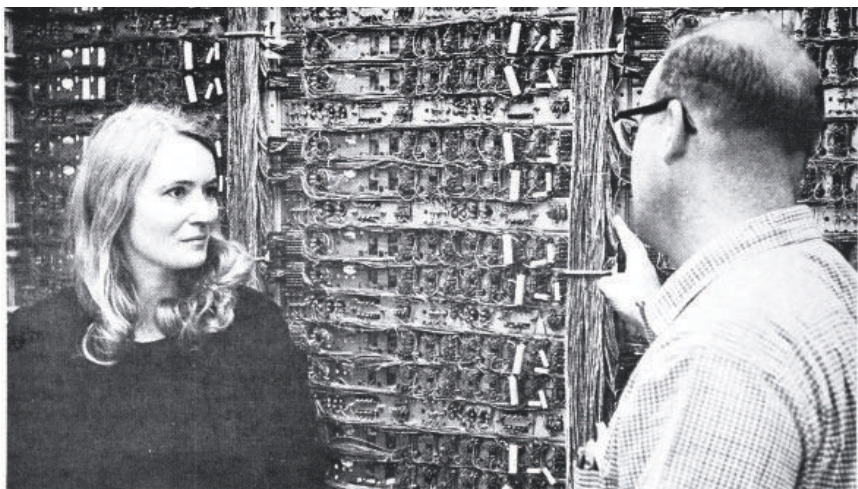
In 2012 a group of Amacher's former collaborators took up the baton, joining forces to collectively engage with the questions of the posthumous life of their friend's site-adaptive work. Under the name Supreme Connections (the top

secret sound lab featured in Amacher's unrealised treatment, *Intelligent Life*), the loose formation developed a model for realizing Amacher's radical approach in keeping with its complex conception of "the work." Recreating the working methodology of Amacher's later years through conscious interpretation rather than incongruously faithful reenactments, Supreme Connections created a series of large-scale "hearing as if" installations at the Funkhaus, Tate Modern, Bienal de São Paulo, and Stedelijk Museum.

Amacher's 1991 piece *Petra* was originally commissioned for the ICSM World Music Days in Boswil, Switzerland. Written for two pianos, *Petra* is a unique example of Amacher's late work, a direct extension of her working methodologies for electronic compositions taken into an acoustic realm that alludes to the music of Giacinto Scelsi and Galina Ustvolskaya. The piece is a sweeping, durational work based on both Amacher's impressions of the church at Boswil and science-fiction writer Greg Bear's short story of the same name, in which gargoyles come to life and breed with humans in a post-apocalyptic Notre Dame.

The piece will be performed by Marianne Schroeder, who originally performed the piece alongside Amacher in 1991, and Emily Manzo. Like much of Amacher's work, a performance of *Petra* is not as straightforward as it might appear—there is no definitive score but rather a series of fragments and working notes left to be deciphered. This third-ever performance is an expanded version based on newly discovered notes and scores from the Maryanne Amacher Archive.

*Notes by Bill Dietz, Amy Cimini,
Lawrence Kumpf and Dustin Hurt.*



SHE HEARS A RHAPSODY

Creative Associate Maryanne Amacher (shown here with an unidentified technician) recently exploited the musical potential of this tangle of telephone wires in Goodyear basement in a 23-hour composition entitled "CITY-LINKS WBFO Buffalo." The blonde composer's experiment in urban avant-garde utilized the lines to transmit sounds from five off-campus sites, including Bethlehem

Steel, General Mills, Greater Buffalo International Airport, and Hengerer's Department Store, to the WBFO studio. There, she monitored, mixed, and altered them during a marathon concert, broadcast by the campus station from 3:00 p.m. Friday, May 26, until midnight Saturday, May 27, as a kind of way-out Inaugural tribute for urban planner Martin Meyerson.

Maryanne Amacher during her stint as Creative Associate at the Center For Performing and Creative Arts in Buffalo. From the June 1967 issue of the University of Buffalo Alumni News. Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

Artistic Occasion in Store for Buffalo

By TERRY DORAN
OUR MARINER-5 spacecraft is expected to rendezvous with planet Venus on Oct. 18. The following day, an event no less advanced in conception is scheduled to begin in Buffalo and last through the week-end, perhaps longer.

Event is entirely the wrong word, as you shall see. It suggests time, a place and reasonably specific expectations. Occasion is a plausible alternative.

So this occasion, which is called "In City, Buffalo 1967, and may be admitted Oct. 20-22 will project our city nearly into the 21st Century. This temporary trip already has a number of sponsors and, hopefully, will have a great many more soon.

THE GENERAL IDEA, which is described below, grew from conversations between Maryanne Amacher, a pianist, composer and Creative Associate at the State University of Buffalo, and Allen D. Sapp, chairman of the university's Music Department.

The Creative Associates are young people working in the arts, members of the Center for the Creative and Performing Arts, administered by Dr. Sapp and Lukia Foss. Their work in particular and their presence in general has contributed an experimental force throughout the scene in our city.



Maryanne Amacher, pianist, avant-garde composer and Creative Associate, contemplates some commonplace objects. During a fall week-end, she intends to transform Buffalo into an artifact, using every-

day materials such as newsprint, downtown buildings, streets, sounds, colors, motion picture film, radio waves. In this 21st Century environment, the entire populace can enjoy an esthetic experience.

Maryanne Amacher around the time of her In City, Buffalo 1967, the work she would later refer to as "CITY-LINKS" #1. Terry Doran, "Colors on Streets, Pictures on Clouds: Artistic Occasion in Store for Buffalo," Buffalo Evening News, 29 July 1967. Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

SUMMARY OF PERCEPTUAL GEOGRAPHY

by Maryanne Amacher

Our experience of these responsive tones sensations are more or less subliminal. My work involves bringing them to surface, removing the subliminal status, the perceptual glue binding them to the acoustic intervals. The work seeks ways of composing with "additional tones," so that tones originating within human anatomy exist in their own right, i.e., become perceptually more than an accident of acoustic tones in the room, attain conscious interplay with them. To do this I have developed what I call a "perceptual geography," which allows me to prepare for the existence of these tone sensations, by distinguishing them in time and space, perceptually.

The response tones we create as a result of the acoustic space we are in, matter to me as a composer. Tones in the room affect our mind and our body. The latter respond by creating new tones. What I am calling "perceptual geography" is the interplay, the meeting of these tones, our processing of the given. I distinguish where the tones originate, in the room, in the ear, in the brain, in order to examine this map and to amplify it musically. I want to listen more carefully, to what are innate and perhaps even distinctly human capabilities. This involves developing a music which more clearly lets us "hear" some of these responses, lets us "know" that given acoustic intervals are indeed affecting responses in our ears and brain. It is a music which emphatically brings attention to what is happening to us.

With traditional musical instruments, the experience of our processing is more or less subliminal, because energy is distributed over such a complex spectrum. This aspect of the musical experience can be enhanced with the addition of simple tones, produced electronically, because they are capable of concentrating energy at certain specific frequencies. Simple tones allow us to present clearly the structure of the interval—the ratio characterizing the interval. This amounts to a "reinforcing" of something very basic, that we have previously "known" and experienced "less clearly" in music; the same interval given by two musical instruments would contain much more harmonic information.

I am sure that past composers understood much of this and would have liked to pursue it further. Today, this music can exist because of the use of simple tones, produced electronically, in musical composition, and can be developed because of the computer—and with the knowledge from modern research in musical acoustics—it is time to take these further steps.

In the music I am describing, superpositions created in ears and brain are reinforced. Tone responses can emerge from subliminal existence and become truly "audible" recognizable experiences. I use simple tones, selected purposefully for these reinforcement functions; musical instruments create the timbre of the tone structure, and relate specifically, in melody, rhythm, pitch, close interval relationship, to tones and/or patterns being created in ears and brain. An interplay is cultivated between musicians and tone sensations. It is intricate. The musicians embellish, improvise with human-given tone responses.

It is a matter of composing—distinguishing ears and brain as different tone spaces, and creating musical dimensions for them. The composer "ghost writes" the scenario, prepares existence for tone responses in time, and space, perceptually. The selection of acoustic intervals may be determined now by choices made regarding particular tone sensations to be created in ear and brain spaces. Tone responses in ears and brain are no longer merely an accident of the acoustic tones compositionally, but can now play a critical part in the selection of those tones.

- "Psychoacoustic Phenomena in Musical Composition: Some Features of a 'Perceptual geography'," from *Arcana III : Musicians on music*



Maryanne Amacher in Oakland, CA, 1993. Credit: Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.



Maryanne Amacher at the Minneapolis remote link site for No More Miles (An Acoustic Twin), 1974. Credit: Photographer unknown, Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

PETRA - IN CONVERSATION

with Marianne Schroeder, Stefan Tcherepnin, and Lawrence Kumpf

MARIANNE SCHROEDER: The problem—this is the problem with Maryanne [Amacher]: I guess that we spoke more on the telephone back then, so it's hard for me to remember everything. Yesterday I looked for several hours to find some letters or something, but I couldn't find any.

LAWRENCE KUMPF: When did you first meet?

MS: Well, we spoke on the phone originally. I wanted to ask her if she could write a trio for us, after I saw and listened to her incredible installation in Berlin in '85 (I think it was in '85). I'm not sure how much we spoke when she was writing *Petra*.

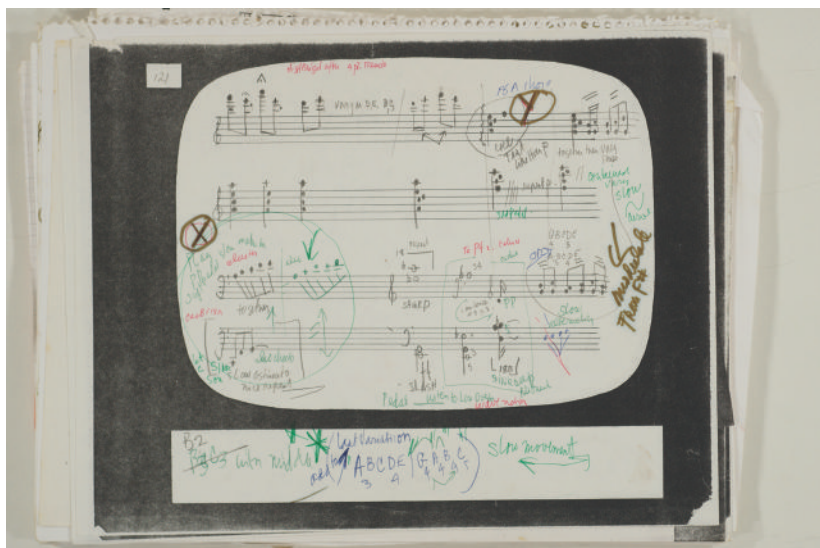
LK: That installation was *The Music Rooms* part of her *Music for Sound Joined Rooms* series at DAAD gallery? And is this where you meet Maryanne for the first time?

MS: Yes, yes! You're right! I had heard about her of course. Werner Uehlinger from Hat Hut Records talked to me about her. He had visited her in Kingston several years before we met. I was in Berlin at that time with my husband, and Maryanne had her installation there. It was the best installation I have ever heard! [laughs] That is the truth!

LK: Yeah, I was reading a little bit of the correspondence that she had with Max Nyffeler, the director of New Music Days, where *Petra* premiered—and as you mentioned, the piece you originally asked her to write was supposed to be the trio for piano, cello and percussion with you Robyn Schulkowsky, and Frances-Marie Uitti, correct?

MS: Yes, for a long time she said she would write a trio for Frances, Robyn, and me.

LK: So that was your original proposition to her, and then as she was thinking about it she came and visited you in Switzerland—in November or December of 1990—and visited the church at Boswil where the



Excerpt of "Petra". Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

performance was eventually going to take place?

MS: Yes. You're right, we had been in Boswil in the church together. She was very excited about the space and the architecture, and so was I. After this she started to correspond with Max about the piece that would become *Petra*. I was there with Christian Wolff, Dieter Schnebel, and others in a competition for composers that Klaus Huber founded when she came.

LK: And then, from what I can glean from her correspondence with Nyffeler, she had just read Greg Bear's *Petra*. I guess, according to these letters, the piece she eventually wrote was inspired by the short story as well as her visit to Boswil. But she also mentions an experience you had—and I think this occurred on a visit to the church—that you had this vivid sense of re-experiencing your first piano lesson when you both visited the church?

MS: Isn't that wonderful? [laughs] No, I can't remember. My first piano lesson was in a village also like Boswil, a small village. That was similar. She came to Boswil maybe four or five days before the festival and then we worked together on the piece. We both had been very, very nervous. She was not used to writing musical notes—and I was nervous to play with her. [laughs] I thought, maybe I'm not able.

LK: It's interesting that you inspired her to write notated music again. She hadn't written any notated music since '64 or '65. So this would've been the first piece she attempted to write since then—and then a few years after this performance, Kronos Quartet commissioned a string quartet that she ultimately never finished. Were you aware that she hadn't written music like this since the mid-'60s?

MS: Yes.

LK: What were your expectations in asking her to write a piece for you?

MS: [laughs] I just felt that she was such a great musician. Maybe I was a little bit ambitious. I thought, "She's alone, she's in the world, she's alone—we should make use of her." At the time I was in a very fruitful collaboration with Robyn Schulkowsky. We had wonderful concerts together, a really wonderful time playing together and improvising and with Frances too, though we didn't improvise; we played Galina Ustvolskaya and Giacinto Scelsi. The three of us all met in Darmstadt, which is where we played as a trio the first time—and



Excerpt of "Petra". Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

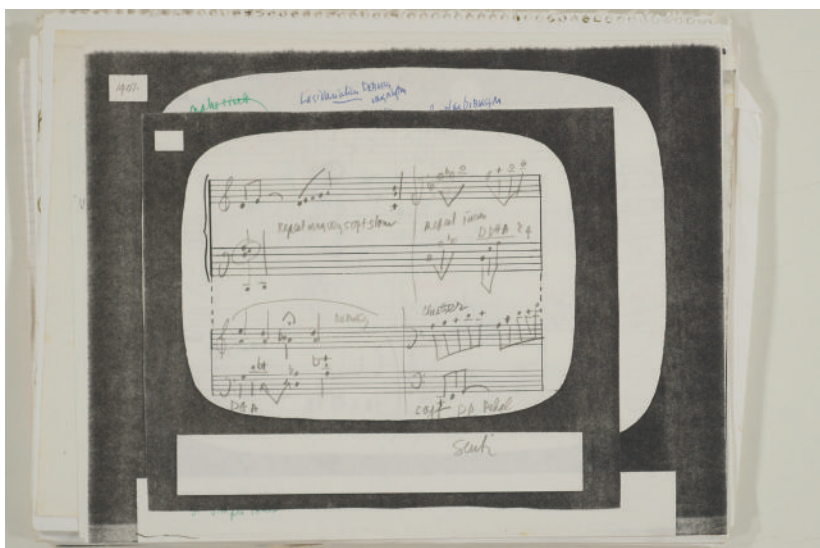
it just went so well. So I thought the three of us would be the right musicians to play Maryanne's music. But I must say I was very shy and I felt—I couldn't believe Maryanne's installation, it was so strong! I was familiar with Cage; I had played *Etudes Australes*, and I was very close with him during that time. Maybe that helped me. But Maryanne, she was alone in the world. Such a music, such a music.

Stefan Tcherepnin: Do you remember when we were working on *Petra* in Berlin, how the materials we were working from—how the score was so fragmented and out of order that we had to reassemble it according to your memory, but also according to the recordings which existed from the performance in 1991?

MS: Yes.

ST: And now, I don't know if you had a chance to see it, but since then we've discovered a whole new packet of materials which includes these same score materials with Maryanne's notes and her handwriting, with more direction—how things were meant to be played. It's interesting now that you mention Ustvolskaya, because I saw in one small passage that Amacher wrote down some transcription of a melody labeled as Ustvolskaya, with no other explanation. There's even some mention of Scelsi in her notes, and I was wondering if you remember that, or if you had discussed any of that music with her before—if that was somehow informing or inspiring or something.

MS: She said that she very much admired Scelsi's music to me several times. She met him once in Rome. I don't know when exactly it was, but it was at the time Scelsi was dying—around 1988. At the time I was very close with him, but now it seems very far away. Maybe I felt like I was on another planet when working with him. I met Scelsi in '85, but in '84 we spoke on the telephone and he said I must immediately come to Rome. I went the following year in the summer, from Berlin, and spent some time working with him. He told me I should stay in his house two years, but not at that time because I had so many of my own concerts and shouldn't interrupt my career. Now I would like to take those two years to learn all his music, [laughs] to learn it until the end. But I played when we were together there. I would always have to ask him to play. If I hadn't asked that, he would never say to me, "Now we play." He didn't like to work, so it was always a big effort to get him over to the piano. He was very special. He liked just to be. Sometimes he let me listen to his own improvisations. And then we stopped working together, but we telephoned often. Every week he called me, on Saturday evening mostly—he called me and then we talked together and I had dreams of him. [laughs] In my dreams he said to me, "Play this music, play that, that is good for you." [laughs] We had a very special communication.



Excerpt of "Petra". Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

LK: Did you have much conversation with Maryanne about her approach writing *Petra*? As I understand the piece, it appears she's composing through a midi computer and printing out the transcriptions—so maybe she's starting the process working in an improvised fashion, having all that material printed out, and then going back and cutting pieces up and re-pasting it together. We've found sections of the scores cut and pasted together that correspond to the live recording from '91.

ST: I think she's approaching it in the same way that she composed her electronic music. In this case, rather than pre-recorded material that's run through various processing techniques and filtering and phasing, that might be the human aspect—and instead of loudspeakers, you have the soundboard piano. So actually, maybe the pianos are like two speakers, and what the pianist is actually performing is blocks of material. This is like how Maryanne would select sections from one performance to the next, so that the same piece would sound entirely different depending on the space in which it was performed.

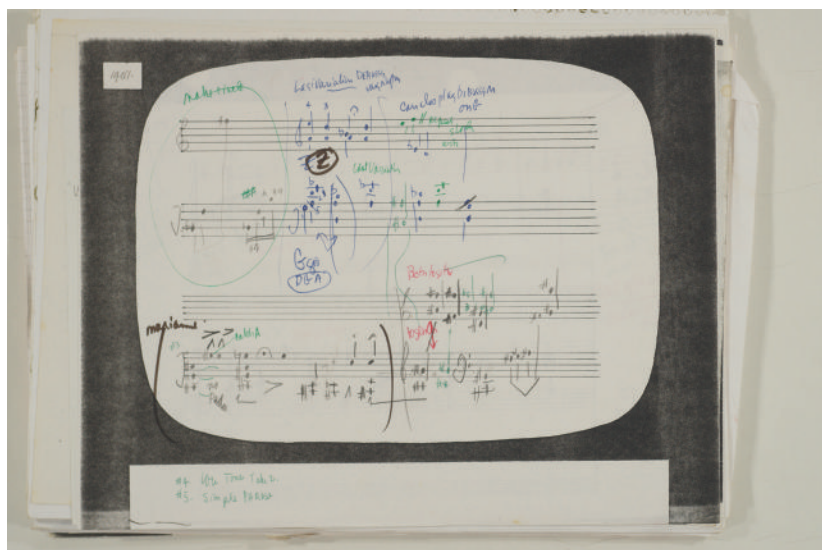
MS: I must say that one of my problems is to really understand good English, and with her, that was not so easy. [laughs] Her voice was a little bit inside, you know? She spoke for herself a little bit, no?

ST: Yeah, she understood herself. [laughs]

MS: Yes. And to play, when we play together, that worked well—but when we talked I think maybe I did not understand most parts. But we had no problem playing.

ST: What allowed me to feel like I could enter into the piece, was the experience of having played piano with Maryanne before and understanding that it's not the same kind of space that we experience in just a day-to-day, normal experience of playing. To get deeper inside the notes or underneath the notes and behind them and really go into the sound in a very emotional way. I didn't, then, feel so much pressure that my technique isn't so good or anything, but more to find an entry point to this kind of sonic world that Maryanne occupied.

LK: In one of the notes that I have from her, she talks about this idea of wanting to make *Petra* a dramatic work. This would have been very much in line with her thinking at the time and her interest in episodic forms like soap operas and comic books; it also connected in some sense to her unrealized simulcast opera *Intelligent Life*. In one of her letters, she talks about wanting to create a set that would incorporate television and video, digital visual material, color, lights, objects, and costumes. And of course, *Petra* itself is based on this great story by Greg Bear about qargoyles coming to life and breeding with humans in post-apocalyptic



Excerpt of "Petra". Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

Notre Dame. Even though her work as we hear it now—as pure sound—is extremely abstract, there is this desire on her part to frame it in this episodic or narrative fashion or even use that to inspire the pieces creation. I'm just wondering if you and Maryanne had that conversation, or if that came across in any ways when you were working with her on the piece?

MS: That is absolutely possible, but I was so bad at English. I think, now when you say that, it sounds so familiar. She must have talked about that, she must have.

ST: I wonder if this could be a way of making sense of the score fragments, and maybe it's how she made the arrangement she composed for the performance—the original performance—in some way reflect the narrative of the story. We can always get more and more out of investigating her notes to this piece, and find if there were some extra elements to it that she had intended. But I think it's endless, the labyrinth of material into which we can always go deeper and deeper.

MS: You have some ideas?

ST: I have some ideas. But also, just, looking at the score, and playing certain passages of it—it gives me more ideas.

MS: Yeah!

ST: A lot more ideas.

MS: That is what happened to me too.

ST: Yeah.

MS: It's in the music, no?

ST: Yeah.

MS: It's fantastic, it's fantastic! In the music!

ST: I think we can find it in the music. [laughs]

MS: We could!

ST: Maybe the answer is in the music. [laughs]

MS: Yes.

ST: Yeah, I think it's about finding all of the different versions. I think that's the only way to approach it.

MS: We should work on it! Then we can find the answer, no? With the material.

ST: Yeah, I found that through all of the notation being limited, when you listen to the recordings that were made, you can hear all of these intertwining melodies and kind of counterpoint also, between the two pianos—it's difficult sometimes to distinguish between piano one and piano two. But sometimes I was under the impression that one of the pianos is creating a kind of vapor, or some kind of dense cloud, and that the melodies and harmonies and even rhythmic figuring from the one piano are then immersing themselves in this cloud, and then it sort of swirls around and generates new—or different melodies begin to emerge out of it. At least that's what it sounds like.



MARYANNE AMACHER'S ADJACENCIES

by Amy Cimini

In an early 1960s letter, Maryanne Amacher tells her parents that she will become a composer. She will not take paid work for a year and will, instead, devote herself to putting her musical ideas "on paper," she tells them. Writing from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, she is in the middle of working on a duo for percussion and electronics, "Adjacencies." After joining the Creative Associates at the University of Buffalo in 1966, Amacher will have two performances of "Adjacencies:" a first at Buffalo's Albright-Knox Gallery and a second, days later, at Carnegie Recital Hall. There, "Adjacencies" appeared after three pieces by Anton Webern and was followed by Charles Wourinen's "Chamber Concerto for Cello and Ten Players." The massed sounds of Amacher's glittering metals, roving around the hall between the four points of "Adjacencies" quadraphonic speaker array would have certainly stood out, far out.

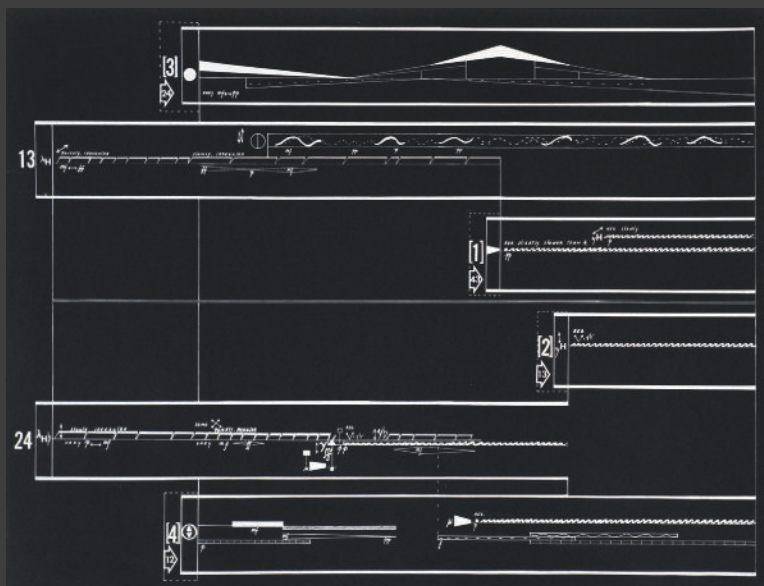


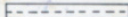
Fig. 1: A page from "Adjacencies." The integers designate sounds' locations in one or more of four speakers. Brackets indicate that sound should be fixed at a single location, while arrows instruct players to project that same sound from additional locations.

The duo calls for a mostly metal battery but also juxtaposes orchestral percussion with household items and industrial junk, including two large metal gas tanks that were to be not only palpated but also struck against one another. Amacher's percussionsists also play harps. Diaphanous glissandi and tremolandi are nearly ubiquitous, as the harps wrap "Adjacencies'" percussive events in a soft Debusssean haze, a gentle but effective source of textural and timbral coherence. Amacher's stunning graphic notation leads her players in ways of listening to each instrument's complete frequency range. She divides those ranges into five distinct strata, but leaves techniques for achieving these sounds up to the players. Ways of listening lead, playing techniques should follow. Percussionist and composer Jan Williams recalls rehearsing "Adjacencies" in Buffalo with Amacher, then in her mid-20s. While

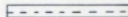
some of the techniques - like glissandi on timpani were somewhat standard - rehearsal had to be a space of experimentation, of "trying things," as he put it. And the two percussionists also had to find their way around harps, as well. Amacher knew what sounds she wanted to hear, Williams explained, and asked for the techniques that she thought might produce them. The single extant recording - a rehearsal - begins with sustained, gleaming sighs produced by drawing thin metal fins along a gas tank's surface, while harp tremolandi quiver in the background. Though her instructions ask her players to spatialize sounds, in addition to producing them, Amacher ran the mixing board in both performances. As Jan Williams notes, the audiences at Buffalo were large and quite young. "[Adjacencies]," he added, "would have spoken to this group."

GET OUT OF THE INSTRUMENT A TIMBRE, (AND CONTINUE TO PLAY, i.e. EXPLORE MORE SPECIFICALLY THE COLLECTION OF FREQUENCY CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN THIS TIMBRE)

*
+H: AS METALLIC & RICH IN HIGH FREQ. CONTENT AS POSSIBLE:  Stress High Freqs. above

H: RICH HIGH FREQ. CONTENT MIXED WITH "SOME" METALLIC LESS RICH THAN ABOVE.  Stress High Freqs. above

-H: ORD. HIGH OR HIGH FREQ. CONTENT TENDING TO BE LESS RICH THAN THE 2 ABOVE:  Stress Low Freqs. below

L: ORD. LOW OR LOW FREQ. CONTENT NOT AS RICH AS BELOW, MIXED WITH A LOWER METALLIC TIMBRE.  Stress Low Freqs. below

+L: AS RICH AS POSSIBLE IN THE LOWEST FREQ. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INSTRUMENT.  Stress Low Freqs. below

*
+H: etc. are to be read as part of the verbal timbre descriptions; they designate a more specific aspect, namely INCREASING and DECREASING, (+ or -), whenever possible the AUDIBILITY of possible self-organizing characteristics you might hear within the HIGHEST and LOWEST FREQ. COLLECTIONS of a timbre generally rich in High or Low Freq. Content.

EXAMPLE:  (-H: ord. High) is rich in high freq. content, but possible interacting characteristics of the highest frequencies are not to be as audible as in H.

Later in these notes I use +H, H, -H, etc. simply as abbreviations when referring to the score indications,    etc..

Fig. 2: From "Adjacencies" score, here Amacher uses differently filled and shaded rectangles to guide her players through a five-part division of each instrument's frequency spectrum. These divisions range from "as high and metallic as possible" "rich high frequencies," "ordinary high frequencies," "ordinary low frequencies," to the "lowest frequency characteristic of the instrument."

An evocative review of the Carnegie Hall performance speaks of "great tensions built up from accumulations," offering a suggestive comparison with composer Edgard Varèse. By the late 1920s, Varèse approached writing for percussion ensembles as the assembly of timbrally distinct "sound masses" whose speeds, planes and angles spurred a music drama of interaction, collision, penetration and dispersion. "Adjacencies" massed sounds certainly draw from this lineage, but also turns a Euro-American modernism staked on electronics and percussion toward radically different horizons. In the letter to her parents, Amacher suggestively recounts studying with Karlheinz Stockhausen in Philadelphia before moving to Urbana. "[He said] I must work very hard," she tells her parents, "[he said] how much I was needed." "Adjacencies" offers a suggestive case in point. With important modifications to the spatialization techniques of Stockhausen's *Kontakte*, Amacher affords her players a flexibility and responsivity to listeners, instruments and built space that Stockhausen found himself unable, at that time, to achieve. While *Mikrophonie I*'s adventures with the tam tam

take steps in this direction, "Adjacencies"" far vaster battery holds open, for Amacher, wider-ranging concern for her listeners' bodily awareness over spectral authenticity alone. A closer look at "Adjacencies" technical details vivifies both points.

Rather than move sound - the point-like attacks of much 1960s modernism - around a static perceiver, "Adjacencies" casts sounds, instruments, bodies, ears and built space into a delicate microdrama of shifting proximities. By connecting sounds' resonant decays with (masked) attacks at new speaker locations, Amacher effects a continuous sounding whose timbre changes as a condition of its movement in quadraphonic space. This, she specifies, is "melody" in "Adjacencies." Pitches and timbres cohere as "melody," in this piece, when they are also specified in three-dimensional space.

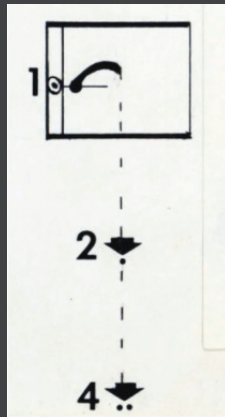


Fig. 3: This is Amacher's graphical notation for spatializing decay, represented by a dark, trellis-like arc followed the descending dotted line. The strike, on the going, sounds at speaker one, but its bright decay should moves to speaker two and then four.

In a 1965 Composition Notebook devoted to the topic of "Space," Amacher explores using the four vertices of the quadraphonic array to create effects along square's sides and diagonals, as though imagining rooms and walls of sound with variable shapes and densities. For an audience seated in the middle of the speakers' square, the effect might be to be sometimes inside and sometimes outside a shifting sonic architecture. As in the later *Music for Sound Joined Rooms* and *Mini-Sound Series*, "Adjacencies" seems to be the making of a special space, a place the audience could enter and linger.

In a remarkable program note, Amacher points, through "Adjacencies," to concerns that will continue to occupy her for the next fifty years. She writes:

I made Audjoins [Adjacencies comes from that series] so that worlds of sound could be joined. They receive each other, interrupt, interact and bring the unexpected to each other. What previously could not have happened simultaneously in the same place, either because of distance, as in the case of countries, or within one composition because of sound levels in one room, is now possible through electronic means.

In Amacher's note, the directionality conveyed by the prefix "ad" describes not just quadraphonic spatialization but suggests further experimentation with sound's long distance transmission and architectural staging. Amacher will, indeed, formalize these concerns in the three installation series that perhaps best summarize her work: the telematic City-Links series (1967-1980), the scene-like architectural dramas of Music For Sound Joined Rooms (1980-) and the walk-in serialized narratives of the Mini Sound Series (1985-). We hear so much in "Adjacencies," but not least the tremors of later projects and a long-term commitment to creating "worlds where the listener might go."

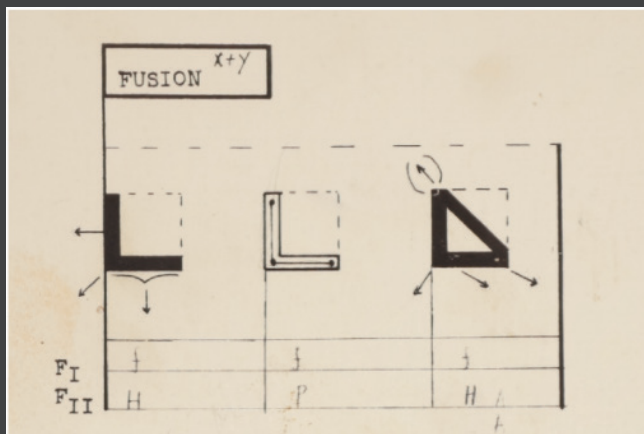


Fig. 4: Amacher's Composition Notebook on "Space" engages in detailed consideration of what kinds of sounds can suppress or emphasize the connections between the quadraphonic square's four speakers. Sometimes she wants to dramatize a diagonal relation and at others emphasize what she calls "side orientation." In her notes, for example, she often remarks that harp tremolando create especially powerful diagonal effects.

THINKING OF KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

The following text was written for and printed in the March 2008 issue of Artforum. As the last known text by Amacher addressing the posthumous future of an artist's work, it has become an important reference for thinking about the posthumous presentation of Amacher's own work.

Proposed: Creation of a VR Character K.S.

"If one of the First Men could enter the world of the Last Men.. the traveler might perhaps be surprised by..... the pair of occipital eyes, ...the upward-looking astronomical eye on the crown, which is peculiar to the Last Men. This organ was so cunningly designed that, when fully extended, almost a hand-breath from its bony case, it reveals the heavens in as much detail as your smaller astronomical telescopes."

The model for the Character K.S. is an entity with enhanced sensory endowments described by Olaf Stapledon in *Last and First Men*. Imagine this new entity and Stockhausen's response to it!

I believe Stockhausen would surely be inspired by the multidimensionality of this Character's expanded perceptual world. Following Stockhausen's innovative direction I want to create existence for it sonically and visually as a VR Character.

Imagine the Character K.S. appearing as a fully animated 3-dimensional presence in your room in a few years, emerging from a VR display. With visual contours and movements ideally designed by the Super Hero artist Matt Haley, K.S. projects the sonic shaping of his music – up, down and all around your space. Walking out of the screen into your room, emitting his radiant energy sometimes in great strides, often flying in different trajectories while interacting with celestial images visible in his crown, or settling nearby beside you K.S. emanates sonic imaging in subtle myriad dimensions due to the sensorial depth embodied in his enhanced auditory/visual perceptions.

Eventually as interactivity for 3d sonic/imaging becomes more sophisticated subtle and adventurous scenarios may be developed for K.S. Such score/scenarios will augment more personal experiential modes with vivid new sensorial presence! Many of these could be based on Stockhausen's beautiful sound score plans for example, Plus Minus or his text pieces, such as Prozession relating newly created sonic events with previously composed episodes from his works. Other remarkable Sonic Characters could be developed and scenarios with interactive interplays among them cultivated for people to discover, script and "play" in their homes. The Characters may appear to each other as complex patterns and rhythms of tonal differences. They could move their tonal bodies in the dimensions of pitch, and sometimes in other dimensions, humanly inconceivable, interacting with the light, movement, and shapes of the astronomical objects radiating from K.S.'s crown. More details will be available at lunch!

"First Light" in K.S.'s Crown

Great news relating to the Astronomical Eye on K.S.'s crown announced just a few days ago! A project to construct the world's most powerful ground-based telescope on a mountain top in Chile has received major funding from the Gates Foundation and the Charles Simonyi Fund. "First light" for this wide field imaging telescope the Large Synoptic Survey (LSST) is scheduled for 2014. Truly an Internet telescope, the LSST will provide real time digital imaging of astronomical objects across the entire sky, night after night, deeply in multiple colors every week, opening a movie-like window on objects that change or move rapidly: such as exploding super novae and distant Kuiper Belt Objects to everyone on the web. It is this ultimate network peripheral device to explore the universe that will enable K.S. to interact sonically with the celestial imaging his astronomical eye is receiving!

Notes Without Ears

If I had not had studies with Karlheinz Stockhausen it is very likely I would have gone on to pursue pure biochemistry – looking inside to the "life" of cells and the critical shaping of their molecular structures. My conventional/traditional/academic background in music provided no approach to understanding or investigating what mattered most to me about the physical nature of sound, our responses to it perceptually, and the creation of the sonic worlds I imagined! All of this began with Stockhausen. How to communicate in a few words the unique treasure of these studies!

Imagine what it was to encounter Stockhausen's supreme energy to *discover*, to explore entirely new ways of presenting music, to delve into the interacting energy of the spectrum itself, and listen into the inner life of sounds themselves! And perhaps even more important his incisive attention to the experiential, to observing sensorial features, how we respond to the acoustic information. One of his first questions to me: "Do you want the tones to shimmer inside?"

All of this was in contrast to most musical practice, where composing usually amounts to procedures of simply rearranging and modifying existent musical figures, that is other men's tunes and giving them a personalized framework in time. ("notes without ears") Silicon composers are now achieving this faster and often better.

Stockhausen understood many of the problems built up over time accompanying the habitual practice of music: that it becomes difficult to "hear" new thoughts. His sonic investigations were designed consciously, to transform such automatic thought processes. He realized new, more fertile approaches were needed.

Stockhausen's example at this critical time in my life enabled me to stretch my mind with great vigor, reinforcing my desires to hear, think, and explore the "unformulated" in order to discover the unique sonic worlds I hoped to shape.

ARTIST BIOS

Amy Cimini earned her Ph.D. in Historical Musicology in 2011 from New York University. Prior to her appointment at UC San Diego, she held an Andrew W. Mellon Post- Doctoral Teaching Fellowship in Music Theory from the University of Pennsylvania from 2011-2013 as well as a visiting position in Music Theory at the College of William and Mary from 2010-2011. Cimini is a historian and performer of music from the 20th and 21st centuries. Broadly, she is interested how performers, composers and audiences practice and theorize listening as an expression of community, sociability and political alliance, with special focus on improvisation, sound art and installation practices. Her book project, *Listening in the Future Tense*, examines the use of biological and ecological sound sources in late 20th century experimental music circles. Cimini is also an active violist working across improvised, rock, noise and contemporary classical genres.

Robert Cosgrove is a percussionist who is passionate about collaboration, whether it is with other musicians, composers, or dancers. An avid chamber musician, he is also drawn to unique performances of little known works that deserve a wider audience. Robert has performed along the East Coast at Carnegie Hall, EMPAC, Princeton University, and the Performing Arts Center at Purchase College and with composers such as Steve Reich, John Corigliano, Stuart Saunders Smith, and Sean Friar. He is a recent graduate of the Conservatory of Music at Purchase College where he studied with Dominic Donato and Pablo Rieppi.

Bill Dietz is a composer and writer, born in Arizona, and based since 2003 in Berlin. Since 2012, he has been co-chair of Music/Sound in Bard College's Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts. His work on the genealogy of the concert and the performance of listening has brought him to festivals such as MaerzMusik and the Donaueschinger Musiktage, museums such as the Hamburger Bahnhof, Tate Modern, the Brooklyn Museum, the Stedelijk Museum, and das Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Oaxaca, and into publications such as *Performance Research Journal*, *boundary 2*, *Blank Forms*, and the 2014 Whitney Biennial catalogue. Large-scale public works have been realized in sites such as Le Corbusier's

"Cité radieuse" in Marseille, the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin, and along the entire city block of "Im Stavenhof" in Cologne. From 2007 to 2015 he was the artistic director of the Berlin-based "Ensemble Zwischenräume," organizing numerous festivals and concert series. In 2015 a monograph on his "Tutorial Diversions" was released, and in 2017, a second monograph on his "L'école de la claqué" appeared.

Percussionist **Russell Greenberg** specializes in music of the 20th and 21st centuries that spans a wide variety of styles. His breadth of experience as an international performer has led to a unique approach and viewpoint on contemporary music and teaching, and he strives to share this experience with varied audiences.

Dustin Hurt is a curator, composer, conductor, and founding director of Bowerbird and executive director of the Arcana New Music Ensemble. As director of Bowerbird he has curated and produced more than 600 events, including large scale retrospectives of Morton Feldman, John Cage, and Julius Eastman. In the spring of 2017 he was the artistic director for the North American premiere of Mauricio Kagel's *Zwei Mann Orchester*.

Lawrence Kumpf is the Artistic Director of Blank Forms. Kumpf began developing programs with ISSUE Project Room in 2008 and served as Artistic Director there from 2012-2016. In 2016, he co-curated *Open Plan*: Cecil Taylor with Jay Sanders at the Whitney Museum, a retrospective survey of the avant-garde jazz pianist. He recently founded the recording and publishing imprint *Distributed Objects*. He has organized projects and exhibitions with MoMA PS1, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Pioneer Works, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Van Alen Institute, and Yale Union. Kumpf is a contributing editor for *BOMB Magazine*.

Emily Manzo is a pianist, songwriter and vocalist that *Time Out New York* considers "a uniquely protean artist who makes several scenes move." The *New York Times* has described her "attention to detail exceptional." Emily has performed throughout the U.S. and Europe in concerts and festivals of chamber music, experimental music and rock music. As a vocalist and pianist she has premiered the works of many American composers. Her degrees were earned at the New

England Conservatory, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Columbia University where her teachers included Stephen Drury and Lydia Frumkin. Emily currently resides in New York where she performs regularly as a classical solo and chamber musician, as well as with her pop group, Christy & Emily.

Daniel Neumann is a Brooklyn-based sound artist, organizer and audio engineer, originally from Germany. He holds a master's degree in media art from the Academy of Visual Art Leipzig and also studied electronic music composition under Emanuele Casale in Catania, Italy. In his artistic practice he is using conceptual and often collaborative strategies to explore sound, sound material and its modulation through space, situation and media. Curatorially he runs an event series in NYC and Berlin (CT::SWaM) that engages in spatial sound works and focussed listening.

Keiko Prince was born and educated in Tokyo, Japan. She was invited to join MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies (in 1971 to work on the Charles River Project – revitalisation of the then deteriorated river environ as a public open space. She conceived Water-Maze, Wind-Belt, Weightless-Tunnel – (culminating in The Shelter: sun-water dial), these all were generated and transfigured with natural forces, and each had formed as a component of the environ as a sustainable cyclical entity.

Nora Schultz is a German artist who creates sculptural installations involving methods of archaeology, anthropology, and linguistics. Often, her sculptural works are also the protagonists of her performances. Schultz earned her degree from Städelschule, Frankfurt/Main, and she has also studied at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College. Some of her recent solo exhibitions include Cent Dent at Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin, I am Honda at Reena Spaulings, New York, and Parrottree, Building for Bigger Than Real at the Renaissance Society, Chicago. Her solo performances include River at in The Whitney Museum, New York and Terminal + at Tate Modern, Performance Room, London. Schultz took part in Skulptur Projekte Münster in 2017.

Swiss pianist **Marianne Schroeder** is one of the leading performers of new music today and a renowned expert on Scelsi. As a soloist and chamber musician she has performed at pro

musica nova in Bremen, the Lucerne Festival, the ISCM World Music Days in Athens, the Donaueschingen Festival, Berliner Festspiele, Wien Modern, Zagreb Summer of Music and the Witten Days for New Chamber Music. She has performed under conductors such as Paul Sacher, Francis Travis, Erich Schmid and Luciano Berio and has premiered works by Pauline Oliveros, Walter Zimmermann, Morton Feldman, John Cage, Dieter Schnebel, William Duckworth, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Erhard Grosskopf and Maurizio Pisati at major venues across Europe (including the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris) the Soviet Union and the United States.

Woody Sullender is an artist based in Brooklyn, NY. His pieces encompass a myriad of media including sculpture, video games, performance, theater, music, ixzxxnstallation, architecture, origami, and even sonic weaponry. His recent work utilizes video game space as an arena to undermine specific modernist ideologies and rituals of music reception. Sullender has performed internationally at venues such as the Kitchen (with Sergei Tcherepnin), Issue Project Room, the River to River Festival, the Schindler House, SculptureCenter, Abrons Art Center (NYC), Les Instants Chavirés (Paris), Chicago Cultural Center, DNK-Amsterdam (with Seamus Cater), and many others. Among other activities, he teaches new media at various New York institutions and is founding co-editor (with Bill Dietz) of the sonic arts publication Ear | Wave | Event.

Sergei Tcherepnin is an artist operating at the intersections of sound, sculpture and theater. Attaching synthesizers, computers and amplifiers to small surface transducers (devices that convert electrical signals into vibrations) he orchestrates complex multi-channel compositions in which objects are transformed into speakers. Often invoking queer, hybridized characters such as the Listening Cactus, the Maize Mantis, or the figure of the Pied Piper, Tcherepnin's scenarios cultivate play between things and bodies, compelling the audience to develop a "score" for handling these animated objects. Tcherepnin's performances and installations include the Museum der Moderne, Salzburg; Whitney Biennial, Roulette, the Museum of Modern Art, Pavilion of Georgia at the 55th Venice Biennale; the Kitchen, New York; Yvon Lambert, Paris; Karma International, Zurich; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the 30th São Paulo Biennial.



Stereo image of Maryanne Amacher's at the grave of Ludwig van Beethoven. Circa 1994. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.



Courtesy of Blank Forms / Maryanne Amacher Foundation.

Following page: Maryanne Amacher, cover of the artist book edition of Intelligent Life, circa 1982.

CREDITS

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Instruments: Cunningham Piano; Steve Weiss

Percussion, RAIR Philly

THANK YOU

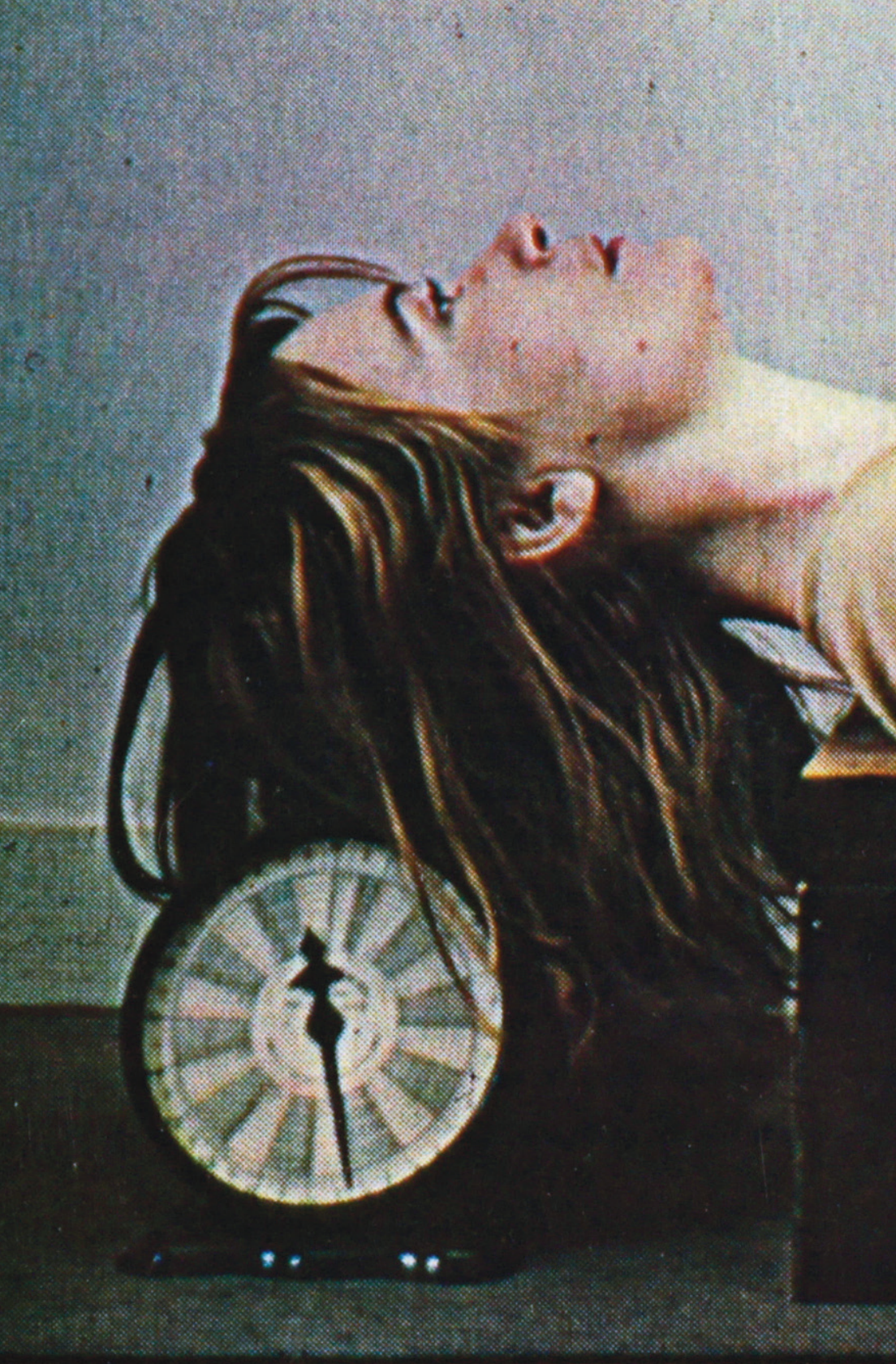
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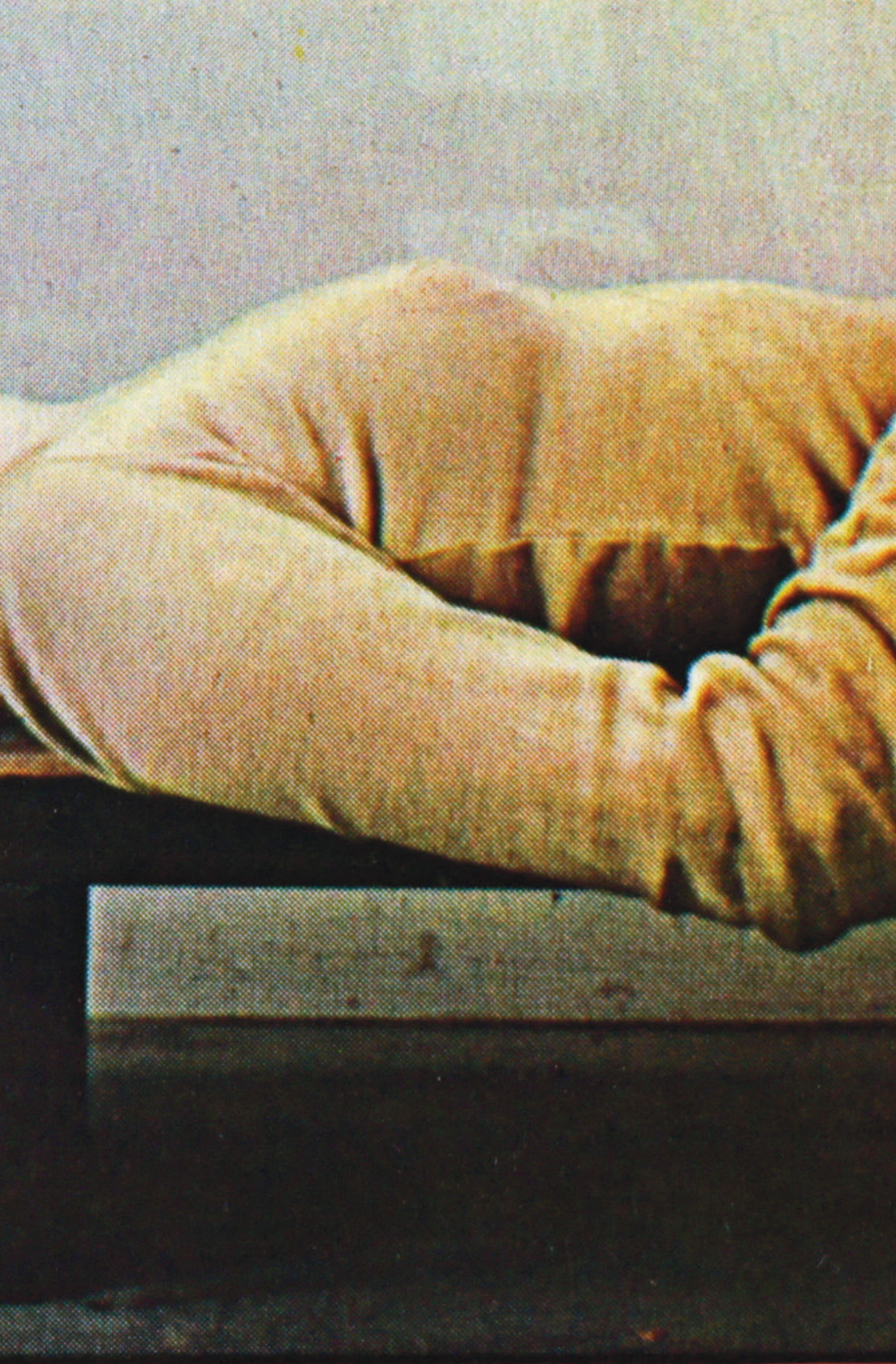
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BOWERBIRD is a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization that shares music, dance, film, and related art forms with audiences at locations across the region. Our mission is to expand public understanding of Experimental music, moving away from simplistic tropes such as "cutting edge" or "contemporary," and instead striving to engage with experimentalism as a timeless and recurrent artistic practice. Bowerbird was founded in 2006 and has presented over 600 events at venues across the city. During this time Bowerbird has presented several large multi event festivals dedicated to single composers. These have included Morton Feldman (2010), John Cage (2012), and most recently Julius Eastman – 2017 in Philadelphia and 2018 in New York City. www.bowerbird.org





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