Chapter Ten

THE FIVE HORSEMEN OF THE POST-MILLENNIUM

Michael Heffley

A post-modern ethnography is a cooperatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality, and thus to provoke an aesthetic integration that will have a therapeutic effect. It is, in a word, poetry—not in its textual form, but in its return to the original context and function of poetry, which, by means of its performative break with everyday speech, evoked memories of the ethos of the community and thereby provoked hearers to act ethically…Post-modern ethnography attempts to recreate textually this spiral of poetic and ritual performance. Like them, it defamiliarizes common-sense reality in a bracketed context of performance, evokes a fantasy whole abducted from fragments, and then returns participants to the world of common sense—transformed, renewed, and sacralized. It has the allegorical import, though not the narrative form, of a vision quest or religious parable. The break with everyday reality is a journey apart into strange lands with occult practices—into the heart of darkness—where fragments of the fantastic whirl about in the vortex of the quester's disoriented consciousness, until arrived at the maelstrom's center, he loses consciousness at the very moment of the miraculous, restorative vision, and then, unconcscious, is cast up onto the familiar, but forever transformed, shores of the commonplace world. Post-modern ethnography is not a new departure, not another rupture in the form of discourse of the sort we have come to expect as the norm of modernist esthetics' scientistic emphasis on experimental novelty, *but a self-conscious return to an earlier and more powerful notion of the ethical character of all discourse, as captured in the ancient significance of the family of terms "ethos," "ethnos," "ethics"…*

The point is that questions of form are not prior, the form itself should emerge out of the joint work of the ethnographer and his native partners. The emphasis is on the emergent character of textualization, textualization being just the initial interpretive move that provides a negotiated text for the reader to interpret. The hermeneutic process is not restricted to the reader's relationship to the text, but includes as well the interpretive practices of the parties to the originating dialogue. In this respect, the model of post-modern ethnography is not the newspaper but that original ethnography—the Bible.

Tyler, in Clifford & Marcus (1986: 125-26, 127, my emphasis)

Scientists have uncovered genetic evidence that may pose problems for the leading model of human evolution, which traces the origin of *Homo sapiens* to a single area of sub-Saharan Africa. The results, detailed in the March 16 issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, suggest that the evolution of anatomically modern humans occurred after an ancestral African group of archaic humans subdivided and migrated into two or more geographic populations.

The Chronicle of Higher Education (3/26/99: A24)

We'll end our look at FMP artists with a survey of some key figures from the younger generation. We'll follow the same west-to-east pattern arcing through this study, looking

- first, from the western states, at drummer Willi Kellers and reeds player Thomas Borgmann, for their shared association with Peter Brötzmann and with each other, and their similar attitudes to both aesthetics and socioeconomic challenges;
- then, in Berlin, at reeds player Wolfgang Fuchs, for his extension of the collective and solo concepts of free improvisation established by the GUO and various individuals, in his Küng Übü group and solo work;
- and trumpeter Axel Dörner, whose diverse handlings of the Monk legacy, the English style of "sound sculpture," the overlap with rock, and the newer practice of *Geräuschmusik* and its theatrical elements further and refine the use of those areas as parts of a single pallette for the improviser;
- Johannes Bauer, for his relative freedom from the cultural-musical disorientation plaguing many of his older colleagues (and people in general) from the East, and the musical details behind his success;
- and finally, Sven-Åke Johansson, the drummer on *Machine Gun,* for his own current forays with and influence on these younger artists into all these various areas.

We are on our way out here; the reading will be less work, the writing less thick, than in those chapters framing our main focus. Nevertheless, this one serves well to round out the picture of the improvisational thinking that has led to this idiom/scene called "new and improvised," to be contemplated more analytically and theoretically in Part III. Disparate thrusts, aspects, and concepts held relatively separate over the

span of the FMP principals' careers have come closer together in these torchbearers, in ways suggesting both new syntheses and extensions.

Willi Kellers

is a drummer with a style closer to American jazz tradition than are those of many of his European colleagues. He's also one with a history of taking his music *in der Hand*, of creating *Initiativen*, as FMP did in its beginnings: self-produced, self-promoted events to present his and his colleagues' music in the absence of existing venues and support.

The latter is something sorely needed since the fall of the Wall; the musicians from the East need it the most, and relate to it the least. They were the bane of Willi's life during the moments I spoke with him. He was part of a group of Berlin players who had formed the Berlin Improvisers' Group in April 1997, to produce, seek funding for, promote and play a series of weekly concerts by its members, culminating in an annual festival. He had just been chosen, by both Western and Eastern players, as the group's president, largely because of his history of effecting such musicians' networks and coordinating them with helpful city officials and producers in his previous locales (he's lived in Berlin throughout the '90s, having followed his actress-wife's professional move there). But things are not going so well.

"The history with the group is one of personal frustration for me," he says. "It dates from a jazz festival in Münster, near my hometown of Köln, through Uli Blöbel and others; things started happening, the promise of money and so on, but I was skeptical. We had a very good meeting yesterday in Prenzlauerberg, and established some promising commercial support by telephone. I am not really in the position to profit much from these commercial interests with my personal activities—I don't

know if it's my Christian morality or my memories of my beginnings, causing doubts about permanent, fixed solutions of this sort. My experience in earlier years has been that such initiatives end up favoring the American musicians—and I mean nothing against them—but they would be favored for commercial interests, particularly, in my case, the drummers, and I would benefit little from such initiatives. The first question the American drummers would ask is if there's a drum set available here for them; they get an offer, and immediately they make demands. The same old story."

"You're talking about cultural ministry support, not private firms?" I ask.

"Right, but private support might then follow. My point is that many of these initiatives fall into this rut of pandering to Americans for commercial interests, which leaves the local musicians here in the position of having to take matters into their own hands just to find a place to work. Counting on the officials who are supposedly making things happen, one often runs into the same old syndrome of people sitting around on their hands doing little, really, to improve the situation of the local musician they claim to include. There is much discussion about new music and what it means, but little effective action that leads to anything concrete for working musicians. There is a laziness about actual organizing of tours, and gigs and so on. I have been lucky enough, mostly, to get money and gigs for myself, but what frustrates me is that I have to do it all for myself alone, with little enthusiasm for collective effort from my colleagues, on behalf of our community.

"With my Eastern colleagues it is very problematic, because they have had everything done for them for at least the last twenty years in the East, with no competition from the outside players. For the last eight years since the Change, they have only floundered in the face of the prospect of making things happen for themselves, because it is simply not in their experience."

"But now surely," I offer, "they understand that the situation is different, and that they too must rise to the occasion, and that's why they elected you to lead them?"

"Yes, intellectually, but when it comes to the practical things we must do with the local cultural ministries and so on, it is not so easy. I can handle the tedium of the practical things a leader must do, but I can't bear the little intrigues and suspicious passivity that swallows everyone up. The Easterners no longer have the status of exotic 'other' that used to serve them so well; now they're just thrown into the market with everyone else to try and take their own music, and art, and future into their own hands, and they just don't get it. They don't have the fire and courage any more to do what they did in earlier years, when they played the music against official approval, and then brought it to such popularity as a pseudo-underground expression within that overt acceptance. It's going much worse for all of them than before the Change."

(With that last word, my awareness splits off from Mann's-in-Heffley to Heffley's-in-Mann,walking back in the woods near Vienna. It is night, but he/I can see the way and all around very well by the light of stars and a full moon. I want to check in on him, make sure he's doing okay without me, and with his newmanned-minded body…)

What surprised Kellers about the first meeting of this group was how many new people showed up—and how many players considered themselves improvisers. "There must have been over a hundred players there," many young ones. FMP had lost ground as a major "initiative" affording opportunities to play and record; it was important to Kellers that his new group not be seen as an attempt to steal FMP's thunder, or ride on its coattails, or to commercialize the music, denying what he called "American suggestions" to that effect.

"This Berlin Improvisers Group has networking going on with other initiatives, including Peter Kowald in Wuppertal, ways to make big bands and other combinations," he says. "Kowald held a German-wide meeting in Hamburg, which I couldn't make. But we are thinking from Berlin to German to European contexts, even the older players; this is not all unselfish, because each node in the network hopes for a wider audience locally. In France, they do the ring concept: a concert is organized, then goes all around country. It's something we could do here."

(Walking, sleepwalking—no, better, walksleeping, all around the country in this big old body renewed, in the flow of its null. The night is cool, I am warm in my fur; the woods are unmarked by newman trails, but my way is clear to me at every step. I have stepped it so many times. I am big and strong, the world I walk and its time are my small, humble place, its every, smallest part I know and carry in me as I cover and recover the parts I've come to know the best.

I've been moving for a few nights, and hiding and resting, mostly by day. I am following some plan, my plan, some plan: Bear Due East [against the planet's spin, its magnet's pull directly left], walk as moon makes its round from full to null to full, get back home from this western summer walk to begin the winter rest…)

self-determination (first project), philosophy (second), a discourse on activism, developing an inner plan, purpose

Another project Kellers is involved with is a theory group formed at Humboldt University to produce a publication about improvisation, especially focusing on the Berlin situation; he is working with others on the layout of a catalogue of activities and musicians working in Berlin. Generally, it is a joint effort between two of the primary German journalists/scholars of improvised music, Bert Noglik in the East (Leipzig), and Ekkehard Jost in Gießen, in the West.

"I can't help but have a sense, from past experience, that many projects such as this are less than grounded in the true reality of the music," he says. "They come about from meetings of these professionals who get together and speak fast, make some plan quickly, do this or that, produce this or that, get a book out before Christmas time, and soon after the whole thing is forgotten, with no real practical impact on the music's situation. It is like the whole process of scholars and activists trying to do things like that is on the level of journalism, when in fact it needs to be on the level of philosophy."

Philosophy? That means, for him, something borne of the experience of making—or, by implication, really hearing—the music. "I think everyone reaches a point in his own work where he has to go deeper into his own processes, figure out how and which direction he wants it to go. One does many things, then starts asking what exactly is this I've done, am doing, and why? Especially after one does a two-week tour, puts out everything one does and knows night after night, then it's over and one is back on the corner . . .it's just natural to reflect on the deeper questions of what one is doing.

"Such reflection certainly doesn't take place during the act of playing the drums itself, but when I heard a piece Max Roach composed, I understood that such careful consideration has an impact on the playing, and can bring about something that really does fly, in the playing, when one takes on such a philosophical level.

"Anyway, for me it's clear that I need to develop an inner plan, or seed of intent, from which I can decide exactly which things I can conceive and do. Then in the course of playing free you get a feeling that nothing else (such as writing theoretically) can give you, about whether or not it is true, and about what to do in either case, whereas without it you don't have a clue."

(Walksleeping, because my body is not Moving some Sleeping self around—rather my self's awake, this motion's its trance, I Step where I've Stepped before, *as* I've Stepped before, in the same river a trillion times. With every new step, all the old ones Come Back to constitute my moment, my null, my plan, myself: out of the hot south, first steps north, toward the Magnet's Pull; through cooler midlands, next steps north; up to far north mountains, where home finally Became.

Bodies Change to fit the earth; they must stay in a place to live in it, make it home. We left the south; we stay in the north, where the trees of our life stand rooted far more, because more precariously [in cold and rock], than in our first hot home. But we walk the earth, we in I, as memory walks thought, as we had to for so long, following the game onto the treeless open lands, with the weather's short and long ups and downs; we retrace steps to recall routes, revisit that first-hour hot home [south to the pull of the world's spin], those long-habitable midlands [between full spin out at fattest earth and still spin in of magnet north], always on the move away from, in spring, then back to, in fall, high mountain winter's long, white sleepskin.)

more on the need to take life by the horns, even ambivalently

"So is your hope with this publication," I ask Willi, "for all the reservations and uneasiness you have about the academic contexts and the inadequacy of them to speak and effect the truths of the music…is your hope to have something in hand to help you in fundraising, or promotion of the music in Berlin as an activist seeking to connect with cultural ministries or firms or such?"

"I don't know if I can really explain my motives or reasons for doing it," he says. "I have no grand designs for an academic career for myself with these activities, or for some big impact on the culture. I'm doing here what I've done before in Köln, and Münster, in simply trying to hustle up and organize and manage things for myself and

create opportunities to work. I've never established a regular management for myself that is corrupt enough, or smart enough, to be much more than a network of friends who just lead me from one thing to another."

(It feels good to be going home again, with rather than against the world's motion, my own way neither with nor against its pull. The trek back east always seems shorter than the same one west. I had not gone so far as beyond the middle sea to the first hot homeland, this time; I wandered the midlands idly, summered there to relive the glory days of my kind, near Düsseldorf [and Wuppertal, Neandertal, where the newmen first discovered our traces; the newman in me now is surprised to see my view of Europe as not the youngest but the oldest surviving culture on the planet, stretching back 50,000 years to the paintings on our cave walls and our flutes of bone], in France, Spain, Italy [all newman names: since my Change they flood my mind]: old haunts, timestoppers and slowers, places that turned hours into as many lifetimes as I cared to recall.

My newman presence sensitized me to the newman lore of some of those haunts so close to me: Wetzlar, on the Lahn near Weilburg, where Goethe pined futilely for Charlotte Buff then went off and wrote *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Marburg, where the Grimm brothers started writing down the folk tales of the region. I also walked the woods of Baden-Württemberg, where, contrary to his vague family lore [I was able to inform Heffley], my newman's ancestor, Johan Carl Haffalee—his name derived from the word for "potter," his family's traditional trade—set sail in 1735, all of twenty years old, on the Ship Williams to America, almost half a century before the Revolution there. Württemberg was then the state just south of Hessen, and Johan Carl had lived on the line I walk now, almost due east from his home near the Black Forest to mine in the Caucasus Mountains.

I'd had no exChanges this time except the one, near Vienna. It was just what I needed, a long time coming; I felt like a new man, as I was, and I knew he did too, off there in my oldman world. As "I" walked my almost two thousand miles, over some forty days and nights, "my" mind would wander pleasantly to "his" talks that month, his last before going back to his own American home…)

Brötzmann's influence

Peter Brötzmann lived up to his "father of free jazz" title in Kellers' case specifically, fathering the drummer in the music and its scene.

"Peter Brötzmann was very important for me," he says. "The first time I saw him was in the early '70s, in Münster, at a concert in a series at the Landes Museum. It was advertised as Free Music and Beer, with Peter in his trio with Han Bennink and Fred van Hove. I saw them often when they were there. At the time I was a small-town music teacher in Münster, just finished with my studies and beginning work at a school.

"I had no interest in joining a classical orchestra. I had started my own improvisation group with colleagues there, one of whom is now a psychology professor at Saarbrucken, the other a biologist in Marburg, the third a professor of classical saxophone. They began at an amateur level, and I saw it as kind of a part of my studies. We rehearsed twice a week. In the middle of these activities, this *big bearded monster* [Brötzmann] kept haunting me; I didn't know anything about it, free jazz, what it was. I had played Xenakis, and Stockhausen, I was on another trip with that 'new music' scene."

"No jazz?" I ask.

"Yeah, bebop, standards, but it was more like a practice thing, for technique, not really my music. I had a broad classical education and training as a percussionist, which assured me a job; some theater music experience, a wife, a car—but I wasn't sure what it all meant, where it was going. Something about those wild free-jazz guys and this cry in the sound which I had never heard haunted me, and the strange person behind the drums [Bennink] who hit the cymbals like a madman.

"At first I rejected it, but that cry stayed in my head," he says, "until finally I had to start asking what it was about. I traveled to Berlin to hear more of this music, to FMP concerts. I tried to meet this guy whose music fascinated me, hung around him at the bars where the musicians drank. He was slightly older; I started trying to slink into his acquaintance, ingratiating myself, making little jokes and small talk just to get to know him.

"Then my band dissolved, because we had to deal with exams and so on, but the festival in Münster, which was then a big international festival, offered us a gig; so my hometown's organizers were saying 'now the ball's in your court.' At that point the band was broken up, and at first I thought of getting it back together, but that made no sense, so I drove to Wuppertal and asked Brötzmann if he would play with me at the Münster festival. He said, 'Let's see my schedule'. . . then yes, we can. I was still living in the country, and he came two days before the festival, we rehearsed for twenty minutes, then went out for a beer, and that was it. After that twenty minutes I looked at him and said, 'My god, you're a great musician,' and he said 'Well, you're not bad yourself.'

"It was just the two of us on the stage. I had a bunch of classical percussion stuff with me, my vibraphone, and other things. Today I'm more reduced, so the playing is going differently. We played for an hour and had great success. The people and the

critics were cool with it, so Peter offered me a duo project. It was early in my musical career, and not without some danger to me—because I became arrogant and stupid toward my old colleagues, thought I was the best. That was something I had to get past, see myself realistically, as a professional now; I told myself to give up the kid stuff vanity. Peter also explained things well to me. There was no fight between us, but we sort of drifted. When he's around he calls me; we've done the *Ruf der Heimat* trio with Thomas Borgmann, and the theater music project in Hamburg, for Heiner Müller, which was fun for all of us."

Listen to CD 9/5, tracks 6-7

"So can we say that your first FMP experience, with Brötzmann, opened new musical doors?"

"To play once with Brötzmann was no problem," he says, "but if you play a hundred times with him, you need to have consistent quality, which I didn't have back then, so we had some friction in the first few years. But that was no big deal—rather natural, looking back.

"Tony Oxley told me, 'Everyone is looking with funny eyes upon what you are doing.' I think he meant, it should have been his place to travel and play with Peter. Keith Tippett called me a fucking scalliwag. Because I was an unknown novice one day, and up there with Brötzmann the next. We say '*von Null bis Hundert*'—too much too soon, moving too fast. We played together once, and everyone wondered who is that blond idiot with Brötzmann there, and my other colleagues made me feel that, because I was where many others had wanted to be for a long time."

"Was it good or bad?"

"I learned," he laughs.

(Then, when I'd gathered enough such wool, back my mind would snap, away from their babble to the clarity behind and beyond speech, words, from flux of life and death and details snagged to time embodied, flowing free. That exChange was just what we both needed, all right; he was starved for the talk, the fellowship, the word-making/world-making, and I was infinitely grateful to be away from it, where I was, free and deep in the music of my own unspeaking mass in its natural sets, stepping steps, stepping my way back home.)

axes of identity

Having divined FMP percussionists such as Paul Lovens, Paul Lytton, Han Bennink, and Tony Oxley as the (vertical) "colorists" to their American (horizontal) "timekeeping" colleagues, I wonder immediately about Kellers' more stereotypically American driving, swinging style.

"I never really realized that, it wasn't obvious to me," he says. "My drum teacher saw it in me when I played. I played Bach inventions on the marimbaphone, and he had been a jazz drummer, and he would say, 'Stop that swinging,' and I would say, 'Wait a minute, didn't Bach say that good music has to swing?' He said, 'Yes, but stop playing it like swing.' I don't know why I did that, but he said, 'No, you have to play it with more of an edge, more stacatto,' and so on.

"I had a big problem with that; I had to stop bringing my jazz habit to the classical music. *This feeling of swing that Bach meant was what I understood as jazz swing then.* I said, okay, I'll take my exams, and after that I don't give a shit about it, then I'll just play the way I feel is right. *I'm a rhythmic player, it's true, and I can do no other; the* klangfarblich *aspect for a long time meant nothing to me; but meanwhile, through a normal set and normal work with sticks, stick on stick, and the rim, and the*

relationship between cymbal and skin…in other words, I tried with a normal drum kit to play klangfarblich*, which I think is a lifelong process itself, and my goal to master.*

"One must develop other techniques, other ways of playing; I need no block of wood to play *klangfarblich*, to make the sound of a block of wood; stick on stick is also like a block of wood. All I have to do is find the right spot on the small drum. When I put one stick on the rim, or in the middle, there are still more different effects; I don't need an extra drum, all I need is the two toms. When I make my accents on the small drum, on this side, with the left hand, it makes no difference whether I go to the other side to the tom or to the middle of the small drum; I can produce a squeaking sound on a cymbal, or accompany it with a loud screech of my voice; I need no special devices just for making my squeaks; I don't need special styrofoam and percussive devices to get my effects, and that is my focus now, to make the most out of my simple standard kit to yield a fullness of colorisms, as well as have the rhythmic side of the drum kit.

"I succeed very well in it when I play quietly; it's tough when you try to play loudly, because the set is specially built to provide the pulse and rhythmic side; but I think it works, it has to work."

My emphases bring out something unique I sensed in Kellers. His classical background—the extensive German-musical acculturation that took place before he came, late, to improvised music—seemed to me to create in him a need to integrate the broader historical streams of Baroque, Prussian military drumming, its mutation into the American drumkit, and the mutation of that as an instrument in Europe of percussive accent and texture more than meter (a concept also rooted in the art music tradition). That need to integrate I would find variously manifested in the other

improvisers coming up after their *Emanzipation* elders—more so, perhaps, than the need to individuate, to "killl the fathers," that so marked the latter.

"You mentioned Max Roach as an influence," I remind him. "How so?"

"In the '60s, when I was a teenager, there was a drum workshop at the Berlin Jazz Days," he recalls, "and only Ami drummers played solos, one after the other. I played in a rock band, and I was very conventional, as my father [also a drummer] was. I played in rock and underground bands, with student protest leader Rudi Dutschke's speeches for lyrics. We played in an ice cream parlor in the village on the weekends; all he wanted was a little bit of rock music for the youth, and we jumped on the stage of the place and hammered on the place's big tin drums and cans, shouting out our Rudi Dutschke lyrics until he threw us out. Then we got drunk and started bitching about how it was typical of the whole rotten establishment," he laughs. "In the '60s and '70s I was a regular punk.

"Then I saw this drum event from Berlin on TV, with Max Roach and a few other drummers. In Münster, nothing like that ever happened. The first thing that fascinated me was how they could play these single beats, and in-between them get this singing kind of sound. I asked my dad, and he didn't know. I asked him about this accent with paradiddle, what I later came to know as 'ghost notes.' I tried it, it drove me crazy, because I didn't know how they did it; we had no video, so I had to watch the half-hour-long program to try and figure it out, these Ami drummers, and I just didn't get it.

"Two years later I finally understood, because there was a jazz drummer who knew a little bit about it and kind of showed me the way this paradiddle technique worked, this rolling followup to every single beat. My drum teacher then told me it was impossible, it just couldn't work.

"Then there was another TV broadcast on Milford Graves. I had no knowledge of his philosophy of playing drums, this reversal of the strong-weak pattern, which Tony Oxley also uses. They were talking about a philosophy of beats and accent placement, which I didn't understand. Through these mental maps of playing the drums I started getting involved with the techniques of playing, which are basically German; there was '*Herr Müller's Methode*,' by a German parade drummer who'd been to America and saw the bands, including the black bands, and spread his method over there. There's another older gentleman in America, I don't recall his name, a super technician; but then it's not all about technique, its about the different levels, as with every instrument, of dynamics and timbre (*Klangfarbe*) and how to integrate them into an expression. It's not left to the unconscious process as it is in classical music, and it's not about the intense flurries of energy thrown into drum rolls and percussive effects as noise and energy. All of that's not enough. It's rather about the expression within every single beat of the stick, the balance between dynamic and timbre."

"Günter Sommer told me about his Saxon roots in Dresden and a big feeling for them and the Prussian influence," I tell him. "Your band with Thomas Borgmann is called *Ruf der Heimat* (Call of the Homeland). What does this mean at this point in your music in terms of German identity, as a drummer?"

"When I learned that one of the major influences on American jazz drumming was German, via Herr Müller's book, a circle closed for me. If I'm influenced, it isn't by Germany or Prussia; on the contrary, I'm influenced by a polyrhythmic style and a preference for the technique thereof, which I think is international, not a locally Dresden thing (with apologies to Baby Sommer), but global. I worked with the African drummer Abdul Gilbert, and we understood each other from the first

moment, sometimes even playing the same patterns. Don't ask me how, I've never studied African music."

"Thomas Borgmann also told me something like that about his experience playing with African Americans."

"I don't think it's something you decide consciously," he says. "I think if you follow the way inside yourself, that is the true way, you shouldn't listen to all the stupid stuff older colleagues are trying to tell you, which is often very dangerous. You mustn't be influenced by some fashionable trends that may be false. If you're lucky a global way develops out of it. At least that's been my experience."

(It is not that difficult to Make one's way through earth and time without Being Seen—bothered—by newmen, even where they Live most numerously. My people are masters at it. We mostly Avoid; sometimes we Encounter, often we're Mistaken for something else, in confusion; occasionally we Show ourselves, or are Caught off guard, but even then, half the time the observer Is too shocked, afraid, or even, surprisingly, indifferent—as if *he* didn't want To Be bothered by *us*—to Disrupt more than a moment before we're gone again. And, of course, all such moments Are the exceptions to the rule of our lives, which mostly Unfold unhindered in places no newmen Go.

Newmen, newmen, newmen—I ponder the word for all the meanings it has, the memories it brings. I said I was in the woods near Vienna…not so near, now, a few restful days and walking nights were already behind me; I was somewhere between the Danube and *Neusiedler See*…I was settling into my own new memories, and my old, to collect myself, to bring them all together in the path I knew as one through these trees, these mountains, this land.

Newmen, newmen—every time I made a Change, I had to recalibrate it all: the newmen we once were to the oldmen who once were…in Africa; the newmen those oldmen became to us, through time and climate, the oldmen we were then to them…in Europe; the fightings and wars between us, and the love and families; the disappearance of old and new both in that mix, except for here and there, the margins of the mix [my roots, my lines]; the waxing of the mix, the waning of the unmixed [my wane, and the waxing of the mind down my line's peculiar way], the northern mountains where we hid at last, so few in numbers, intent on our ways away from newmen. The Himalayas, the Rockies…the Caucasus.

The waxing mix around us then, who hid from no one but sought to wax still greater, to take and rule the folk and worlds throughout the world, always restless, never still in one place. Even as I and mine walked and moved to reMember and enVision our time as one place, so did these Indo-Europeans Run and Ride to forget theirs, Seeking always in their motion a moment, never Finding it until their minds had settled Space—this world, all worlds—the way our Mind was settling Time *as* space.

Newman—in me now, he made it all so fresh again, alive at every turn, alive both to my and with his own perceptions, memories, knowledge…but also terrifying, alien, overwhelming; my every breath and stride filled him with awe and wonder, but little control. I had to override him throughout most of those first few days, keen though he made me feel, simply to function with normal grace, without hysteria. But now he was getting the hang of it, and I could abdicate to his presence in my life, attend to my own in his—which I was preferring increasingly as *I* got the hang of *it*: the loss of physicality in nature, the gain of mental maps and other displays, the abstractions that

so materialized the mind, the fellowship with others so refined, so cultured. It was all an exciting, fresh plateau for me, and I went into it lustily.)

Kellers' most recent musical direction, at that time, was toward developing a body of solo work and technique. He had hoped to interest Jost Gebers in putting it out, but the latter didn't share his enthusiasm. It includes recitations of his own poetry, written out and read aloud, but set spontaneously to the music as it's improvised.

"As for other FMP projects, we will put out this Hamburg trio, which was part of this Heiner Müller thing. We will do it with text which Brötzmann will select, poetry read by an actor and with Christoph Winckel on bass, whom I've played with often in England and Switzerland."

"What are your thoughts about the relationship between your own poetry and music?" I ask him.

"I have the feeling that drums especially have a very close connection to language and the speech organs. Very close. When I work with [vocalist] Phil Minton, I realize what a percussive aspect there is to what he does. That might sound strange, because many people say that a saxophone or viola is closer to vocal qualities, but there is a very close relationship too with drumming."

"So what do these mouth noises and so on have to do with text?"

"Repetition—of text, syllables, letters, the cry or shout—*Klangfarbe* is reflected in these short poems, almost percussive sounds of the mouth. That's the connection.

"As for the future, I hope that the tour with *Ruf der Heimat* and [American trumpeter] Roy Campbell, whom I don't even know, will be good, and the trio tour with Keith and Julie [Tippett] in November also; and in January we will revive the old Andreas Altenfelder [trumpeter from the Willem Breuker Kollektief] Sextet, this time with two Americans. And as I understand from Thomas [Borgmann], in

February we go to America, with *Ruf der Heimat*, which would be my second trip there.

"In Berlin, I'm doing a lot of playing with Johannes Bauer in a duo, and the trio you saw with Uli Gumpert is actually the duo with Johannes, because he is the one doing things along these verbal percussive, oral kind of lines, similar to what we discussed. We're working on that together, along with my partner Komitov, a younger player I like to rehearse with regularly, and I think we'll do a recording together, which we'll try to sell to FMP, or elsewhere. We'll see."

(And with those words, I see my double way clearly, in sync and rhythm. I feel secure enough in both visions to carry on in balance, in my conversations with and as newmen, and in my solo walk toward my Caucasus home, to leave the statically fertile mull of my one but Sevenfold Null, to begin the One-and-Twelve Moments of the Crossland Flow [that would *make* it momentous, rather than mere motion].[1]

This balance was itself something New to me. Had I ever been so present, so aware and active as Double Agent in One moment? Neither of us thought so…)

Thomas Borgmann

Willi Kellers: "Thomas Borgmann is surely one of the best organizers in the world; he has incredible energy, and a knack for the business side of things. Earlier I

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[1]. "As the closely related *momentum* suggests, 'movement' is the etymological notion underlying *moment.* It comes via the Old French *moment* from Latin *momentum*. This was a contraction of an assumed earlier *movimentum*, a derivative of *movère* 'move'…and it had a wide range of meanings: from the literal 'movement'…developed the metaphorical 'instant of time' (which arose from the notion of a particle so small as only just to 'move' the pointer of a scale) and 'important'—both preserved in English *moment*" (Ayto 1990: 352). Mann's "Moments" were the geographical divisions, legs of the trip, he had formed in his mind after walking it so many times: temporalized space.

The word for "zero" in the ancient Breton language is "mann." The word for "I" in Hebrew consists of the same letters as the word for "nothing."

tried other managers, but none are as diligent as Thomas; he is a wild man at the telephone. I knew him already in the '60s and '70s, when he played in Nickelsdorf and other places. He seems to have decided a few years ago that a full proactive engagement with the business things was the only way to survive."

Borgmann is of interest here not because of any connection to FMP; none exists, except the inclusion of some of his notated music—*Two Lines for Nik: Suite for Improvisers (10 Players/15 Instruments*, a very sophisticated new-music-type score, something akin to Braxton's work) in the FMP publishing concern, the enterprise required for its eligibility for *E-Musik* classification. However, his association with FMP elders Brötzmann and Petrovsky, as well as with American players, makes his a voice in the international spread of German improvised music, and that as a gesture deeply rooted in the same free jazz movement of the 1960s that spawned FMP and those elders.

Listen to CD 9/5, track 8

Ironically, Jost Gebers has not been interested in recording what Borgmann is doing musically because it is such a gesture; the music of Borgmann's choice runs to the "old-fashioned" (Gebers' word) style—driving, swinging, rhythmic and often over a droning central tone—of early Pharoah Sanders, early Ornette Coleman, or Archie Shepp. His choice of bandmates has included pianist Borah Bergman, drummer Denis Charles, saxophonist Charles Gayle, and bassist Wilber Morris.

Borgmann's concept of a return to what he calls the "classic free jazz" sound is, interestingly, embodied in the band he's dubbed, as mentioned, *Ruf der Heimat* —a distinctively German gesture he grounds in the early German free jazz not as a "European echo" of what Coleman, Coltrane, Ayler, Sanders et al were doing, but as

a deeply Germanic correlate of their work (which work, of course, has been seen by all Americans as deeply Afrocentric).

Brötzmann's influence on Borgmann dates from the latter's musically formative years.

"When I was 16 or so and started with the saxophone, in the early '70s," he says, "I was in college, and I heard this music on the radio; the first free music I heard live was by Gunter Hampel and Brötzmann. I found it interesting; I had only listened to soul music before that, and Chicago, Blood, Sweat & Tears, bands like that. I took up the sax with the intention to play in a horn section of such a band. Then I got to know this music, and put all that behind me.

"When I came to Berlin, age 21 or so—right now I'm 42—in '76, '77, I was still going to Moers, at a time when it was still very discriminating in its programming, fantastic music. I got Peter [Brötzmann] to look at and repair my old C-soprano sax, back around then some time; it's funny now, because he doesn't remember meeting me then at all. There was (still is) a club in Berlin called the *Zwiebelfisch* (onion-fish), a meeting point for the improvisers in those days."

(To my left north, the Danube; to my right south, the *Neusiedler See*, the shallowest lake in the evening lands; its salt rides the air to my nose and mouth. I recall when it was vast, a sea indeed, after sun burned ice's moment into water's movement, everywhere; I recall when we moved above the floods to start our life in mountains, in the caves nearby here, neighbors to the bears we worshiped.

This sea here, from deep and wide to shallow and small in time, like the womb swollen then shrunken by birth; the smell of brine, feel of fish deep in the brain and loin of me, feel of saltsea coursing blood, feel of woman as the sea I swam from; the riot of smells and lives of so many different birds and beasts and plants around this

lake, more than anywhere on this landmass, in these reeds [the feel of birth, of life and land first coming up from water, of the safety of mountains risen from sea, of caves].

More recent: the newman smells of grapes, wine, corn, bread to garnish the fish; the fish then not only essence but also symbol, token of the man, the newman as the One, his churches born here and from here [the road from the Prussian quarries to Rome, the quarry stones for St. Stephens, the ancient *Frauenkirche*, where the baskets the women wove when we still knew them would sometimes be left full of bread, fish, and wine for me and my then only half-mythical kind on our walks through the night; the Empress Maria at her summer home]…all of this stirs and mingles in me, in the blossom of the Now and the newman's Knowing, to rouse again my deepest, oldest memories, countless lives…yet all, in the new life of my Change, as child with mother, noticing self *as* child more than as boy or girl.

This first moment ends by the freshwater flow of the Danube, as it bears me across out of mother Austria to Slovakia, near Bratislava. Nearer still to Chicago![2]

Borgmann's musical development turned with that of the times, until he decided, fairly recently, to bring it all back home. "During the '80s my own tastes kind of turned from free jazz to the new music area, something more along the lines of Braxton; I can show you some examples of scores from that time. I played with another musician, Nick Steinhaus, in a duo at Nickelsdorf, at a time when only Americans were on the bill there. It really got me more into the borderlines of the music."

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[2]. The most easterly settlement west of the old Iron Curtain, Chicago is a small village founded by Slovakians whose relatives emigrated to the American city in large numbers around the turn of the century. They used their American dollars to buy up land here to return to and develop, and when they did so they named their community after the city.

The first enterprise of what Kellers called Borgmann's business savvy was the initiation of a semi-annual festival in the subway station café (called Cato) just blocks from his own Prenzlauerberg apartment. He got funding from the city, booked three or four groups, often ad hoc formations of whomever was around and available, called the two-day event Stakkato (get it? *sta*tion, *Cato*?), and used it as a networking device to make his own connections with the scene.

"The music was very mixed," he says, "some real new-music stuff, like Steve Reich, and a traditional drummer from Basel, for example. The North Swiss have a tradition in March, a *Fastnacht*, and they have indigenous drummers with colorful costumes, all to drive out the devil from their town; the drummers customarily walk through the streets in this very authentically traditional way. I was thinking like a programmer, putting these guys on the bill with a minimalistic duo between, say, Wolfgang Fuchs and Rudi Malfatti [both FMP musicians]." He laughs with delight at the juxtaposition of minimalism and the folk drummers and the sparse improvisers. "So you group new music and heavy free and traditional, crazy things together—but between these borders.

"At that time, I didn't book real free jazz groups, that wasn't yet my interest. That changed also, because later it was *only* improvised music. Some of that shift had to do with the politics of the time, in the '80s, when the new-music scene got so much more recognition and support, more money and acceptance, which endures to this day. 'New' and 'improvised' started out, in the '80s, both as the underdog, but later 'new' broke through, but not 'improvised.' So there was really no need for me to keep my little festival as a forum for the 'new.'" To Borgmann's taste, this "new," in the flush of its success with Berlin's cultural officialdom, centered in the Eastern *Akademie der*

Künste, has become static, predictable in concept, too safe, throughout the last decade or so.

"Was your festival here a way for you to meet American musicians and bring them over?" I ask. "Is that what started your trips to America?"

"No, there wasn't enough money to book Americans, as a rule." He mentions a few—the Rova Saxophone Quartet, Steve Lacy, the bassist Sirone [a one-word name], who were in the area already. And, in fact, his own first trip to America, in 1987, did come through a sextet gig Sirone set up at the Black Arts Studio Museum in Harlem. As much as anything, it seems that one aspect of Borgmann's own return to the "classic free jazz" was simply a falling into it through the vagaries of who and what happened to work out in his shotgun attempts to make things happen between disparate elements on the scene.

"The *Ruf der Heimat*'s mix of different people came out of my situation at the Stakkato, where I would make different groups out of my guests. I played there with Petrovsky once, and discovered that he was very easy to play with. I put together a group with Heinz Sauer, Christoph Winckel, Willi Kellers, and a saxophone player from France, and trumpeter Uli Weber, from the East. It was a big group, but it really worked well.

"My idea for the name of the group, Call of the Homeland, was a reference to the free jazz which I'd grown up with, this drive and rhythm and power—as opposed to the little excursions into experimental improvisation others, and I, had taken into the new music scene. I was missing this classical free jazz power; I mean how many groups can you think of today with this power, like Frank Wright, or the old Brötzmann groups: a rhythm section behind you over which you can still do anything you want, but with this power and drive? It is also good for the audience, a musical

experience that didn't leave them out of it, not some esoteric extremes good only for a few, a music that is more like philosophy in the head. The quartet with Petrovsky, Willi and Christoph was my way of getting back in touch with that vitality.

"A lot of people don't distinguish between free jazz and improvised music, but they are two distinct things. My feeling was that people had thirty years of experience now with this music, so it would be easier for more of them to handle, and it would develop more itself. I went back to it myself as a comfortable, familiar thing after playing around on the borderlines and extremes of the music for awhile.

"A couple of years before playing with Brötzmann, then, the band was initially with Petrovsky. He's a very clever player, a little bit like a chameleon. That makes it easy. I always do like playing with another saxophone. With him I could always have close interactions, melodically, or with licks; he's responsive, sympathetic. It was part of my concept for the group, to have two similar players on the front line, side by side more than going two different ways.

"I wasn't sure when we started with Brötzmann whether it would work; I was still developing on the tenor, the power horn, and I didn't know if I was up to Brötzmann yet; I was more comfortable and experienced on the smaller horns, and I sounded more like Steve Lacy or Evan Parker than Brötzmann.

"At some point, Petrovsky couldn't make all our gigs, as we got busier. I wanted Charles Gayle as a fill-in, and we did play together for maybe eight gigs (I had brought him to Germany through the Stakkato). But that situation had its own problems as a longterm one. It was Willi who really wanted Peter in, because he had worked a lot with him. I wasn't sure, but I tried it out. It did work out okay; the main thing was that I could go with Peter's melodies. You can't change Peter, but I did find

my own way in that part of his sound, these broken melodies, with that broken tone. People get that shiver, you know?

"So this music was born with Peter, and he also functioned very well in terms of making the gig, unlike Petrovsky, who was always busy with that duo with his wife in the East. So our group came into its own more with Peter. One big event was at Mulhouse; we got on the front page of *Le Monde*, in '95."

"Would you say that this group has been somewhat important to Peter's recent music and career?"

"I don't know; he still has his own quartet and trio, which are his priority, but he does still love to work with this band, I think. I'm sure he got good feedback from the best critics, because he was like the star of the group; good for us too. The same thing happened with Borah [Bergman]. We did our *Ride Into the Blue* CD at Peter Edel; I intended to play with Petrovsky and Borah, but Petrovsky didn't make it, and it turned out to be a great event with Peter instead. A month later we played in Leipzig with Petrovsky, but I didn't think the mix of Petrovsky and Borah went too well, because they're both very intricate players, and it's best when a horn player does something to contrast with Borah."

"Why do you think this way of playing has come so automatically and easily to you?" I ask him this after he's told me about his instant chemistry with the late Denis Charles, re: the distinction between "drive" (which he says most European drummers have) and swing (which they don't). "Do you think they 'drive' because that's how they want to sound, or because they really can't feel how to swing?"

"In the States, a drummer has to learn every style, and how to be firm in it; here, improvising just means playing what you want. It's changing a bit as people come out of the schools and so on here, but still you find a lot of drummers and bassists who

really don't know what they do want to play. In the States, you see players who want to play free music, but they also know about other styles, and working professionally in them, because they have to survive, and they genuinely like and respect those other styles. You don't find it happening that way here so much."

(I had stayed to high ground throughout Austria to Vienna, coming down only for my Change; I've been walking lowlands since that Change, and now I am eager to climb again.

To my left north, Carpathians—they call to me, but also away from my way home. To my right now, Bratislava, a place to skirt. Like Vienna, it is close to Danube's waters; it is less charming, more ugly, the communist dream gone nightmare; yet its Western neighbor, while less grim, more winning, is also culture curdled, capital counted as culture. Both dreams are nothing more than the waking gaze of lizard brains, eating or enslaving their young, starving their old and others, all those for whom their lizard life unquestioned, overruling, is nothing but a bad idea.

I hold the twoness of these capital cities in me, feeling the West as my left, East as my right eye, hand, leg, brain…the static Two of Symmetry, a Two whose peace is insufferable and whose war is simply a moment of lifepain leading to more such, or death…I walk like a child, just born, aware of myself as both boy and girl, black and whiteday and nightlife and death, Twinned One, no hope. I *find* my hope by *making* the boy *look* at the girl as *woman* he must swim *to* (my memories run to lifetimes alone, no mother, no family, no lover—Eros abstracted). I *push* this static Two, I *deem* it just another One, and myself its being-born Second One. Full of ancient guilt at leaving good-enough homes to search for better ones, I make a beeline through my now dynamic Two from that static, balanced One to my next, a better birth, in the waters of the Váh, across the sunbaked Danube plain. I *make* this Two dynamic by

relating it to the One before it, and thus the Three to come. I make that plain my defenseless land in the middle, from all beginning to all end, feeling in the fire in my belly the deathly comfort of lizard sun's moment giving way to the colder air of animal flow in motion, belly sailing against the wind, in restless, growling, howling runs for harsher life.

I can't be sure, but I think I was glimpsed once or twice. Surely I was heard…)

Wolfgang Fuchs

When we move into Wolfgang Fuchs, we're moving from the Brötzmann to the von Schlippenbach lineage, both by personal association and musical gesture (leading a large ensemble). John Corbett (1989: 20) has noted Fuchs' *Küng Übü* as the latest word in European collective improvisation, a sort of next generation to the Globe Unity Orchestra. Like Schlippenbach, Fuchs conceives and crafts his group's musical events, but "composer" seems even less appropriate a moniker for what he does with *Küng Übü* than it does for Schlippenbach and the GUO—in spite of the "All pieces composed by Wolfgang Fuchs" on his FMP recordings, a convention of the *E-Musik* status Jost Gebers won for FMP's improvised music. Also like Schlippenbach with FMP's SAJ editions, Fuchs carved out his own little special coproduction branch with the *Uhlklang* (Owl Sound) sublabel, his entry point into the regular FMP roster later.

Fuchs moved to Berlin from his hometown Karlsruhe. "I never heard jazz in the smaller town; I played solo guitar, listened to the Beatles, Stones, rock groups; in our little town, that was the youthful opposition against the elders. I started on several other instruments, including trumpet, and violin, but it was James Brown's music that got me into the saxophone. I had no awareness of jazz, until some people I met happened to take me to see Brötzmann and Bennink playing together. That's when it

first clicked. Later I started hearing records by Globe Unity. But it was very late in my development, age 22 or so, before I ever heard any of it."

Listen to CD 10/1, tracks 7-10

solo music, composition/improvisation

"I noticed that your first solo LP with FMP was *So and So,* in 1982. I'm curious about the processes that went into this project, and its relationship with other parts of your work, in duos, trios, larger groups. Looking at the solo area, this LP came some years after you started working here in Berlin, during which time you say you played solo concerts. Why did you make your first solo LP in '82 if you had been doing solo concerts for much longer before that?"

"I think I was first inspired to think along those lines when I heard Eric Dolphy's solo rendition of 'God Bless the Child,'" he recalls. "I then asked myself what my own engagement with material would be, because to play solo like that I felt I needed a very strong, tight relationship with some given material. In combinations with other players, you can always fall back on the interactions with the others; in solo, you stand in a room alone for the people and deliver all the music yourself. The question was to what degree my material was developed enough to present, what must I leave out, how should I treat what remained. The process was very much one of deciding what was substantial enough to leave in and what was mere noodling in the end."

"So perhaps your early long period of playing with groups was one of material evolving to the point where it might be ready to present in solo context?"

"Yes, I think that's true. A point came when I did develop music from the group to the solo context in that way, and one also came when I developed solo music

completely on my own for a ten-piece group to then play. The same process, only in reverse.

"I have also noticed that a very good improviser will not work so well as a solo player, because he will simply play in the same way he would play in a group. That is not my approach; I need to work on the material beforehand and decide what to use and what not, think about it very carefully. I have to rid myself of background thoughts of a drummer or a bassist, playing to them in my head, as it were, though they aren't there on the stage. This is for me utterly important, decisive—this relationship with the material."

"So you must have a strong feeling for the material first to get to that relationship."

"Of course."

Listen to CD 10/1, track 11

timing, how the short pieces developed

"And I have noticed also," I say, "that this solo and the later solos—and most of your work with duos and trios, for that matter—the material you present is usually short in duration. This makes me wonder about how your sense of timing works in improvisation: how do you sense when a piece is good enough, that it should end at a certain point?"

He laughs. "That is hard." He laughs more. "That is hard."

(With my second birth in slaking and bathing in the waters of the Váh, I come up in the Three—the end of my beginning and my middle, beginning of my end, dialect completing—and look back within my Third over the One and Two in me. Mother One and Father Two—so time's dreaming have named them. The child I made myself

from them is still an infant, still exposed, but real enough to sound its Thirdness in me, to give me a sail beyond my flesh to spread to my wind.

Points and lines subsumed, I have another plain now to sail, the Váh Valley peopled scant, an easier walk, though barren. Loneliness is gone; I recall my times in family, as father/son, mother/daughter, and wholly spirit, One again anew. Animal brain reigns at ease, unstraining surveys its domain.

Ahead lies the Four. The rise of its mountains [again, the Carpathians, but now they *are* on my way home] pulls me upward like a gravity in the sky, like the northern vortex pulled my ancestors, from the force of equatorial spin outwards toward sun, to the magnetic pole, inward, away from that outflowing, heedless force, to the secrets of the stiller earth frozen beneath its white ice cap.

The excitement in me grows as the wind against my psyche's sail grows now yet colder, swifter, whispering from the mountains I do now call home.)

"But these pieces on your recordings," I say to Fuchs, "are all so similar in duration—two to four minutes."

"Yes, it was already so in the first one, *Momente*. I think it has something to do with the fact that since I started on my musical path as a free jazz player," he says, "I had developed through the experience of playing for very long stretches of time, mostly in these smoldering buildups of intense energy. This was the way all of the best players in free jazz developed, from the beginning.

"When I started here in Berlin, in '68, '69, playing with Alex and Sven, you needed no wristwatch. *They started, and they finished exactly 44 minutes later—always.* They were very well used to each other—but at some point one must notice that one is in an unproductive rut.

"I think it also has to do, in my case, with realizing what it is that I have to offer, and how long I'm capable of making it. Then too, back to the relationship with the material—what is this material, how will I work it, whether alone, or in duo or trio; if it can be mined to my satisfaction in four or five minutes, then that's okay."

"And what you determine as okay for yourself is something other players pick up on from you, or do they just happen to have the same sense themselves?"

"That depends on the musicians one works with, forms groups with; they will tend to be like-minded people. I've never had the experience, except perhaps in the beginning, of saying in a group, 'We will play for six minutes, or eight minutes, and then we will all stop.' The duration is just something that comes naturally and mutually. Perhaps there is a sense in which it is coming from me, my aesthetic, to others, but then if they are in accord with that it is also coming from them to me.

"The other consideration is commercial. When I've played in certain contexts, such as jazz clubs, the piece will typically be short, and the musicians who work with that length have learned to play something in just a few minutes that is just superb; more would be too much, and I've heard examples of that too."

Listen to CD 10/1, tracks 3-6

biological clock

"So have you then developed your own biological clock, do you think," I ask him, "in such a way as to guide you in how you present your material, either for a studio or a live session? You know you have an hour or two to fill, and you fix in your mind a certain division of the time, and a certain order, so that you can explore first one musical area, then contrast it with a different one you consciously determine, then follow that as deliberately?"

"You mean in solo, or group, or both?"

"Both, generally."

"I think that there are a finite number of possibilities according to a given situation," he says. "For example, playing solo bass clarinet, the focus for me is on this fantastic deep tone, and the overtone series that come with it, and perhaps I will do all I want with that in five minutes. It may be that I find myself in a certain acoustically distinctive room, and I will decide, okay: one tone, one hour. Or even one tone, three hours."

"You've done that?"

"No, I haven't. That has not interested me, but it is for me a clear concept. You understand?"

Yes. Something a "new music" person would be likelier than an improviser to actually do: the drama of gesture over experience.

"So when I've played for a few minutes, then I know I can either flow into a kind of expansion, or deepening of the musical area that strikes me as the compelling structural move to make, or into something contrasting—like a sopranino playing in a pointillistic way, for instance. The deep tone of the bass clarinet may go from interesting to boring, and the way to contrast it is not necessarily something automatically in the sopranino sound; the point is to have a sense of structure that will tell you what is appropriate to do and when, for the proper contrast. All that may take a few minutes, but what I've done is establish a playing field *out of the structure of myself*. I can go here, go there, and work the different areas I've set up for myself in those moments. What's important is to work within the field I have set up."

(As I move into the Four, at evening in the foothills after a good day's sleep, I am aware with new keenness of my own embodiment of it, and of the numbers within it.

My Oneness, the unity of all my parts, undivided; my Twoness, all divisions, all mirrors—symmetry of feet, legs, testes, lungs, arms, hands, eyes ears nostrils brains left and right, rows of teeth, hinged jaws, body/mind—all at odds in their very evenness; my Threeness: full genitalia; inner, outer, both; birth, life, death; fish-mammal-man brain.

But mostly I feel now my Fourness, symmetry of frame, of the skeleton in me: the thing that makes me feel the other three so. How? why? no time to know that…but time to feel its truth, in the four limbs of the frame, in the cross my two arms make against my standing trunk, the two sets of four fingers opposite my thumbs. They feel themselves a field, a structure, a way to sense, engage, engender the fire, water, air, and earth—especially the earth of this mountain, rising through the air like something burning cooled [so much more immediate than the Great Pyramids, or St. Stephens], frozen, wetted, toward skyfire and water. A field in time, too, from spring to winter through summer and fall.

I stand there at the foot of my climb; the memories that flood me now are of community, a person among the people, a life from family beyond family to clan, tribe, kindred creatures like and unlike other such, with a history, momentum of present to future, possibilites concrete. One in Four, Two in Four, Three in Four, Four in Four—all pictures in frames, each a celebratory icon of those things its numbers image, carved in time [metered].

These mountains—newmen call them Tatras, or τετρακτψς,[3] something like that—they loom before me now like the finish of my beginning, the spine of my

[3]. Mann was imperfectly recalling Pythagoras' *tetraktys*, the seminal figure at the core of his mathematical-musical mysteries:

instrument, the sum of the parts I have to play, the beginning of my end in sight. I hurl myself, slouch and lurch and stride, all muscle, up their slope.)

"Is this field you speak of, at least in its aspect of sheer sound, primarily determined by the structure of the different instruments you work with?" I was asking Fuchs.

"That's a good question. I would say so. Because up until a few years ago all that I developed of a sound world I developed on the sopranino; sometimes a little bit also came through the clarinet, then bass clarinet, then later contrabass clarinet. But meanwhile, for three or four years I've noticed what enormous potential the bass clarinet has. Whenever I needed to feel secure and confident about exploring and experimenting in this way, the sopranino was always the instrument I turned to. The bass clarinet is not so penetrable or transparent, so easy to yield such secrets; perhaps it is like the trombone in that respect. *So on the one hand, I have a vocabulary I feel virtually handed to me by the one instrument; on the other, I have to put much more active thought into what vocabulary I can get from the other, and how.*"

phonetic vocables

"I might mention the example of a solo LP I did, *Bits and Pieces,* which was based on vocalizations of the vowels—a, e, i, o, u. I worked on it for several years, and I would say three or four sentences about it.

"For a few years I had read the work of a famous wind player**.** He wrote that there was a difference between the way French and German speakers formed their vowels, therefore their embouchures. He was a writer who was open to other music besides classical—he discussed the pop flutist Ian Anderson. What he wrote so impressed me I began working on my own vowels, without a mouthpiece, only my voice, in every

possible articulation, from stacatto to legato and so on, *just to confront my own inner structure with them, to wake up to it as an area of musical exploration*. Perhaps you know this from the trombone.

"When I felt satisfied with that, I worked on them with a mouthpiece, sopranino, then bass clarinet. I noticed that when I did this, my sound on my instruments changed, became imbued with my voice. It was a seminal experience for me; I see it also as square within the classical tradition: you learn the basics of an instrument, you develop your technique, and present your sound. It is the classical sound ideal. But of course then there's more to it than sheer sound. Schönberg was already talking about the melody of the *Klangfarbe*.

"My way to the same principle lay through these vowel permutations, and this first solo LP's tracks were so short because the material dictated that. First I went through the whole system of the sounds forward and backward with my voice alone. (Then, incidentally, after I had recorded six full sides of this material in all its permutations, I added up all the tracks featuring only my voice, and they totaled around twenty minutes. It was something I wish we'd caught in time to release an entire side of only the vocals.)"

"Ah yes, that is interesting," I say to Fuchs. "Axel Dörner told me something about his work as a trumpeter, having learned in the literature that Spanish speakers have an easier time with the instrument because of the effects of the language on their embouchure."

"Really? I'll have to ask him about that, I've never heard that."

(I can't help but laugh at the memory of my poor attempts at newman speech; it rises in me now as if for my sheer amusement on the long trek home.

For several days and nights I lose myself in the twists and turns and vistas of the Four and then the Five, stretching through the mountains at the top of Hungary. Now that I am in these less peopled mountains, I can relax my guard and savor the joy of their feel and their silence and sights. It is here that the oldman in me gives way to his own new life in Heffley, and wakes me up even more to Mann as *new*manned.

Mostly I'm riding my body like a horse who knows its own way home. My bliss seems to wake up in my four limbs doing their work of moving my trunk through the five spins of the world, my five senses engaging it, my five digits on each of the four limbs gripping and releasing it. I am shocked at one point to watch myself dart at the sight of a wild boar, catch it and kill it and eat most of it raw, all without planning or thinking a thing. It dawns on me in the middle of this meal that Mann has acted so already, several times since our joining, but kept it shielded from my awareness at the time. Apparently I am ready to deal with this part of me…

In the back of my mind lies the next water ahead, the Tisza River beyond the mountains. My "memories" of lives the Mann had "visited" are not so present now—he'd really had to expend a lot of psychic energy in those first legs of the trip, dealing with our union at the very time of one of its most demanding, stressful parts [through populated lowlands]. What I do notice is an awareness, from him, of the history of this area as it resonates with things already fresh in my newman mind [for example, Mangelsdorff's recording of *Es sungen drei Engels* resonated so with the thousands of "barbaric" Magyar warriors from these parts who heard King Otto's "civilized" Christian Germans sing it in the battle at Lechfeld, some thousand years ago, when "white" Christians were fighting so many such battles with "white" pagans so decisively throughout the West; Keith Jarrett's solo concerts in Köln, from where some of those Christians came to Lechfeld to confront his own Magyar forefathers;

Brötzmann's use of the Hungarian *taragato*, brought here by the Turks from farther east, which he found so apt in his band with African American drummer Hamid Drake and African *guembri* player Mahmoud Gania; and Hungary's first [and Christian] king that millenium ago, Stephen, the namesake for the cathedral I saw in Vienna. Most delightful of all, I swear I heard "Pannonica," the tune Thelonious Monk wrote for his beloved Hungarian baroness [de Koenigswarter], in the very air of this land after whose earlier name, Pannonia, she herself was named by her Hungarian father]. Generally, "West" as distinct from "East" is already blurring in my mind in this place where the history is still thick in the present rumblings in the Balkans, and where "the West's" arts and letters have been as brilliant as the passions that ignited its wars and weapons, to fire up the globe.

As the Four moves into the Five, my newman awareness seems to move up from the center of my body—my beating heart, my belly—to the top, my face and head. Like a star whose five points form eyes, mouth, and wideflaring nostrils, the awareness of new rises up over old, or out of it, to an ascendancy of control and command, and awareness. I am more and more glad to be here, less and less in need of oldman intervention.)

"So would you say any of this goes from sheer musical technique out to the area of the relationship between music and words and language, as bearers of meaning, and in the process of making your own musical system?"

"No, it is only about technique; I've never used any words, just the vowels, as a way of working out how my mouth functions. Again, like the classical tradition, it was like exercises to build up chops."

Listen to CD 10/1, track 12; 10/2, 1

word improvisations

"But I've noticed that you have worked with Sven-Åke; is that the only work you've done with language and words in the music?"

"Yes, that was a very interesting experience, simply because I never had worked with anyone doing words before; I've always been more the music purist—music without program, as in a film, no language, no semantic content—music speaks for itself, that's always been my opinion, and that's the position in which I've developed personally. Naturally, the written word does much for many that music can't do, but for me the art of sound says enough.

"But for this year or so that we worked together, it was a first for me, because language, and the voice, for the instruments we play, the brass and woodwinds, is most relevant, *because their sound comes from the breath; because every language has its own 'melody,' so every musical expression on a wind instrument is all bound up with those linguistic issues*.

"Later I understood how non-wind instruments worked with the same issues, when Alex Schlippenbach—who, of course, has done a lot of great duo work with Sven—told me 'Fuchs, when I play with Sven, I play off the rhythm of his speech.' It was something I'd never pursued, I felt it to be something of a weakness on my part. That's why the chance to work with Sven so extensively was important to me. Alex had laid the groundwork for his way with Sven, too, when he [Alex] was so fascinated with Schönberg's *Sprechgesang*.

"Anyway, this was a way a musical purist like me could come to the relationship between music and speech."

"So a kind of exception to your aesthetic?"

"No, more like a reach, an outward growth and strengthening, of the potential of my interest. For a pianist perhaps such a reach will be simpler, because his sound pallette encompasses everything—melody, harmony, rhythm, everything. For me to play with Sven's language, I have to establish my link with the level he's on with it, in ways I might not otherwise have to."

films as visual improvs

"I've also noticed that you've done some work with films. Can you tell me about that? Is it a process of improvising a sound aspect to a film while you view it?"

"Yeah. It's been a source of strife for me, actually, because film is something my girlfriend is primarily involved with. My feeling about most of the music that goes with a so-called good film is just bullshit; or rather that the film is no good without the music, and vice versa, which for me is strange. But film is young—a hundred years or so. So my first experience was on a tour with Sven and Alex, when we got teamed up with what the Germans stupidly conceive as an 'experimental' film. It's not really an experiment. Anyway, purely visual things, without language. But again, my feeling is that only music, without language, without anything else, is enough. So film should be too.

"There are very many films of interest, actually, as I think about it," he muses. "Michael Snow, from Canada; New York Eye and Ear Control—you've heard of the group through their recordings, but they also did a film that is superb. In Toronto, too, there's a strong scene, or back and forth and so on through there. There's a film of the Empire State Building, a three-hour shot by a camera trained on the same frame. That for me is just great. That happened…and that got me to thinking whether it would be

interesting to make music to something like that. So we improvised, but we did know the film beforehand."

"Was it interesting, or just a passing experience for you?"

"Yes, it was very interesting, and it's ongoing, I hope to continue. It's hard to sell. But these films, whether they last five or forty minutes, isn't the point. There is a Japanese film that focuses on only the right border of a projected reel, where holes and frames run by. It's a ten-minute film of this stripe whizzing by; for some boring, for me not. Alex said to me, 'Ah, it's like the pulse of the drum.' So yes, I'd like to do more, but only this type of thing; not the usual 'I love you, you love me, let's go cook some food' sorts of films.

"We did a piece, Alex and I, by Stroheim, an old silent film from the '20s; very famous, I think it's called 'Symphony of a City.' That's the only German one I've done. There's another one he did before that, 'The Man With a Camera;' it was the first of this genre of films shot by a camera stuck unmoving in one place—people, machines, traffic and so on, a long glimpse of a day in the city. In the 'Symphony' film, he expanded on the same context by taping a sound track too, from a similar scene's natural sounds, different voices talking and the other noises, and cutting and splicing it throughout the filmed scene like a collage. What was fascinating was the way the juxtaposition worked; superb.

" I have been exposed to many of those I've mentioned, from other countries, through my girlfriend's catalogue. *Like these flicker films, with the optical effect of the fast succession of discrete changing frames that your brain translates into a continuous flow."*

the German language as musical material

"This element in European music of sound as color seems so strong in your work on FMP," I say. "Peter Kowald speaks of improvised music as having horizontal and vertical dimensions; horizontal in the flow of rhythm in time, and vertical in the stasis of a moment. You seem to have chosen the latter to develop. Is that a characterization you would agree with?"

"Yes and no," he answers. "I felt that in the history of jazz, both in America and here, so much had been said and done that there was no need for me to add to it. The free jazz area was the place I saw to make my own new statement. I had many good experiences playing in these long, open, powerful sessions where many interesting things happened, but in the end that wasn't my main source of interest either. I think of three players who have had an important effect on me: Dolphy, Evan Parker, and Brötzmann. Dolphy had a very pointillistic way of playing with pulse that always appealed to me. Then when I heard the other two, it woke me up to the possibilities of the sounds themselves, and how I might pursue them further. I didn't need to play for forty minutes at a time to do that. So, that just became my niche.

"*It has to do with the German language, too. German is not a flowing, elegant-sounding language like the Romantic French or Italian; it is harsher, more like pointillistic bursts itself, bursts of information. But in that harshness there is also something like a* Klangfarbe, *sounds as colors, and they form their own melody in their sequences too.*

"Then, although I haven't studied Schönberg as intensely as some, from what I did read I got the idea of the *Klangfarbmelodie*, which for me reconciled the whole dynamic between pulse as discrete bursts, sound as color to be explored, and the dimension of melodic flow. Mind you, this metaphor of sound as color is purely musical; I'm not thinking of the actual colors the eye sees to put them into sound,

though there was a school of painting that included that concept." (Scriabin and Messaien are two composers who were fascinated by that too.)

"Has Webern been any sort of influence on you? Much of your music evokes his for me."

"I've heard his music, naturally, but the whole of it amounts to no more than a total of four-and-a-half hours. But certainly what is similar is the distillation of ideas and directions from long, roiling pieces to short, direct expressions. However, what is true is that I didn't immerse myself in Webern's work and from that come up with my own."

(By the time I get through that stretch of mountains, I've gotten what I needed from them. The newman in me is completely at home, at ease, ready for the challenge coming up. The Six and Seven loom ahead like a reiteration of the Two and Three, in that they are descents into lowland plains cut through by rivers; as the Danube and the Váh defined my One and Two, the Hernad and the Tisza do my Six and Seven.

I marvel at this, at the actual power and energy and purpose it gives me. I would have always thought it aesthetically pleasing, these little synchronicities between the world and my own mindplay; I had spent much of my life as Heffley marking and counting not stretches of space, as Mann was doing now, but durations of time, hundreds of thousands or more, day after day for maybe forty years, mostly between one and four, layering them into longer durations to also count [ONE-two-three-four, TWO-two-three-four], bringing them to music's life and meaning in sound. Long after numbers and counting had become unconscious, I still did it and felt it, without trying to will it, when I did everything else, from speak to whisper to scream to sigh, so that it was impossible to tell whether the compulsion came from a body programmed or welling with its essence.

But this body of Mann is playing far more than mentally. It feels like I'd been trained only partially by those human engagements with music; much deeper and clearer [and quicker] was the training of my walk thus far, through these moments of those numbers marking time as motion through space, to help me think, and see, and be the way I am now. The challenge coming up is to handle myself through the more populous lowlands, to move as discreetly as I/he had through and out of Vienna, and before he/I was so thoroughly Changed by that walk.

Not far from Miskolc, south to my right a few miles; I can feel the newmen minds and industries [mostly mines, still graves to the Scythians who started digging them two-and-a-half millennia ago] grouped together in force. Something in me tells me I am at a mean here, that the Six and Seven mark the middle legs of my journey, that there is in them some sort of dance of perfection and holy, virgin sacrifice—no, not sacrifice…more like timing, something to do with these numbers, with showing up at a certain place at a certain time to do a certain thing, simply that, something I'd been trained for and had alerted, committed myself to—after which my time, my life would be my own to spend and live as I pleased. Well, at least to spend and live so in the rest of this walk, through the Eighth to the Thirteenth mo(ve)ments, in the mountains again, through Ukraine and into Kazakhstan, over the Black Sea then around the Caspian, back to the womb of my Caucasus cave between that water west and the Aral east, Russia just north, China the next land over east. My safest, surest place high *and* deep in the middle [despite the newman world's recent upsurge of attention to it for its oil reserves].

Miskolc. Staying in the dark of moonless night, still in the last bit of mountain woods before the valley below, I find my mind tends to wander more to its past than its current moments, though again, through those of the latter that have preoccupied

me most recently as Heffley. I hear Sainkho's music breathing in the lives of her Mongol ancestors who almost wiped this city out around the time St. Stephen's was built; I recall the Japanese players and dancers as related more closely, through both genes and memes, to the Mongolians than to the Chinese or Koreans, connecting them up together too, in my mind, to Kowald's and Brötzmann's and Gumpert's and von Schlippenbach's ties to both; I hear Bach's music, hear it yet unheeded by the Germans who lived next to it as it first sounded, five hundred years later, who rather left it behind them at home to come and invade this city, about the time Johan Carl Haffalee, some thirty years younger than his not-too-distant neighbor Johann Sebastian Bach, left it behind to make his ocean crossing. Miskolc.

Finally, I hear "Con Alma," the Dizzy Gillespie tune quoted twice on record by the Globe Unity Orchestra, and I remember suddenly the name my newmen neighbors around this land have for my kind: Alma, which means soul, because for them we are humanity's soul. I remember the way I got here, in my own midlife Middle Passage reversed, in my transatlantic flight away from, with the support of, my *alma mater*. I grin my big hairy head, roll its eyes back in delight, and give a whinnying squeal of pleasure, a sound like the horses that carried my own erstwhile neighbors and distant cousins down from these steppes to the rest of the world as its conquerors and lords, before I lope down into the valley.)

"You mentioned an earlier formative influence of James Brown," I remind him: "an interesting resonance with our discussion about the harsh, percussive German language and its musical counterparts. Your music, more than most of your colleagues, is clearly one removed from the direct influence of the various kinds of African American free jazz things I heard growing up in the '60s; but one thing I've noticed that is similar, for me, is that the percussion and wind instruments work

together as sound-makers in your music. Andrew Hill once told me that he sensed horn players beginning to play much more like percussionists in the free jazz outbreak as he experienced it in that time.

"How has this generation of sound through rhythm manifested in your own work? You've mentioned coming up in the long free jazz energy sessions, and I noticed that feel to one of your early trio records that used drums. In the later recordings by Küng Übü, I notice this jagged rhythm that relates to the feel of German language that you mentioned. What I'm wondering is how the sheerly rhythmic dimension of your music has developed over all this time. When you sit here and look into your mind to retrace that development, how has that process of collective free improvisation developed from the more or less common free jazz sound to your own very distinct one?"

"It's hard to say," he says. "In the beginning, there was a rhythmic element, that perhaps moved increasingly from the ground in percussion to expression in the horns?"

"Perhaps the easier way to get at this is to have you compare the first Küng Übü recording with the second one."

"That is hard too," he says; "it's been a long time since I listened to the first one, and the second one is already a few years old now. *It is clear that in the first recording the players tried for a long time to bring out a certain sound picture that would emerge not from the will of one person but from the collective as a whole; sometimes they got it, sometimes not.* Sometimes it has more the sound of an attempt than an achievement. *By the second recording it has become clear; the sound world is established and is being explored.* I don't know if that's true or not, but it's what I hear. I can't really be objective, but my subjective feeling is that the sound world has

been recognized. *The musical events unfold as a product of the group mind, from one to the other, with no one person imposing his will on the whole.*"

"So you say that these recordings took place far from each other in time. How often or seldom did this group meet to work on the music between the recordings?"

"Ah, that was catastrophic," he laughs. "I am not so much the organized leader; we met not at all for the year or two between, then the nine of us met an hour before the concert, then we hit. How much the others played together, I don't know; we just had the experience of playing not at all together for that time, then coming together and taking it up where we last left off. It was a Nickelsdorf festival, and it went very well, I think. The English colleagues thought it was a little spare, but that's okay."

"Aren't they noted for their own spareness? Have they been a big influence on you?"

"Yes, very much so. The scene itself is so hard, very difficult, but certain musicians in it have always been important to me. Their intensity of intent is what appeals to me. I've played with Evan, and Tony Oxley, Paul Lytton, Phil Wachsmann, Phil Minton; very, very important for me."

(I will not speak more of the Six and Seven, except to say that I feel anything but reflective, or receptive to the newman history around me at this point. I am completely engaged, every orifice of sense in my head, every surface of hide and pelt, in moving through this stretch without being seen. I need to prove I can do it, can practice it, can move through such parts of my world not as places to linger but rather to speed through with dispatch, as flat and fluid in mind and spirit as they are in terrain, and as devoid of awareness and care for the newfolk there as they are of me and mine. I've already lingered and cared so, near Vienna; it is enough, I need to be in my mountains now, in my cave and its heavy dark.

I will say that I wonder at the feel of these memories of invasions—by the Mongols, distant cousins of my first wife's Native American tribes, or the Germans, those of my second—because now I'm so newly sensitive to the goal of remaining invisible, of finding my own private place coveted by no one, remarked by no one, certainly held by no one. I don't mind the idea of sharing…but, at least at this point, sharing's only modes look like coercive force, or persuasive seduction—distant concepts, nothing to readily trust. Maybe later, after I've slept off this Change for a season, I'll wake up to some new modes. Maybe.

And now I will say that I did get through it all right, as I set out to do. And that I am back in those mountains, entering Ukraine, and the Eight.

The entrance to the Eight is a rush of profusion. Ukraine, a homecoming made new, a land full of glaciers melted to rivers, a little birth for every leg of the walk [up to the last, Thirteen]. The Prut, the Southern Buh, the Dnieper, the Volga; the rooted, *angstvoll* forests of mountain and steppe. How did I know, recall all this? My body brought me to it. The word for "white" [as in White Russian] is the very symbol of the West here, in this farthest east before *the* Asian East. I glory, weaken, quicken to its call. I swear I can still feel the shifting of the earth that pushed up the Crimean, Carpathian, my Caucasus mountains, not really so long ago. My four limbs, each hinged into eight, my four fingers, each set thriced against its one thumb; these mountains are one with these knuckles that climb them. I am near home, I relax into the profusion's luxurious tension.)

"How would you say the Küng Übü concept is different, distinct from the stereotypical English sound-research kind of approach?" I ask him.

"I can't really say. There are different aspects of the English scene that don't fit that stereotype. The London Jazz Composers, with Barry Guy; there are many other

colleagues who have their own ensembles, with distinct sounds. I think Übü has simply found its sound, something distinct to its identity as a collective. Although I really shouldn't use that word in Germany, because it's been so discredited by its association with communism in the East. But the ideal of working as a collective bent on the same direction and pursuing a sound unique to that collective process is what we're about, and we have achieved it. It is something that is totally contingent on the people creating it."

"And these people are the right people for this band sound, you think."

"Mostly so. Not to impugne the musicianship of Jon Rose, we invited him to play with us once, and it just didn't work. We couldn't invite pure jazz players nor pure classical players."

ensemble as social microcosm

"Your comment about collectives and communism and so forth interests me," I tell him. "From an American perspective, Globe Unity Orchestra looks like a group with a very sophisticated collective consciousness. How would you differentiate Küng Übü from GUO? I know the sounds are very different, but I'm interested in your perception of the different group consciousnesses."

"Well, I know from my long association with Alex that the GUO has always had two different levels to its identity. One is of totally free improvisation, the other of interpreting charts. It's too simple to make such a direct comparison. I think Küng Übü is in some aspects extending directions from GUO, but perhaps even more from the Breuker Kollektif. You know, in Europe there has always been three free jazz schools: Dutch, English, and German. I think we are taking the Dutch line in our own direction; not so much that we sound like them, of course, but that we are a group of

ten people who basically improvise. We improvise by trying specific things. What are those things? Pieces. Little ideas."

"How does that go? How do these ideas emerge?"

"Everyone asks, what shall we play now together? How about high sounds held long, alternating with deep sounds played short? Everyone tries it. Five minutes. That's an example from a concert we did in Austria at a three-day festival led by Aloise Fischer, Kaleidescope. However, such a rehearsal doesn't mean we'll play exactly what we work out there in a concert. It's a reference point. Some players do it because we did it in rehearsal, others get inspired to do something else, as contrast. You go after something for yourself.

"Another good example is Georg Katzer; his role, also for a gig in Austria, was that of a composer, to write something for us to play. We did work up what he prepared for us, but we told him we were improvisers, and would be doing something different in the concert. The composer thinks, 'oh, yes, we rehearsed, and what we rehearsed we will play tonight.' In part we do, but not from the abstract of a score."

"Do you ever use any sort of signals in Übü to determine the end of an improvisation?"

"No, we all reach our conclusions consensually."

duration, bioclock

"I've noticed that, like your solo recordings, the Übü recordings are mostly short tracks too."

He laughs. "I think it is proper to play short, I guess. But we don't do short for short's sake. I never say 'three-and-a-half-minutes' or something. It just fascinates me."

"It fascinates me too."

"There are two small examples. Evan Parker is of course intellectual and rhetorical, very strongly. He said to me, 'Wolfgang, what is short? So the next time, if the piece lasts three or four minutes, it doesn't mean it was destined, predetermined to be so.' You understand?

"Also, for many years, when David Moss was first here, and we played together often, he did put out a recording that was intentionally conceived as a collection of short pieces. That is not how I work. The shortness in my case is just somehow a by-product of the musical thinking."

"But that's why it fascinates me; it suggests a certain biological clock peculiar to you."

"You mean I couldn't play longer if I wanted to?"

"You could, but your body is saying, 'now is the time, please.'"

"I think it is both, head and gut," he says. "Because when you immediately generate a certain intensity owing to the instrument—such as the sopranino—or the bass clarinet, instinctively you feel the effect of the sound has been achieved, quickly, instantly, and it's over. I think you can see this from Cecil's long stretches of playing. They're great displays of energy, but maybe three or four minutes out of an hour has the substance of what he's saying. The rest is color, or repetition on it."

time issues with Cecil Taylor

"You've played with Cecil in small and large groups," I say. "Moving to another end of the spectrum, I had an interview with Peter Brötzmann recently, and he was talking to me about playing with the Moroccan *guembri* player in his band, Abdelmajid Bekkas, who comes out of a musical tradition in which the music has no

real beginning or end, but cycles through a lot of different players over a period of days and nights. Since the band's approach is to just play free, Bekkas would tend to go on with Hamid Drake, who's an African American drummer from Chicago, longer than Peter felt like doing—at which point Peter would be the one to change or stop the groove. He blamed it on his 'Western training.'

"So what do you think about your experience playing with Cecil? Is it like visiting another kind of musical time world for a few hours, maybe not your cup of tea, but an interesting experience or something?"

"No, it was really very important for me. I don't know if I can express it exactly.

"For one thing, there were a lot of shorter things within the one long stretch of his music, places for different people to do duos and so on, like a suite. What I think was unique about the experience with him, compared to similar situations I've had with Alex Schlippenbach and others, was that everything the other musicians did, Cecil would go with them; there was no conflict between musical ideas, he would go with you. He has such a vast musical sensibility that he would instantly grasp your idea, and go with you in it. That was a new experience for me; plus the sound world itself was superb…" I recall too Günter Sommer's report of finding slowness within Cecil's speed, another time-related aspect.

"So did you feel that his long, amorphous concept and yours of shorter statements were in sync with each other?"

"That I can't say, because we only played together four or five times, in different-sized groups. All I can say is that I found those experiences very exciting. As for the difference I hinted at before, in his solo playing, I find much about it that feels to me like working things out on the stage that I would probably work out at home, to get to the real essence of the music to present. Often, there really isn't much happening for

the first thirty minutes in the music, then boom, suddenly it's there. It's like a meditative ritual, with himself, with his body, for the audience. I don't have so much this meditative element in me that I want to share with an audience. I know a few colleagues here in Western Europe who have a better tolerance for that; maybe Kowald, through the various experiences he's had with Asian music, has something similar worked out. I can appreciate it, undertand it intellectually, but as a player, it just isn't for me."

(The mountains descend soon to steppes and plains, but the forest remains thick, mostly, and still peopled only thinly. I go where best to avoid them, as always, but here I can relax my guard with that more than westerly; these people have always had more brushes with, awareness of our kind than most, living so close to our homes. They have more stories about the devil than most, and those stories depict him/us as a harmless, comic figure bound by the omnipotent mother earth, as much as a frightening, dangerous one out to capture and devour newmen souls.

Gullies, ravines, waters and trees, steppes; the open lands I walk at night, the others sometimes in late or early sun, with some care. Soon the grasslands will stretch away from all forest for several days before I finally veer from my straight line east into the mountains south, to home. Those steppes stretch from the Danube to Dong-Bei [Manchuria]; out of the tangle of trees and their roots, my mind wanders easily to the lives of my own kind scattered far through time and space, from Africa through Germany and Ukraine, where newmen have unearthed remains of our ancient dead, to Tibet, where they've formed some of their closest living links with us.

But I am not there yet, and I savor the last bit of unpeopled forest before I get there. The oaks, the pine, the maples, ash, and linden, the birch and aspen, the willows, all growing down the high, right bank of the rivers, mostly. I savor their

spirits and smells with the renewal of my own new thoughts: Heffley had been drawn to wander and rest in his own Pacific Northwest forests for much of his life, forests of the same family as this one.

His knowledge of the newfolk here highlights mine, too: pianist Bill Evans' mother was born and raised nearby, in Charma, a village at the foot of the Carpathians; the old capital, Hlukhiv, boasted the finest school of music in the Russian Empire, a source of many imperial court musicians; Chopin and Liszt can't have been be too far away…)

time issues in duo context

"I've noticed too that some of your recorded pieces, mostly in duo with others, were longer than the solo and Küng Übü work. How does that part of your work fit in with your overall concept of these longer expressions? Are they also like a suite or something? or do you ever have that aspect of meditative trance you say Cecil has but you don't? Sometimes it seems so."

"It's hard to say. I had a session here in the gallery, for instance, in which I played with Fred Van Hove. Fred is someone I know only slightly, and he too plays from this long concept, but of course with a very fine art. When he came at some point we came together in my own shorter style, and worked it fine together.

"It's different with different people. Evan, of course, is a very strong player; there are players who just hit, and are off and running. They play regularly. Or it might be the case that I am playing so badly that I can only stand by while they blow. Like when Evan came, I hadn't played with him for ten years or so. "

"It is important to be cooperative—*but what it comes down to is that, in my body, I just don't feel good playing long pieces.* It's another matter with eight or ten people,

because you can go in and out, you don't have to play so much. In trios or smaller, you have a presence, or maybe not (I hope I do, I don't know). But in a small group where everyone is always playing, it's just bullshit for me. If I have a trio, what's more interesting is to play duo, solo, duo, trio, all within the flow of the music.

"So when you plan a concert or recording of many short pieces, do you have a sense of how the entire collection of them should be organized and presented?"

"Yes. Sometimes what seems like two pieces to the listener is actually one in my mind, such as when I simply change instruments. That's why I have no problem with interrupting a piece to quickly change instruments. It is time to change, it's part of the piece.

"I don't know whether you're familiar with a book I have read cursorily, 'Adorno/Eisler,' about film music. It talks about the problem with 'new music'—this dreadful category in Germany (*zeitgenossischen*), out of the classical tradition (for many, Schönberg is still 'new music'!). Anyway, new music is supposedly good for film soundtracks because it is so much a collection of sequences, but also an overarching structure. So you can easily pick and choose from what workds for the film within that overall unity."

"This reminds me of Jon Zorn's *Carl Stalling Project.* Have you heard that?"

"No, I only saw him once, in Victoriaville, playing free, no pieces, with someone else, very good. Then in Kowald's Sound Unity film; again in Sweden, in a big band. Later, he lectured on who Eric Dolphy was; very American. Interesting. I do like his concept."

"It makes sense to me that you would be involved with film, with your musical concept of short statements. It's an area of important music right now that some are exploring; the Clubfoot Orchestra is a West Coast group that has done some work

with a couple of silent films. Also the old radio bands that used to play sound effects with the plays. But that's not so much a part of your background."

"No, but it is important to me," he says. "When was it when I started with Sven-Åke—maybe ten, twelve years ago? And in Germany nobody was doing that; then later with Alex. It was in small circles, mostly cinemas; these so-called experimental films…"

East/West

"I'm curious about how the East/West situation here has impacted on your particular musical or general life in Berlin."

"It has no impact on the music itself, because there's really no one from East Germany who's been a big influence on me. The improvisation there was not so great; there are some good players, but no real original voice, in my opinion. Others may see that differently, but for me the music from the East is not so important.

"I have had a good collaboration with [Ossi] Georg Katzer, but it's more to do with his electronics; it isn't any sort of sociopolitical thing, just that he's very good with the electronics. So I could say I'm influenced by him, but it has nothing to do with his being from the East.

"As far as the general impact—total bullshit," he laughs. "There is so much money in Germany that is tied up in supporting the East now. They have something like 18% unemployment there now, and from 1990 to 1997, some billion Marks have gone over there. The West suddenly has so much more to do, with less money. And it's impossible to really make it better with so much unemployment. Next year is an election, we'll see what happens.

electronic music

"Can you tell me a little more about how your acoustic work with electronic music works?"

"I think the electronic possibilities are fascinating. Most of the people who do electronics don't interest me, only a few. Lately, though, I've had more good experiences with it, going well with all my instruments, more than before."

"Do you then think of having a synthesizer in your groups, someone like Katzer?"

"Georg, and now Tom Leeds, a young English player we've invited who's very good. Thomas Lehn from Köln; he has a very old Moog synthesizer that he's constructed his own sounds on. None of this patched simulations of instruments. His sounds excite me greatly."

"So that is perhaps a path that will expand your acoustic concept?"

"I don't know about that; the technical possibilities expand, but the musical concept doesn't seem to be stretched by them. The same goes for the computer: I see new technical but not really any new musical possibilities—but then you're working from a different framework, something not so much for an audience. Or if you do, it isn't really the same concept as an acoustic concert.

"For example, you go to electronic concerts sometimes and sit there listening to a tape. Excuse me, but when I go to a concert, I want to see people playing. Here is a piece that is the exception, though." He shows me a CD. "It's played on a quadrophonic system and is just a great piece—clear, beautiful. Through-composed, but of much more interest than a lot of such pieces."

"I heard Keith Rowe in Nickelsdorf with a band of six or seven computer-electronics players performing on the spot. It struck me as rather similar to your sound concept."

"That could be. It fascinates me. I think my earlier problem was just hearing so much of it in the youth-pop realm."

old/young

"You mentioned earlier that you also have an interest in younger musicians, and that you enjoy working with them when you visit America too. What can you tell me about your experiences with younger improvisers?"

"When I meet young players, I try to discern what their musical path or background is. Sometimes they've been influenced by the music of my colleagues and me, others they have quite an array of eclectic roots, in rock, or pop, or anything in general—tango, electronics, sampling, the superb mix Fred Frith had going—all quite different from us here. Perhaps our work has been a part of their mix; it interests me how I can sync up with that part."

"I notice from your CV that you have also worked for a long time as a music teacher. Are most of the Küng Übü players now younger?"

"Now?" he laughs. "That really takes us back to the question of what the *Gestalt* of the players is. In Nicklesdorf, recently, many of our players were younger. But it is not that my own generation is being edged out by them so much as that we desire to keep an eye on each other, and exchange what we can. I certainly don't go out of my way to hire anyone because of their youth, as a part of sort of a mandatory profile. People are people more than their ages, and when you meet someone who is a true colleague, and something genuine happens musically, it's a natural alliance."

"But I have noticed that among the other FMP musicians your age, you are perhaps a bit more engaged with younger players than they. Would you say so?"

"Well, because I don't live by my concerts alone, and I've always had lots of students. At the moment I have maybe ten students one-on-one; the group workshop I teach has maybe six students."

"Did you agree with Corbett's 1989 suggestion of *Küng Übü* as the torchbearer for the Globe Unity Orchestra?"

"There is a relationship between us as colleagues, some continuity in the musical thinking; on the other hand, we certainly didn't emerge as an imitation of them. We have our own distinct concept that was informed by theirs, not vice versa."

"Which of your FMP recordings have sold the best?"

"The Küng Übü's always sell the best; more recently, apart from that, *Bits and Pieces* has done the best. The worst is probably the duo with Georg."

"Can we say that you have a certain niche or place established, through the *Uhlklang* things, in the larger FMP roster, since '89, when you moved to that?"

"Yes, but I also record for other labels. Paul Lovens' Po' Torch, Beat with Tony Oxley, Phil Wachsmann."

different concepts, different groups

"Your situations range from trios, solos, duos, and larger groups. Do these different situations serve different musical needs or aspects you can develop in one better than another?"

"Yes, I do think so, but my interest is something in constant flux. For example, working with Georg is valuable to my interest in electronics. The *Holz für Europa* group was not so much a way to explore generic wind trio dynamics—there are already plenty of such good trios and quartets around—but what is always of great

interest to me too is how specific people work, and work together: how they create structure, how they think and so on.

"The difference, of course, between a solo situation and a group process is basically a move from one's own concept to a collective one. The music moves from personal expression to an impersonal result of collective processes."

"For example, how would you describe or compare your experience in "Holz" with that in Küng Übü?"

"*Very* different," he laughs. "First, there's a very different musical-social dynamic between nine or ten people than between three trying to work together. Also, it is a challenge for me to try and figure out how to handle myself as a soloist in the different situations, what exactly to draw on. That's first; next has to do with finding the expression appropriate to a given group. The Holz group has a certain relationship with certain material—Georg's piece, the Dolphy pieces from Alex. It would be boring for me to try and make it sound like a miniature Übü. Again, it always goes down to the specific people and their dynamics, not to an attempt to make a generic sound specific to different sized groups."

"I find your music very visually evocative. Do you have visual experiences when you play? inner visions of any sort?"

"Well, naturally it's impossible to concentrate on the sound of the music 100 per cent of the time, and one's mind wanders in playing in various ways," he says. "I can say that I never consciously use visual premises as platforms for the musical improvisations. Sometimes I do like to take in a good art exhibit before a performance, which puts me in a nice state, but that's different from using a visual to inspire a sound."

Listen to CD 10/2, tracks 2-3

musical areas to explore

"Are you then satisfied with the different situations you have going on for yourself here now, or are their other areas you still want to get to in the future?"

"I would like to explore electronics more; and I am also interested in the voice at the moment."

"Your own voice?"

"No, a choral context. I have a small grant to produce a work for a choral group, not something they are accustomed to singing but rather something I would like to hear them do. I hope to have a piece finished by the end of the year. I haven't narrowed it down any more specifically than that I'm interested in the possibilities of the voice for sound, not for language. I'm thinking back on concerts I've done and heard with Sainkho Namtchylak, Tristan Honsinger, Sven-Åke and Alex, Shelley Hirsch and so on.

"So no text, only vocal sound."

"Right, text doesn't interest me. I'm just not the type for it, like some others of my colleagues. I'm focused on sound structures the voice lends itself to."

American exposure

"What is your plan for America?"

"I go as a soloist, and I will be joined by other musicians with whom I have some contact to play together after my solo performance. John Corbett has hooked me up with different situations."

"You've mentioned the importance of people in defining a group, more than externally imposed generic standards. What about the role of instruments? Do you

consider instrumentation at all in the way you put players together? or do they just follow the personalities by chance?"

"Yes, it is simply the players first, then whatever they happen to play. I find the oboe a superb instrument, but there is no one out there playing it in a way that would fit with us. At the moment, I see the same problem with the contrabass. But it doesn't matter; when we invite someone to play in the group, it's just to make music, whatever they play. With Holz it's different; we three came together for our personal chemistry, but also with the determination to have certain instruments in the group. But that's the only exception; otherwise, it's always the person."

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"That's about all I have for you. Is there anything you can think of that I might have neglected to ask, that you would consider important to say?"

He laughs. "That's a good question. No, not really. I find myself thinking back to your question of the visual stimulus as a trigger for music. For me it is simpler to play conceptually in terms of the sound of the instrument. When I play the sopranino, or the contrabass clarinet, or whatever, the sound is a concrete thing you know must be, distinct from all others. The clarinet is clear like a laser, the saxophone is rough and powerful, and it has nothing to do with anything visual. And when I go see a good art exhibit, it really has nothing to do with music."

"I think what fascinates me about your music, maybe because I'm an American, is that you've taken it so far down the path away from the horizontal flow of time, into the blossoming of moments. *You've developed this vertical dimension so strongly that for me it is very visual, like a painter in the sense that a picture stops time's flow."*

"Ah ja."

"In music, that isn't so typical. It is usually more flow than moment; yours isn't static, but it's more moment than flow."

"But it must also expand out into the space of that moment."

non-Western music

"Does your music have much to do with any non-Western traditions? The word 'static' I don't like, but thinking of it in a positive sense, some traditions are more static than the Western because they use sound as a way of interrupting time's flow, to take us into the moment of the sound."

"I have sought them out in my listening. Like these wonderful exotic Eskimo sounds. Kowald knows about this sort of thing much better than I, from his travels. I was never there, I can only listen and observe what I can from that."

"But as a musician in your own milieu you have listened to such things with interest?"

"Of course. Japan is very deep; Korea is very interesting to me, because they've been improvising for 3000 years.

"Playing with Sainkho was a great experience because she is a very good singer, but she was also naturally very familiar with our Western music tradition. Her concert here was very good; I do think it is hard for her to do pure improvisation. I saw her work at Podewil with Ned Rothenberg, and they set up little pieces by saying 'you do this, I'll do that'—but it was not so easy for her. She would play in a certain area a little bit, then stop; we would play for twenty or thirty minutes putting many such little areas together, or transiting somehow from one to the other, or going back to certain areas at strategic moments. That works. But her concept was to go to one area,

stay there awhile, then stop. For me, however, the experience was good, because her technical prowess and presence is so amazing."

"Do you have a strong sense of yourself as a German musician in the terms of your own body of music? Or European, or international, or anything like that?"

"That's hard for me to say, maybe better for others to say. But my impression of my own music is not of something that is provincially German; this music is such an international art form."

"I'm thinking of what you said about the German language being so percussive and punctuated, rather than flowing."

"Yeah. But I have been quite influenced by the English, too. And American music, naturally."

(The Ten…sum of the One, Two, Three, and Four, of the All and the Null.

I had long stopped marking and counting consciously the flowing moments of the thirteen legs of my Walk, but the Ten was so distinctive that I recognized it immediately. The profusion, the plenum of the earth around me, of its own memories it carried to me and I to it and in it; the keenness of my double mind, the way my new and old selves melded and saw things, knew things; the ten-pronged hands that worked together to seize, touch, eat from this place, and to reach for the sky, the ten-pronged feet that ran the world and made it go around.

There were times, when the ice was not, when this land was not that different from our African tropical first-home, its plants, its animals; other times, when the ice had made us better hunters, we stalked the mammoth and rhino to death here. Some of our number were from Africa, some from Asia, some from God knows where, groups always coming and going, following the game. People always felt themselves as old to the earth, new to each of its times and places.

It was when they really did take it into their hands—plant their own forests, of food; raise their own game, creatures born to go nowhere but into their bellies—that their feet too were planted in place, their toes rooted. Their nomad flows became momentous deeds; they changed the world for the rest of us, their fields and settlements and numbers locked up what were once free lands and waters, razed plant life that used to support our bands and enough bison and other big game to feed us. What they left was only enough to support small game, including us. We died off like the meat we'd hunted, the spirits that drove it, or survived by narrowing in every way, catching our rabitts, black grouse, occasional deer. Mostly we hid, raided these people a little, were poor and powerless. We turned inward, our minds grew in dreamtime as our lives shrank in the world.

By that time their world had changed enough to serve as game and garden not for its makers and keepers but for a new kind of hunter-gatherer: clans of their own kind who yet counted them prey, their held fields of food as free grazing, as all men had taken freely from the wild earth of beasts and plants forever: the warlords, come in on horses from north of God knows where, starting over with the One [the sun they invoked, as, surprisingly, female, for its white-hot power and light and rule], the Two [the cross they put on its circle, to map and name that circle's force], the Three [the embodiment in clans that fathered that force, through generations in time], the Four [their shining of that force through space and time].

This new kind of hunter-gatherer is the shock still rocking the earth; I feel it, its horrific dread, as if it hit only a moment ago, and is still registering. The memory of its firstness here, of its spread from here throughout the world—still in memory as recent as the power axis running from Russia to Prussia to Vienna, acted out through Hitler and Stalin, perhaps too America still and to come—floods me as the waters

from the ice had done. It is not only a shock of dread and horror, it is also one of shame and guilt; these new people are part of my kind, we are all human. How could this have happened?

In the run of time I can recall through my body, through this place, that move—to seize, imprison, rape and milk the earth so, then to kill and die over its fruits so—is truly just a moment ago, a moment in progress; a moment too much, too soon. The new things these monsters brought in, a mere four millennia ago—their wheel, bearing them in chariots behind horses, like little suns and worlds rolling through the sky; their silver tongues, a language so strong and hungry for all tongues to speak it, to pull together their bodies [all bodies] to act as one body under mind, to do every mighty thing possible.

Indo-Europeans…their newman name comes fresh to my newmanned mind; the image that lingers here arcs from those first bodies down their generations to the first people known as "Slavs," and down their other lines to the first known as "Germanic," the Varangians [Vikings] who swept into this land and usurped the usurpers, built Kiev, founded the first Russian dynasty [*Ruß*, from the Rurik family name of the founder of Kiev Rus'], took so many living Slav bodies down the Dnieper and across the Black Sea to Constantinople to trade for spices and glass and silver coins that their very tribal name became the word for "slave," as recently as a millennium ago, when Hildegard sang.

But the Mann in me turns away from that jarring, grating image; still too much too soon, this white clan. I need, with Mann, to reclaim my ground in the clan that was here for so long before it, has endured it right along, will surely remain as it passes.)

Axel Dörner

This young man seems young indeed, compared to everyone else I've met. He's the very picture of the slender, refined, sensitive artist type, blond, early thirties; the paisley silk jacket and ascot he sports adds to the effect, but I quickly see there's nothing vain or affected going on here, only personality and its style. He is also among the most thoughtful and dedicated of the players I've met.

Keeping to our central focus of the first-hour players, I would place Dörner, like Fuchs, on a continuum with Schlippenbach. He grew up near Cologne, where he went for his early formal music education, at (after von Schlippenbach) "the first school for jazz in Europe;" like von Schlippenbach, he was exposed then to the latest developments in new music, studying with teachers who had worked with Stockhausen and other composers; like von Schlippenbach, he developed an abiding passion for Thelonious Monk's music; like von Schlippenbach, he made pieces on which to improvise, as well as improvising freely and in pre-free jazz styles; finally, his professional associations with elders in Berlin were thickest with both Sven-Åke Johansson and von Schlippenbach, both of whom themselves have a thick musical bond.

Dörner's FMP dates include featured spots in the large groups of von Schlippenbach (CD 61), Sam Rivers (CD 75), and Fred Van Hove (CD 88); he's also recorded with peers closer to his age on other labels, including the double LP arrangement of Monk tunes. The latter was his calling card to von Schlippenbach in 1997, when the band they formed with him was presenting the Monk program at Podewil and the Bb-Club . Dörner's more new-music, performance-art aspects found outlet in his work with Johansson, as did his post-electric-Miles/Punk-Rock forays at

the East German club Anorak, and his delicate *Geräuschmusik* collaborations with young British improvisers at the 213 Club, all of which I saw and recorded.[4]

We spoke for the first time at his tiny studio apartment (add "starving" to the first paragraph's qualifiers of "artist") in the Prenzlauerberg district, over bottled water. He was open and relaxed with me, but also a rather shy speaker as a matter of course.

"Actually, first I wanted to be a painter," he says. "I started in music with piano lessons, and later trumpet. At first music wasn't a big interest for me. At some point, music appealed to me more because painting is so solitary and isolated, and music had that social component. I was only into classical music at first, and I had much more talent for the piano than the trumpet; trumpet was very difficult for me in that time. My trumpet teacher was not a trumpeter but a tubaist. I lived in a small town near Cologne, and my serious music studies came later in the city itself. My first trumpet concerts then were nerve-wracking for me, very tense; piano performances were no problem. Beethoven, Bartok, relatively difficult material, but it went okay. Everyone wondered why I bothered with trumpet. I had played the piano since age nine, and started trumpet at eleven. But I was more interested in other things, sports and so on until 16."

"What happened at 16 to intensify your engagement? Any special experiences with certain music?"

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[4]. Indeed, Dörner's busy schedule throughout Berlin made him the best source for a thumbnail report on the club scene there from a "new-and-improvised" perspective.213 Club had a relationship with the London club of the same name, a place for the "free" scene, English-style; Anorak, his favorite place to play in Berlin, operating only since 1996, featured an overlap of rock and improvised music, and generally more style/genre mix than other clubs; Bb Club is mainstream jazz; Jazzkeller Treptow, oldest still-operating jazz club in the East, a place for the GDR free jazz of earlier times, sort of a mix of acts now, but primarily of free jazz; Kryptonale, he doesn't know too well, has heard it's interesting; Podewil, not purely commercial, functions well as a place to play professionally, also features many foreign players; A-Train, owned by a rich architect, mainstream commercial.

"I heard jazz for the first time when I was 17. Classical music is what I grew up with, what my parents always listened to."

"How about contemporary music?"

"No, only classical. Nothing past Wagner and Mahler. After my primary schooling was done, at 19, I felt too weak as a trumpet to pass the music school entrance exam. Military service was mandatory, and I tried out for the music division, but I was too nervous to do a good audition, and they turned me down. Piano wasn't an option. After my military service was over, I had to do a year of civil service.

"At that time I got involved with jazz through a jazz school in a small town an hour or so from Cologne, begun right around that time. There were a few teachers, jazz musicians, and the students came in once a week for instruction, actually a couple of hours in ensemble performance. Small-group jazz, a chance to play and work on the trumpet. Modern jazz, straight ahead [*Regelmaßig*, a word emphasizing the quality of metered time]; this was the middle of the '80s, so the people were more oriented to fusion music, Miles Davis' electric bands being the prime model. I learned how to read charts, play on changes. It was very difficult after having only played classical music. It was a whole different feel, especially rhythmically, the timing, the phrasing; entirely other than what I knew."

"Did you eventually feel a mastery of it, after working on it then?"

"Yeah, somewhat, but after long, difficult work. I still struggle with it. I started in a band of my own with some people from Bonn, nothing professional, just to rehearse, Wayne Shorter tunes and so on, the same fusion style from school."

"Did you listen to a lot of American jazz then?"

"Yeah, that was the time I really got interested in hearing a lot of records."

"Did you have a special model trumpet player who influenced you?"

"Miles Davis, naturally. It was hearing him at age 18 or so that made me decide to play trumpet professionally in jazz. I really liked the records from the '50s, his quintet with John Coltrane. The electric fusion stuff I also liked, but later. Louis Armstrong was also a big influence, actually before Miles."

"So your first relationship with jazz was with early jazz."

"Yeah, through the Dixieland scene here. I played awhile in my small town in a Dixieland band modeled after Bix Beiderbecke's groups. This was my first exposure to jazz records, at 17, the early players. Miles I heard on the radio at first. We had a good jazz radio station in my town, no real good record store there, one had to drive to the city, and I never had much money for them either."

"Did you practice to records or tapes?"

"No, except later to some play-along records. When I was 20 I started studying jazz trumpet with an American teaching in Cologne, John Eardley. He had played with Charlie Parker and Gerry Mulligan, in the '50s. He was playing in a studio band in Cologne, and I asked him to teach me bebop. That was good. Every week I had to transcribe a Miles Davis solo, or another's, from a record. I had several experiences with workshops over the years, in Italy, South Germany, some led by American musicians—David Liebman, Billy Hart, Jamey Abersold-type things. I had the Jamey Abersold play-along records, worked on those. This was still around age 20. David Baker."

"Current American jazz pedagogy."

"Right. Once trumpeter Terrence Blanchard did a workshop. But still, it was the early Miles Davis recordings that really caught my attention."

"What about him did you especially feel drawn to?"

"His lyricism. I also liked Dizzy Gillespie and Fats Navarro—but Miles was not so technically brilliant, so he was easier for me to imitate, perhaps."

"So did your trumpet playing improve?"

"Well, I was always very dissatisfied with it, my technique and so on," he admits. "I was always practicing. But one can practice ten hours a day, and if one doesn't know what to practice, it just makes for strong wrongness. I needed more understanding and experiences as to how it should function, or what the basis for the mechanics of technique should be. I was ignorant about what should be the foundation of a good technique, what the technique should serve, so all my attempts to build technique were just frustrating me. When I started, I was very hopeful, but I just couldn't find the foundation for the trumpet within me. I would fall back on playing classical piano just because I knew the basis of it so naturally. I kept trying on the trumpet, but it just never worked. It was that way for a good couple of years."

"Was it because you found no good teacher?"

"Well, no one that I did find could tell me what was wrong and how I could make it better. I could find no one to help me. When I went into the music school in '88, I took the piano test and studied that there for a year."

"So Malte Burba was the teacher who eventually worked for you?"

"Yeah, he oversaw my trumpet work there. I was better by the time I got to him; I had a very good teacher in Holland."

the body as instrument, language and embouchure

"So you had been struggling in frustration for a long time with the trumpet, inspired by Miles Davis, wanting to play jazz. My interest here is in the development of a brass player into an improviser who has developed his own very unique approach

and voice on the instrument, going through the jazz style as you have. How exactly did this Malte Burba manage to turn things around for you, to help you get where you wanted to with the instrument?"

"One factor here is that there are not many trumpeters in this improvised music scene; one of the reasons is perhaps that it is so difficult. It has something to do with language. *You know it is easier for English and Spanish people to play trumpet than us, because of the t-h sound; the tongue position. There are many musical people who run into this barrier here with this instrument, I think; saxophone is an entirely different matter, piano too, trombone is much simpler physically, with the bigger mouthpiece; it is also difficult, but trumpet is really extreme.* A small mouthpiece; some things one wants to do are simply impossible, however much one practices. *The problem is really that the entire body must be the instrument; if that isn't functioning as it should, if the position of the body isn't right, the music won't work.*

I immediately recall Miles Davis telling Dick Cavett about the prime impression the comportment of musicians made on him when he was young and first contemplating music for himself, the way they held themselves and, especially, their instruments. Then, the silhouette of his playing posture that became his crossover commercial success' personal logo. "And it was this man whose method helped you understand your body as the instrument."

"Yes, it helped me immensely." We would explore the subtler implications of body—that is to say, body-mind—later in our discussion.

history with free and new music

"Perhaps the interest in the question about the details of technique lies in the specifics of the music you wish to make. We've talked about your history with

classical music and mainstream jazz; when did you become engaged with free improvisation and the desire to practice it?"

"For a long time I wasn't even aware of it, never encountered it," he says. "In 1986, I think, I heard Anthony Braxton; I found it to be very good. It was his quartet, it made an impression on me. But the people in the scene I was in then, in the Cologne Hochschule, were not interested in it. There were a few, but most not. My exposure to free music was slow and gradual, and it came to interest me more and more."

"Did you start thinking about what it meant in terms of the trumpet?"

"Yeah, especially since there were so few trumpeters playing it."

"What about German free music? Did you have an encounter with that too?"

"That came later. Actually, much later."

Dörner was in school in Cologne, and the mostly conventional jazz scene there, until 1994.

"Kowald also had a presence there," he says. "I remember some free music workshop there in 1989, I think. There was a workshop in Aachen that I went to with my trumpet, that impressed me greatly. He spoke a lot about music as well as playing, of course. I found the playing very interesting. In '90, '91 there was a quintet with Matthias Bauer here in Berlin that I played with, a very static kind of music which interested me greatly."

"So that was the beginning of your own music starting to develop?"

"Yeah, actually. "

"And so you started thinking in terms of how you wanted the trumpet to work?"

"Yeah. It was the first time I really started getting interested in 'noise' (*Geräusch*) as a musical component; before it was always sounds, pitches, tones on the instrument."

"Were you also influenced by contemporary music composers?"

"Yeah, in the music school in Cologne, I had a class with Johannes Fritsch, a well-known composer here—he worked with Stockhausen in the '60s. He was a professor in Cologne and had a composition seminar. It interested me, it was so different, another world than the one I had been mostly drawn to."

By this time painting was well on the back burner. Kowald and, later, Hans Schneider were the first contacts with FMP players Dörner had. He knew when it was time to move to Berlin.

"It was very difficult in Cologne," he recalls. "If you always stay in the town where you grew up, everybody knows you from your past. It's difficult to convince people about what you're doing now. Impossible. And in this quartet, and with this trumpet player, a very good friend from Cologne—we traveled to Paris. I organized the whole trip, the first time I organized a tour, and it was a disaster," he laughs.

"Why? What happened?"

"It was good, in a way, it was kind of an adventure. This was the first time we tried to work on a professional level, and we invited these musicians who were very experienced, and they could have been our fathers. There were four gigs, and the first gig was in a place, and he wanted to give us 100 marks each—very little. So we gave the older players our 100 marks, so it was 200 for both of them, and we got nothing, but it was just a rehearsal for the next day, which was a very good concert, a modest success. That was in Cologne; the first was in Bonn, to which only a few people came, which was kind of strange. Then we went to Amsterdam by car; it was just not

very well organized. We needed a driver; things just fell into place coincidentally, and not in a comfortable sense. Then the last day in Frankfurt, the people were expecting a straight ahead jazz group, but we did our own stuff, very much free improvisation . . . but in the end it was a good experience. I recorded the whole thing."

Listen to CD 10/2, tracks 4-5

Monk's music

"Tell me how you got involved with Monk's music."

"I was always interested in Monk, while still in Cologne. But there I never met the right people to really do it with me. I was very enthusiastic, but the people I wanted to play with didn't want to play with me, and the people who would play with me didn't like Monk as much as I did, so it was difficult. In Berlin I met Rudi [Malfatti], who was also very interested in Monk's music, as well as Alex Schlippenbach, so it finally took off."

"Is there anything in Monk's music that is particularly interesting to you as a trumpet player? or is it just the music?"

"I do think it interesting that there are hardly any trumpet players playing Monk's music over here; I like Don Cherry's playing of Monk, on a record he did with Steve Lacy, but it's rare. But I like his way of playing those tunes. Also, Kenny Dorham played some Monk, and he's a trumpeter I like very much."

At this point, my tape recorder stopped working; we switched to his, and it seemed to be working, but when I listened to the tape later it was only noise. I could sense through these mishaps and his frustration with words as a way of communing over musical issues, especially across the language barrier, was leaving him very

dissatisfied. I suggested we leave it alone for awhile, that he think about what he wanted to say, and then try again, over wine, in public somewhere.

Listen to CD 10/2, tracks 6-7

(I can see my old clan still now as I look around me, as clearly as the newman in me sees the shocking other. How do I say this? The strangeness, then violence of that newman clan—its farmers, miners, and ranchers, its warlords, rulers, and slaves—colors how I see its oldman counterpart; I don't have the luxury of ignoring it because it overwhelms and alienates me. But the ground of the new lies in that of the old, not the other way around, and I have to deal with that too. I am a parent who has to search his soul for clues about why his son is a murderer, and I am the son who has to see what in his father and mother led him to murder.

What exactly is the shock these Indo-Europeans embody? Most immediately, I want to say the death, the killing—but death and killing have always been part of the old clan too. The old clan: life in its place, around me now just as it was when yet unshocked; every tree, stone, waterway, every creature, large and small, is a member. Time is not a sword of death and loss with some agenda of its own, it is a Moment in which the whole clan shares, living and dead, coming and going through it. Death is not a moment to fear or inflict, it is the way to come and go, the other end of birth…

Stop right there. [I do stop my strolling body; it had been slowing with its thoughts. I spot a rocky place a bit above the ravine I'd come to, a place both overlooking and overlooked enough to rest secure for the day. The sun is coming up; I amble up myself and perch to contemplate this old clan trickling along with me; I can see trees, water, rocks, any other creatures that might come and go here through the rising sun's light. I can play on my flute while I ponder this.]

My description of it is right, I remember knowing its rightness…but now I must see it as a naïve view, must examine what was assumed, and see if its rightness renews. Start with birth, move through life, end with death.

Is birth something to fear, to inflict as violence? The child doesn't exist to see it so, the parents do. It starts with the drive to mate. What makes that the freedom of life and joy rather than a shock of pain and horror? The art of it, the way it takes place between the parents. The man can aggress, assert, take, hurt, the woman can suffer at his hands; the woman can seduce, use, dismiss, even kill the man, take only his seed and whatever else she might want. Bad artists. The art of mating brings each mate to as much sacrifice as joy, as much death as life, but each as a way to come and go in the moment of the clan, to help the new life come and go so. Man sees the shock and stranger he is to woman, lets her see he sees it, helps her find her own way to turn the shock to pleasure, to purpose, the stranger to friend and ally; woman sees the tangle she is to man, the danger, helps him see her good will and respect, her care for him. Sex, birth, family—life—are nothing to fear if the art they require takes place; otherwise, they are the most fearful things.

From mating, we can picture so all transactions between neighbors in the clan: the man or beast who uses force to rip his food out by the roots is full today and starves tomorrow; the thief is a bad artist, the trader a good one, if the trade is good for both parties, and the clan; in short, every relationship, between every creature and thing on the earth, must have this art that brings out the greatest good in mating, birth, and family. And why not? The old clan is exactly such a family…

The new life comes, and life must kill to live; some lives must die for the whole clan to live. Is this a thing of horror and shock, terror and pain, or the way of life and joy coming and going? There is an art to killing and dying, as to mating [at least so it

always seemed to me without thinking about it, something too obvious to question; now I am questioning]. Is that true, or have I been naïve, deluded by self-interest, to think so? I don't know…but I can make the case for the truth, if it be true.

My people were not arrogant hunters; we considered our success and survival to be due to the generosity of the creatures who gave us their lives. Naïvete, self-interest's delusion, or insight? Again, I don't know, but if such generosity from prey and gratitude for it from hunter is a truth, I've seen it more than once.

I learned about the art of the kill from walking for a time with a lynx; he was a friend, or what you might call a pet, as I was to him. He was curious, sharp, inquisitive, an exceptional cat, and I felt honored by our rapport and bond. We hunted together and shared our food, and many deep communions.

Once he chased down an ibex, a buck in his prime, frisky and strong. They were out on the plain, they'd run to exhaustion, and the cat had bitten the prey's leg enough to ensure his eventual capture. The ibex knew he couldn't run, that it was only a matter of time, and he seemed beyond fear, into something like resignation…but he didn't just lay down and wait to die, he limped back and forth, seemed to do a little dance almost, snorting, lowering his horns and making futile gestures of defense and attack. I knew the lynx was hungry, and the blood smell was strong; he could have rushed in and finished in a flash.

Instead, he paced back and forth with the ibex, swiping his paws at the thrusting horns almost playfully, darting his head forward as if to bite, then back away from the horns. He was playing him, cat and mouse; but I saw clearly that it was not cruelty, was rather seduction, care for the prey's experience, his path through death.

Then he did the most artful thing: he backed off and lay down, on haunches and belly, then rolled onto his side, and raised his front leg, waving his paw inward

toward his face, for all the world like a woman lying down for a man, and beckoning him to come.

The wounded, fated prey stopped moving, lowered his gaze to lock on the cat's strange move, as if stunned and puzzled by it, even entranced. When the paw beckoned, along with soft, sweet growls, the ibex charged, weak but determined, as if to impale with his horns. The cat avoided them with an almost lazy rolling motion, then a lightning swift one of his mouth to the neck, turning living to dying in a flash. The ibex jerked to rigid, flailed some, then relaxed. His eyes rolled back into his head, he seemed to be in ecstasy; the cat bit and clawed into him more like he was making love, kissing passionately, than feeding; whatever he was doing, however he was doing it, seemed to bring pleasure, not pain: death as life's orgasm here. When it was over, he did get very matter-of-fact again, and tore into his meal with gusto.

Many times I've relived this event, moving my mindsight deep into the cat's, then the ibex' role in it. Both were true artists of the kill and the death, each arranging gracefully the passage allotted the other. Indeed, my mindsight could go into each only as a way into both, because in the art of their dance each did feel the other as much as himself: cat would not kill until ibex gave it up, ibex would not do so until he had prepared himself, like the woman prepares for the man, to know and even seek it as a pleasure rather than pain; cat would make sure it was pleasure, feeling as the ibex felt, feeling its brain's endorphins making it so, massaging tooth and claw into its flesh and blood like a lover worthy of the name and the act, making ibex come shudder orgasmically out with blood's final spurt.

After this image, I'm suddenly overcome with a barrage of others, from my own similar transaction [no, not the wild boar—the meeting in Vienna, the Change: a little death, a little life, a negotiation that could easily have been artless outrage].

Apparently this meditation of mine is activating Heffley's own about the music as an issue of Eros and War.

"Play or Die!" was his mentor's motto; it strikes me more as choice than imperative now, and certainly no metaphor. Sometimes one must play, sometimes not; one learns this, feels it, in the music, in the life, as it's making. One starts, if one's smart, only when one has prepared onself and is ready; one brings at least as much to give as one takes—and one runs and lets run, plays and lets play, lives and lets live…until one simply must seize the lead, set the tone, lead the pack, or yield to or support the move of someone else to do so. There are no "others" here, only selves in Self, and conditions must be artfully set to make all flows of "play" *and* "die" unfold to the benefit of all.

Because, being no metaphor, the life is true to the music here in this old clan: just as we blaze with the life force when we play, when we mate, then wane with it as we fall to silence, or old age, so do we stand behind its flux, behind both silence and sound, life and death, engaging, deciding, wondering, with our awareness, picking our moments to flow and to ebb, to start and stop. This is a matter of faith for newmen, but it is our experience, and I've lived it far longer and deeper than I have the life of this Mann.

Heffley recalls in me his response to Cecil Taylor's concert, in Berlin; already he was finding his way to this fact of things, in the music. I try to think of other newmen examples of artful kills, good deaths; I can think of many of both in the music, but mostly only good deaths—peaceful surrenders to time and age, heroic ones in defense of others—in the life. Many bad kills, of course—by no means all of which caused bad deaths. Why is this? what does it mean? what would a good kill look like there?

Leave out the obvious—self-defense, or defense of others, against a bad kill; mercy killing, defined and sought so by the killed; even, perhaps, closest to oldclan reality, a kill for food, in some extreme situation where the starvation of two would otherwise occur, and a choice is made, lots are drawn, all assent [such as actually happened here in Ukraine when Stalin starved the peasants by taking their harvest]. Go instead for the fantasy closest to the reality newmen have made. A good kill would look to *all* like what a bad kill must look like only to the killer who thinks it good, a thing to be done with that same erotic art of mating.

Take an ideal soldier, one who really sees the war he wages as the clan's [his God's] way of deciding the course of the future life, akin to the chase between hunter and prey, only with the roles and outcome yet to be determined in the chase, the art. He is ready to accept either role, life or death; he respects the process, and his opponent; if he loses, his death will be a good one, honorable, to him; if he wins, his kill will be a good one, executed without cruelty, with dispatch, with respect for the good death he brings.

I know these goods exist so, my mindsight lets me live and know them as directly as I've lived the good kill and death of the lynx and the ibex.

Now make it concrete. What would the kill by a Nazi of a Jew in the gas chamber look like if it were a good kill? of a rebellious African slave by a white American master? of a peasant or an intellectual by Stalin or Mao or Pol Pot? of an Albanian by Milosevic, or a Serb by NATO?

These examples come naturally to my mind; this land around me still clamors and howls, echoing the music Heffley brought to me, with the ghosts and the very sons and daughters of just those people, still enfleshed, like a huge tree of blood and bones and meat for fruit rising from the Indo-European ground I've brought him to. I feel

him recoil in me at the idea of seeing these deaths and kills as good in any way—but then he could hardly bear to see me kill and eat my own game, or be aware of the kills and deaths behind the meat he ate himself before our exChange. He needs me for the answers to these questions, as I, I see now, needed him to make me ask them. He doesn't see a thing that's plain to me—that if he sees the kills and deaths around him, in his own history and mind, as evils removed from him, as no part of his soul, he will be the first to commit or fall to them if they ever challenge his own sheltered life. The blind eye he turns to them now will simply turn in another direction, as did that of his German and Russian kin, or of their Asian neighbors.

I can see instantly how such kills would look if they were good ones. I can move with my mindsight to a place not far fom here, not long ago [a thousand years or so], when the Viking traders moved up and down the Volga with their slaves. A chieftain died, and their way was to stock his boat with worldly goods and riches and push it off down the river with his body, as they would have pushed it out to sea in their own northern lands. Custom dictated that his wife be so brokenhearted without him that she would kill herself, or have her kinsmen kill her, to float off with him out of this world.

Custom also allowed her slave girls to offer themselves up in her place. When they were asked, "Who will die with him?" they—not those newly captured, but those who had become fixed in the family for long, perhaps generations—vied with each other for the honor. It was an act that took a slave and her descendants out of bondage, made her death a dignified, even glorious thing. Newman history is as full of such stories as of the savagery of human sacrifice: victims who embrace, killers who inflict, death as glory and honor for some greater good in the clan.

I can see clearly how such kills are the ultimate fantasy of the killers crowded around me now in this time and place: "Thank you for your knife, your poison, your fire," they would hear their victims say, "for you are the Angel of Death delivering me from my life gone wrong, to right and improve it. I had the cruel misfortune to be born a woman, a foreigner, a slave, a criminal drag or block on the clan's true life, the God's true way, and you are correcting the mistake that I am, o greater brother! Please, let my children die with me too, and share my glory in the peace of mind and bounty our deaths will bring to you…" Like the lynx with the ibex, like my clan in its hunt, they long to see their prey line up and file before their guns, into their killing fields, like beasts offering up their meat in a gesture of friendship and love of the clan. [Like my new man Heffley would like to see the killers lay down what they know as life, and take up the peace they see as death…]

It is time to get up again and move. I've gotten through birth, the Two made One in sex and its fruit; I've gotten through the land in the middle between birth and death, the land of the Two made One in death (eaters and eaten); I'm satisfied with my understanding of the old clan's way with both, of the art there to both mating and hunting that binds all parties into the same self and its process; without that art, there is rape, murder, not Twoness united but Oneness divided, into selves and others, in power plays to fix the flux of the old clan's tangled, nested hierarchies.

I've whiled away the day with these thoughts; I've seen wild game and fowl pass below me, flying birds fish the water, trees drop their fruits to the ground. I'm hungry, but not inclined to eat, certainly not to kill to eat, in my mood. I recall my words to myself—"death is not a moment to fear or inflict." Am I then ready to die, rather than fear or inflict? have I been prey, as much as hunter, enough to recognize and embrace the moment myself, when it is time? That is the real point my vision of the good kill

and the happy prey has brought me to—through good birth, through good life, to good death. And what are those newfolk who tolerate their world's slaveries and kills and deaths in this very moment if not happy prey?

Is it time for my own such death? Is tonight not a good night to die?)

more about Klangfarbe/Geräusch , body/mind, inner/outer worlds

I follow Dörner backstage after his gig with young Brits (guitarist and violinist), a subdued exploration of tiny soundworlds—scratches and scrapes on strings, breath and tonguing noises in trumpet, all sorts of objects in friction with the floor and each other—that would have delighted Cage or Lucier, or the quieter side of Braxton. And after too much damn wine on my part, in the audience. But we were *profis*, the interview found its wings. I started by asking him how he felt about the performance just behind him.

"There's a difference between thinking in terms of lines and rhythmic patterns, as in jazz, and *Geräuschmusik* . Thinking in lines and rhythms has more to do with an inner experience, or orientation. It's on a level that has nothing to do with the context of 'noise' music, which is more of a purely physical expression, a bit like a drug. Noise music has more to do with the outer world, as when one goes out onto the street and hears the autos; like *Klangfarbemelodie*, in the sounds of the outer world as music. *It's a more direct, clearer expression than the steady pulse of the body; entirely different.* It isn't a question of which is better, they are simply two different levels, or dimensions."

"Do you think it's a hierarchical difference? Even in the body, we might say it is more primitive here," I point to my lower body, "than here," then to my head.

"Well, is it really? That is the question."

"But you said that with bebop it *is* more here"—I point to my heart, for pulse—"whereas with noise music, it's more the entire environment."

"No, that's not what I mean. It's just that when I play bebop, I work much more from structure. Maybe it does have something to do with the heartbeat, but the noise music is more exterior, in the environment."

"Perhaps more in the brain too?"

"No, both are in the brain. And I wouldn't separate the brain from the body. I don't know, when I play bebop, it's more about thinking, in lines, and pulse, which seem to me to be inner-body experiences. *Geräuschmusik* is more about the world around me. It seems more open. Maybe something more like Zen Buddhism."

"One can say that in bebop one is also very engaged with the outer world. The pulse and mental rationales of lines are certainly in the foreground, but so is the sound a player strives to develop, which is more outwardly directed."

"Oh, I agree, the parameter of the sound is very, very important."

"And also with the pulse, it's dancing around it as much as it's laying it down. And you've said that with *Geräuschmusik* , you always have a sense of pulse, even if it remains implicit."

"There is a relationship between the two, but not a direct one. I play both, and I experience them as two different realms, with little if any overlap."

"Perhaps the distinction has more to do with the area of culture, or historic situation, than with the bodily experience?"

"Well, but one can't mix certain things together and still have the distinctive taste of each. It's like cooking, you don't want to just throw everything into one pot."

"Perhaps this is the point to return to the subject of psychology you mentioned last time."

"First just let me mention Rex Stewart in regard to this subject of *Geräuschmusik* . He was a very important trumpet player for me as a sort of forerunner of the concept of it, as early as the recordings he made in the 1940s."

"I think I know what you mean," I say. "This period and style in American music was very rich with vocal effects, especially in the Ellington sound. They would go off the notes into vocal sounds and lines, kind of like the *Sprechstimme* concept. And a lot of it was very rough and growly, like *Geräusch* ."

"In fact, that's a common area between bebop and *Geräuschmusik* ; they both have speech-like aspects. I would like to develop those aspects in my own music with evermore clarity; they offer a way to greater and greater clarity, but so often I fall short."

"Perhaps because playing and speaking can often be at odds," I offer. "I've always succeeded in improving my clarity as a writer, but I've never managed to learn to speak nearly so clearly."

"Yeah, it's the same problem; speech and music, they're like two poles. That's why I felt so inadequate trying to put what I know about music into words.

"But you'll be surprised when you see it on paper; it looks much better and more interesting than it feels when speaking it."

psychology/physics

"You mentioned a book about constructivist psychology that you found important to your musical thinking. We spoke last time a little about this, and about the new physics, and how they worked together to influence your musical consciousness. Can you tell me some more about that?"

"I don't have a disciplined, specialized knowledge about the fields, or the science, but the books I've read have interested me greatly as concepts that inform the music. *From the first theory of relativity to the subsequent theories, different dimensions, hyperspace and so on. The worldview it all suggests resonates with my experience in improvising the music: what the nature of the moment is, the entire scientific thinking about time and consciousness and existence*."

"So as a musician and a person with this consciousness, what is the relationship between these theoretical areas and your own musical practice and thinking?"

"*If the music is an immediate expression of self, the worldview of that self is directly related to that music. Again, that's where constructivism comes in, the idea that we all create our own realities.* A worldview changes, becomes something new, the music reflects it."

"And how so pragmatically, then? For example, in bebop, there is a clear blueprint, a plan, we can say, guiding and framing all the spontaneity, flexibility and expression. But with *Geräuschmusik* , one must be free to experiment and discover things, yet also within whatever parameters we can ascribe to it (as you've noted, it is its own distinctively cooked 'dish'). *So this worldview you mention, at bottom it is a phenomenon of consciousness, in the body, with a potential musical expression.*

"Right."

"So can we say that the 'science' informing bebop and *Geräuschmusik* worldviews might be compared to Newton's worldview leading to Einstein's, in physics?"

"Mmm, I would say not; you have to be very careful with that," he says. "That implies that bebop is not as complete as it should be, and that we have to look to *Geräuschmusik* to find such completion. All things are possible in each area; for

example, within what is possible in bebop, you have the two very different directions marked out by Tristano, Warne Marsh, and Lee Konitz, on the one hand, and Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie on the other. And one can go, within this same area, in still other directions, can make new structures and discover new things. So I would just say it is a certain direction that has the capacity to branch out and keep going infinitely farther. Even so is *Geräuschmusik* an area with infinite possibilities."

"So they are equal as musical areas to work within?"

"I find it hard to say the one is traditional, and the other new; *Geräuschmusik* also has a tradition, dating back along its own lines, for example to the '20s, with the Dadaists, perhaps the beginning of it in this time; John Cage's early work with the prepared piano. And Charlie Parker and Lennie Tristano were playing something that was as new as it was rooted in tradition."

"So perhaps we can say that the mind in the body has a relationship with a musical spectrum, each part of which offers a fullness of potentiality and possibility. But in the historical reality in the world, can we say that the *Geräuschmusik* part of the spectrum offers a more refined and developed opportunity for realizing the promise of constructivism and quantum-physical reality than bebop? Bebop has a certain potential for *Geräuschmusik* within it, and you have said you would not decide for one over the other; but *Geräuschmusik* as a genre or style is that potential brought to full bloom. *Each musical universe may be of equal weight and integrity to the musican engaging each, but in the world of social and musical discourse, each carries different semantic information and associations.* And I'm asking whether, in your personal experience as an artist, whether one serves you better than the other for certain ends."

"Yeah, I see what you're getting at, that's true; but it's also true that it can only go so far, for me, before I get enough of it and need to put on a Charlie Parker record. Then I get my fill of that and go back to the other. You can never reach the end of either."

"Charlie Parker himself said something to that effect, in one of his Down Beat interviews. 'I have this alto saxophone, it only has twelve notes; I would like to study with Edgard Varèse and widen my horizons. Our music is not jazz,' he said, about bebop, 'it is something different.'"

"I think it's very natural to think in these two different modes. To hear in terms of notes, tones and their relationships, then in terms of sheer sound textures, *Klangfarbe*, as sort of a forerunner to *Geräuschmusik* . I don't think of it as a of hierarchy, for myself; perhaps in our culture it did have a sort of progressive evolution from one to the other, in our conceptualizing, but I don't think that's necessarily true everywhere, or a universal thing."

Wait a minute—are we talking about one-step melodies (bop) and tumbling strains (*geräusch*) here?

"I spoke recently to Vinko Globokar," I say. "He said he started out as a straight-ahead jazz trombonist, in his youth. Then, as a composer for twenty years or so, he thought only in terms of sounds, how to arrange and manipulate them. Then he reached a point where he felt bored with that too, that all sounds could be made, and all lost interest for him as soon as he made them. Then he realized he could only keep his interest in composing alive when he had an idea, or a concept, or some kind of philosophical or psychological or social issue in mind that he was trying to musicalize. So the sound became a means rather than an end."

"So he had a relationship between the two established; his own personal way."

"He was a pioneer of *Geräuschmusik* , but it wasn't enough; the sounds had to become servants rather than goals."

"That is very important. *Then, of course, so is the matter of timing—when should one make one's noise***.**" He said it, not me. "The sound is perhaps beautiful and interesting, but it is most so precisely *when* it comes, in improvisation or composition, and *as* it relates to the other sounds being made."

"In your music of this sort, what do you see as your own music's meaning, or signification? You've said that timing is important in any composition or expression; in your own such well-timed expression, what is it that is being expressed. *Globokar brought a specific intent to his creative process to give the sounds their actual identity, and meaning.*"

"Yeah, I understand; I find that sometimes difficult, his position with that. I can't separate intent from action so neatly. I am not always projecting something from within; for me it is often something I am just putting out there. I don't see myself making any overt political statements, for example, but I know that the music itself can transport people in various ways. I understand his viewpoint, but I think it works a little differently for me. I think it works better often on the fly; again, the worldview that I have leads me to make music as I do. One is always trying to grow and stay open, ask more questions, understand why one does what one does. It's very intense, this life."

Listen to CD 10/2, track 8

music, language written and spoken

We stop and chat about the interview; I'm happy with it now; he still feels he could have done better. "I feel I still haven't expressed all I have in me to say about

this. Philosophically, it still isn't grounded enough; it's more like a hobby philosophy."

"If it was so strong and clear, perhaps you would have nowhere to grow."

"Perhaps I would make no music at all. But the problem here is not one of invention so much as expression: what actually comes into this microphone here, and then gets written in a book? My art and expression on the trumpet is much stronger and clearer, in my mind, than in my speaking; that's where I've focused most of my thought and time and energy, not so much toward speaking."

"So do you think the problem here is your inadequacy as a speaker, or the inadequacy of language itself to express such things?"

"Both. The music is another dimension; but language could still do much more for it if I could speak what I think more clearly."

"My experience is that if I do my job well enough, as a writer, it will help you focus your thoughts into words even better when I send the transcript to you. You can think more and add things, change things. This is doubly difficult, because of our language difference here; but we can keep working on it. It's interesting stuff."

Johannes Bauer

Johannes lives just a few blocks from my own place in East Berlin, and I walk there one evening to interview him. I have already seen him play, like Axel, in several various contexts: a gig with his younger brother Matthias on bass and London drummer Mark Sanders, at the "oldest jazz club in Berlin;" and another, equally wide open free session with Uli Gumpert and Willi Kellers, also at the Jazzkeller Treptow; one with Peter Brötzmann and Japanese drummer Shoji Hano, at Peter Edel; and

another at Anorak, with Thomas Borgmann and a guitarist (all trio gigs). He was busy that summer; I missed at least one other gig he did with DoppelMoppel.

A couple of these gigs afford interesting looks at the social dynamics of the scene as housed by the venues. Kulturhaus Peter Edel and Parkhaus Treptow were two neighborhood city-supported performing arts centers on opposite sides of East Berlin. Each had a jazz/improvised music operation with a history of twenty years or more. Peter Edel's such series had just lost the funding it needed to continue, and the gig with Brötzmann and Shoji Hano was a sentimental farewell event, with longtime regulars and the coordinator of the series giving emotional, impromptu speeches.

Parkhaus Treptow's operation, centered in a basement club on the premises called Jazzkeller, also had a special gig when I was there, but success rather than the end was at the center of it. It was an anniversary celebration of twenty-five years of continuous operation. Free food was served along with the usual drinks, and little speeches and the general fellowship also made for the feel of old members of a hobbyist club basking in what they do and have done for years.

Johannes' flat was comfortable and homey, one room full of the paintings his partner does professionally (she wasn't home at the time). Over coffee, tobacco and wine at his table, we had our say.

"How did your own early musical training and first professional experiences unfold, for a little history to set us up for your current activities?" I ask him. He tells me of growing up in a small town in Thuringia, reaching an age when he wanted to learn an instrument, having his ten-year-older brother Conrad tell him that the most important thing was to find a good teacher—and choosing the trombone because Conrad was the town's best teacher.

"I had often watched Conrad with dance bands throughout the country," he says, "had heard him play with people like Uli Gumpert and Luten Petrovsky, Baby Sommer… At this time, '68, '69, there was no real jazz scene. Dance music was the job, jazz a side activity. It just seemed a natural thing to do as a profession, I was around it so much."

"Did it look like a secure profession, given the system of state support of the profession at the time?"

"No, not really. Playing in [state-supported] dance bands was not so different from being a freelance musician, but it was a living. I started studying music in '71 here in Berlin at the Musik-Hochschule, which got me into playing in soul bands in the studio, which was quite a lot of fun. That was the year the first musicians from West Berlin came here with the free jazz—Peter Brötzmann, Han Bennink, Misha Mengelberg played concerts then, Willem Breuker, Paul Rutherford, all that year. I found it totally fascinating.

Johannes names East German reedsman/composer Manfred Schulze, whose band he joined in 1972, as his first important professional and musical influence ("his composed structures made for very interesting improvisations"); and Conrad, who was the only musician there then who made his living as a freelance jazz player (however, Johannes didn't play much with him publicly then).

I found it interesting that his experience in a Prussian military band led directly to his involvement with improvised music.

"After my student days, I had to serve in the military, and played then in a marching band," he recalls. "The music was dreadful, but the experience was very interesting. This German, Prussian march music had an outrageous intensity, a monstrous intensity, and that made a big impression on me. Not the music, but the

intensity; it was the first time I had participated in it. These marches went on and on endlessly, repeating the form as many times as necessary to fill the time of your motion, which of course had a function quite apart from the music. It was actually very hard work for a year-and-a-half. It was the time in which I really played a lot of trombone, developed myself as a strong, intense player. That was around '79.

"The musical intensity of it was my fascination. It was perhaps the opposite of a good string quartet's clarity, something that lacks the power of good free jazz. Peter Brötzmann's intensity, or Alex Schlippenbach's Globe Unity Orchestra provided me with experiences I simply couldn't deny."

"Did you find it easy to do from the beginning, to improvise spontaneously on this particular instrument in a style that was natural and fruitful to you? Did you have a clear idea of what and how to play?"

"No, that came more over the course of time. In the beginning, naturally, I used what any trombonist might use, these free jazz patterns, these certain technical devices: loud, fast, intense—playing very fast interested me most at first. A way of establishing the intensity. It was more a sheerly physical process at first; the head played more of a role as time went on.

"So perhaps at this point we can say," I suggest, "that FMP was important for you because it was the link between East and West, which exposed you to the music that most fascinated you."

"That is of utmost importance to say. The DDR was isolated from all this music by the Wall, and Jost Gebers was the one to make this contact between these musicians. There was a jazz series in the Deutsche Theater, Jazz in der Kammer, which was the contact for FMP. My first contact with the West was through FMP,

through the record '*Jazz Now—Jazz aus der DDR*.' After my military service, that was my first meeting with Westerners at all. It was actually the real beginning for me."

After his appearance on the 1979 *'Snapshot*,' Johannes' work in DoppelMoppel was documented by a 1982 FMP release by that name. His recordings on FMP and several other labels mostly stem from live performances, which keep him much busier, by choice, than studio work. But, "FMP is very important for me; it was for me the beginning. To this day, I like the label, I like what it does, what it stands for, and I find the festivals they produce in Berlin very important. The last CD I did with them is also a very important one for me, with Fred Van Hove and Annick Nozati, *Organo Pleno*. I think it was the one where I had the fullest presence."

Listen to CD 10/2, track 9

Like Conrad, Johannes has managed to live since 1979 entirely on what he makes as a freelance player of improvised music, including several oft-working groups in the early years with Willem Breuker Kollektief trumpeter Andreas Altenfelder, and with Peter Brötzmann. Projects with Fred Van Hove, Wolfgang Fuchs, and Tony Oxley have also been important, as has the group Slawterhaus, with Dietmar Diesner, Peter Hollinger, and Jon Rose ["we've made two great recordings on Victo and Intakt"]).

"Between 1980 and '85, the East was something of a heaven for improvised music," he says. "There was a very good scene homegrown and functioning here, and I worked with a lot of DDR musicians then, and equally often with visiting foreigners. A real healthy exchange."

"Were there then locales other than Berlin that were important to this scene, or other Eastern countries, as a source of foreigners, such as Poland?"

"Musically, other Eastern countries were never very important, except earlier, in the '70s, when the Polish musicians here were very important. But by the '80s, they were much more oriented to the American scene. The first important jazz festival here in that time was in Rostock, then later in Leipzig, then Dresden, smaller festivals in smaller cities popping up. Peitz, a small town near Cottbus."

Like everyone else I talked to, Bauer says the fall of the Wall had no effect on the music itself, but much on the work front (as on employment in general in the East). "There were fewer concerts, fewer concert series; more musicians were around playing mainstream jazz, swing, very different from the predominance of free improvised music from the former time. When free jazz emerged in the '60s and '70s, there were perhaps a couple of rock bands, a few more Dixieland bands, but the field was pretty much clear for free jazz to flourish here. It had a remarkable force and power when it did.

"Later, so many more musicians were on the scene playing so many different kinds of music, and we had more competition and fewer chances to play our music in the East. In my case, the field widened, since I had contacts in the West, and it was the West that provided more opportunity. It hasn't been so bad. I did play more earlier than I do now, much more, ten or twelve concerts per month, throughout the East; but to play that many concerts for little money is not so much better than playing, as I do now, less for more money."

Currently, Johannes' working itinerary includes performances mostly in Europe (Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, France); occasionally in the U.S., Canada, and Japan; and mostly in spring and fall.

Unlike Petrovsky, or even Conrad to a lesser degree (recall his story about his trouble with the Stasi when Matthias defected), Johannes has experienced none of the

repression of the music prevalent in recent memory. "The official political culture had just accepted us for our ability to contribute to the economy, to be popular in the West—we were like an export article, and they really had no consciousness about what we stood for beyond that. We played music without lyrics that could be easily discerned as subversive, we simply made music. Uli Gumpert had used some texts, and Hermann Keller, but they were the rare exceptions."

"I met Herbert Joos in Konstanz," I say, "and he told me he had noticed that in Europe lately there were fewer German musicians in European festivals than French and other Europeans. Why do you think that is?"

"There really aren't many *from* Germany," he notes. "For improvised music and free jazz—which for me are the same musical phenomena, even though the English make a distinction between them—there are only a few. We have Peter Brötzmann, Peter Kowald, Alex Schlippenbach, Sven-Åke Johansson, Wolfgang Fuchs, Luden Petrovsky, Conrad, me, Paul Lovens, Uli Gumpert, Baby Sommer, Dietmar Diesner, Joe Sachse, and that's about it." His survey, of internationally known and seasoned players, contrasts, of course, with Willi Kellers report of "a hundred" Berlin improvisers showing up at his organization's first meeting.

Johannes' long working relationship with Conrad continues to challenge him, more, he says, due to their common instrument than their sibling bond ("we weren't all that close as children, since he was already out of the house when I was nine or ten; we didn't know each other all that well in those years and we didn't work together until much later.")

"Having two of the same kind of instruments onstage is an extra challenge to keep from sounding like the other instrument," he says. "I find it the hardest band to work

with, because I'm constantly pushed to find something of my own on the horn that will keep me from playing in the other one's shadow."

What distinctions does he see between their styles?

form, improvisation

"We have a similar approach to form, an inventiveness with musical form. But the way we work within this form is very different."

"How would you describe this form you have in common?"

"I really can't describe it. All I can say is that it is clear to us both, we both know it. It functions that way with many other musicians besides us, *but naturally with us it is something we both got in our childhood.*"

"But you're talking about a sense of form within the context of totally spontaneous improvisation—"

"Yes and no; I don't really think of improvisation as totally spontaneous. When I have a musical idea, naturally I want to present it to the audience; by the time I get to that point, I have to have such a clear idea of what I want to do that I know what I'm doing when I make my sounds. Of course, I also want to be spontaneous on the stage with my material, with my ideas, my direction. I mean by form a certain structure I have devised within myself before I come to the stage. Naturally it will be flexible, and alter itself according to the particular person and situation I'm encountering in playing."

"What are the specifics of the unfolding of this form?" I ask. "You start out with a certain physical level of playing, then later it shifts to another, and so it goes through any given situation?"

"Well, I try to develop the material I start with to an extended point. When I have an idea, I try to state it and extend it. I start with an idea, and, like a composer, I decide either to discard it and take up another, or develop it further. I play with it, or I make a break. If I'm lucky, I take it farther and farther and farther into a long development."

(To look the good death in the face is, for me, more than staring down the moment of my own death. As you surely understand by now, that is a good I can know easily as part of the oldclan's life. It is simply the falling of a leaf from the tree, and I simply move my consciousness, my self, from leaf to tree, to any part of it in its time, from its archaic roots to its now-budding fruits, from any yesterdays to all tomorrows.

No, the death I must see as good is that of the tree itself, and that as a result of the rise of the newman tree into the sunlight mine needs to live. I must consider my oldclan a happy prey to the fruit of its own seeds, those that have blossomed from the wildness and truths of the hunt and the garden untamed into a rigid domination of the earth, the sun, the stars, by people, and of people by other people in the service of that domination's progress. I must consider this evil to my good as rather good to my evil, consider bowing to it by giving it my life.

And, since considering is not deciding, I must also consider how to make it, rather, my happy prey. Or perhaps both: my clan's death as that of its killer offspring, as a blow to their root?

This is the landscape of the Twelve, that revealed by the moon's times around the earth's time around the sun, by the stars housed differently in the sky with each lunar loop, by the bars and the beats of the blues, by the twelve men Jesus turned into his band of the fragile, harried few against the harrying, mighty, impossibly many.

[Revealed, too, of course, by chromaticism's twelve-step program of the octave.] This is the very border, these Ukraine grasslands, forests behind me now, between the subjugating West and the rapacious East. I feel myself move palpably away from the one toward the other. The riches of the oldclan—waters, ores, game and food plants, all those stakes of subjugation, of structures to build and command and serve—move me from introversion to the extroversion of this grassland's just-enough-to-live, and plenty of it.

If those riches in the West were the stakes in the game of kill-or-be-killed, rule-or-be-ruled, these steppes stretching from the Danube through China to the Pacific were the training ground for the game's killers, the very launching pad off this world, where the vastness of freedom came with a poverty that let live only those who were soulmates to wild horses, yet whose teeth could also tear and eat those soulmates' flesh—a marriage of unequals from the start. I exult in my first steps here, raise my own teeth and arms in a grinning growl toward the moon, stretch deliciously and set off on a run I know will meet no walls.

Joining me there soon were the spirits of Kozaks, Ukraine's warrior-knights whose tastes of both this land's contested goods and its open poverties had forged in them—much like the Germans—a harsh nobility informed by the roles of both hunter and prey. Prey, because their people here were mostly peasants, keepers of plantfoods and livestock, self-ruling in nature when left alone; hunter, because they had to stand up to so many warlords from every part of Eurasia, become like them, and fight for that self-ruled life, usually to their deaths.

I find these cossack spirits in their current flesh and forms throughout my Caucasian nests, and have mindseen many parts of their lives over my years. There are things I've seen in their souls [in me, Heffley calls to mind his readings of Gogol,

a son of these parts] that I now find useful as I search my own for the eyes to see my death.

First, they learned to live without a thing, because the things they held in joy—the life of the land, family, the fruits of their labors—were ripped from their hands or simply destroyed so often by the warlords from every direction. They came to despise money and the things it bought; they learned to live in aloof detachment and distance from life itself, as from a land too fragile to trust. They sank to deepest shame over being unhappy prey for so long, then rose to the fiercest arrogance of the hunter—the best horsemen, the most ruthless warriors—but, at their best, not for booty and bloodlust, not even for defense of the land and way of life they'd renounced…rather, for something they held in the abstract, for their faith, their freedom, their honor, their authority to define those things, and for the hope of a better world as an ideal they counted enough to kill and die for, not as a reality they expected ever to see the world embrace.

I find this fatalism comforting now. Is my way, my oldclan, draining away its final dregs in newman history? Very well, I would let it go, and go with it peacefully. It was a turn I wouldn't have taken, but the idea that it was a turn that *could be* taken, and could take root and grow and prevail so teaches me something I can take to my darkness: if we humans had it in us to take such a turn for the worse, so radically and thoroughly, the same power to change our nature, all nature, could also take us in the other direction. If it was the good kill that led to the bad kill, we could walk away from both. We could survive on plants; we could survive as equals, with each other and the earth, we could have universal peace and prosperity and renewal of the oldclan therein as surely as we could have the world the newmen made. Whether

we—they—choose to or not, no one can doubt in their bodies that their bodies are capable of that. Our evils are not necessary ones.

In accepting my death as a happy prey, I open the door to the "hunter's" fate as same. Something has to die here, something come to life; the equation between Old and New seems to indicate which will do what…but, in fact, the very identity of each—what is Old and what is New—along with the fate of each, remains to be seen here.)

"When you yourself play on the stage spontaneously, do you experience a sense of form unfolding, such that you know now it is time to begin, now to make a transition, now definitely it should end, and so on?"

"To be sure. I think about that a lot. But then of course whether one tries to play mindfully or not, the mind is still there," he laughs.

"I can understand well what you mean, when I see and hear you play, by your fascination with rhythms and sounds and so on," I say; "but I've also noticed the intervallic way you play. What is your thinking there?"

"I think it's a way I've developed to be heard on this particular instrument when the music gets so loud and fast; the intervals stand out. I gravitate toward a tonality that is very open, ambiguous; naturally, this is often built around a single central tone."

"Yeah? A central tone you have in your mind while you play all the others?"

"Right. Other times I have no sense of such a center at all, and I play so as to avoid establishing one, and the tension lies in the fact that if I suddenly do, the entire system I'm working from collapses."

"Then you have a clear sense of a particular system being worked. Is it difficult to do this? You experience an attraction to a central tone, but you—"

"I do not have to play it. Whatever I do, it has to be a clear and unambiguous system. I prefer it to developing some overarching system from which one generates one's improvisation."

"But as you said, the effect would be similar." (One needn't calculate such a system beforehand in order to effect it.)

"The effect is similar, yes," he agrees, "but, for example, if I just play with the intention to avoid a central tonality, without spelling out how to do that, I may or may not pull it off, it's something I can work at; but if I try to do the same thing by memorizing a row, all I have to do is get one pitch wrong and the whole thing is out the window," he laughs. "It's hard on the trombone. But it does interest me often, this way of improvising without making a clear sense of tonality."

"Why so?"

"It's a way of keeping things going, open, that would seem to stop and close the moment the tonality's expressed. And what has always really interested me the most is the trombone's sound itself. When I'm playing noise music, then of course it's very simple, a non-issue, because tonality has no role there. What can make it hard on the trombone is that I just like to hear a good, loud, ringing sound."

the trombone

"Can you articulate for me a few specific musical elements that are particularly fascinating for you, that you find yourself gravitating to repeatedly to work on? Perhaps something particularly tied to the trombone?"

"Ah ja, the trombone," he laughs. "The trombone is an exciting instrument. Of course, its tradition, from the 1500s or so, is in the old brass fanfare role, a slow, deep throb, ba-bah, ba-bah, etc. That is still wonderful, and I still turn to that gladly. Later,

in the 1900s, the melodic, lyrical potential of its began to be tapped, bringing out its…

"Tommy Dorsey-like qualities?"

"Yeah, an area I haven't really mined heavily, but I do use it now and then, when appropriate to my own playing. Then in this century the concept of *Geräuschmusik* arose. *So those are the three parameters that are for me important: the traditional low fanfare effect, the melodic-lyrical aspect, and the noise possibilities.* When I first started, naturally I was attracted to the staccato, loud potential, but as time went on I was more curious about all the possibilities I might explore."

"Have you played with many other trombonists besides Connie?"

"Yeah, always, many. Here in the GDR time Connie and I did many tours with different trombone trios: one with George Lewis, another with a very good English trombonist, Alan Tomlinson. I've also worked with Paul Rutherford."

"So you said that it was a challenge with Connie because it was the same instrument …"

"Right, and with three it is even more so."

"What have you discovered in these challenging situations? What places on your instrument have only these situations brought you to?"

"I must simply find my own way, more than in other contexts."

"So you don't fall under the spell of the other influences instead?"

"No, I really have no influences in that sense. I've never copied another trombonist; I simply can't."

"Do you find that you gravitate toward collaborations with certain instruments, or more toward certain people?"

"More toward certain people. There is really no hierarchy of instrumental roles in improvised music."

"You mentioned the difference between you and English musicians. The older musicians I've interviewed obviously have a very strong jazz background. But not so much you. But you said earlier that free jazz and improvised music are really the same, and you mentioned the Prussian intensity and so on. What's that all about?"

"I think that this [improvised] music does indeed come straight out of jazz," he replies. "The tradition here in Europe since the 1500s or so has been composed music. The Baroque music was partly improvised, but since then the composition has become ever more complex. *The music that came from Africa, through America, has really been for us the most important thing to what we do.* I've learned through this tradition, on my particular instrument, the importance of finding my own way—to compose my own music *for my own body* with the instrument, *in my own language*. That goal of a personal language comes from jazz, I believe, very strongly."

"Do you think then that the particular traits your music has displayed come out of your situation and character as a German in this particular time and place, as opposed to the way an English player might make his own music?"

"I don't know if there would really be a difference in my sound if I were from England or any other country; certainly I would have a different role in a different environment."

"So the strong desire you mention for Prussian intensity in your music, is more an issue of the trombone as an instrument than of the German musical tradition? You could simply be another personality with that instrument and play, even in Germany, more quietly?"

"Yes, right, I think so," he agrees. "That is possible."

"Do you ever play quietly or calmly in any of the situations you play in?"

"No, no interest in that."

"I had an interview yesterday with Albert Mangelsdorff and I told him that I had noticed that there seemed to be more trombonists, especially in free jazz and improvised music, in Europe than in Germany. He didn't really agree with me. What do you think? It just seems to me that the trombone has developed much more as an instrument here since the '60s or so, somewhat like the saxophone did in America more than Europe, with jazz."

"I do agree with that, and I think it's because of the nature of the music," he says. "In the framework of the mainstream jazz from the '20s to the '50s, the saxophone had many more possibilities in terms of sound-spectrum than did the trombone; there were many saxophonists then with a wide variety of very personal, brilliant styles and vocabularies. The trombone sound was, by contrast, more or less always the same. Since the '60s, the field of possibilities is more open, so suddenly the trombone is more interesting, for its capacities in noise and sound-sculpture type music, things that just aren't much a part of the jazz lexicon."

"The trombone was the first wind instrument allowed in the church in the Middle Ages, because it was thought to be closest to the human voice," I comment. "I've also been fascinated by this relationship the Eastern musicians have had with early German folk music. Do you have that going on somehow in your music?"

"Not so obviously, perhaps in other ways. It is there, of course, but I don't openly use a song to improvise on, I'm sorry, for me that just doesn't get it." The younger generation's reaction away from one of its elders' starker identity markers? "But I do find that I have a strong sense of counterpoint with other horns I improvise with.

"Mingus has always been a favorite of mine; he is for me unbelievable." That favorite was certainly in line with the older Eastern jazz guys he came up through. "It is an affinity for the Dixieland aesthetic, this collective-improvisational way of playing. I don't really listen to the traditional jazz, but I'm fascinated by the group improvisation aesthetics."

literate/oral "notation"

"How was the experience with the Cecil Taylor big band in Berlin?"

"Interesting. He has a very unique way of working. It can be dreadfully nerve-wracking, because it is so slow. He talks the entire orchestra through every note he wants it to play—such a slow process—but it worked unbelievably well. *The orchestra ends up knowing the material so well it can play it with an unbelievable intensity.* The individual sections were relatively independent of each other and the musicians were free to play the material on their own. We could play melodic phrases or motifs slow, or fast, according to our whim. It was a system that allowed for a wide variety of things to happen; it fascinated me immensely."

"So the piece itself was not so complicated, but working it up was."

"Yeah, it took a long time to get it to the point of flowing"—a comment recalling Petrovsky's, Fuchs', and many others' that the bulk of free improvisation is often a kind of boilerplate mull one must endure to get to the few golden moments. "I worked with many bigger bands in the '80s; we'd read it down, nail it, and within an hour wonder what really happened with it," he laughs. Literacy as (if misused) too glib, not properly embodied.

"So you found this a better process than reading a score?"

"No, we took three days to nail something that we could have read in an hour," he rues. "But this is Cecil's way, and the process is inextricable from the nature of the offering he has to make. It was appropriate, necessary to the occasion.

free as "friend"

"Could you give me a few more words about the most important musical influences among the people you play with? Maybe just a couple of sentences about why, specifically, musically, they are so interesting to you, for your own music."

"I can't really say," he admits. "It has something to do with things I encounter or don't. The question is good; I wonder about it a lot myself, why I click with Fred Van Hove more than others, for example. I know I click with Uli Gumpert so well because I've known him so well for so long, and we've grown up together in developing our music. With Fred Van Hove, it was more a matter of suddenly being there. With Peter Brötzmann, I think it's a matter of loving his way of playing, and loving the saxophone, but there are only a few saxophonists with whom I play so well."

"Well, for example, I've noticed that Fred Van Hove has this introverted, lyrical, melodic side. Does that bring out of you something that no other situation does?"

"To be sure, something only his music does."

"Is it something in you that is also lyrical and melodic?"

"Decidedly not. He also plays very intensely, and with a very stark sense of structure, that pleases me greatly."

"And with Brötzmann it is perhaps the intense sound?"

"Yes, but he also has a refined sense of form. I've often marveled that he never rehearses on the stage, he either plays or he doesn't, and when he does it is with a

blazing clarity; he gets an idea and sees it through to the end. That's always fascinated me with him, that spontaneity that takes him away or doesn't, always already there."

"Do you find that these longstanding relationships make it easier or more difficult to play well together?"

"It is never easy. But, of course, when I play with bands I've known very well for a long time—Slawterhaus for ten years, or DoppelMoppel for fifteen—there is a certain security in how one feels about the playing situation; one plays or not according to what the overall music suggests, with more sureness; it's a matter of trust."

"Most of these FMP players you mentioned, and play with, are among the 'first-hour' people a generation or so before you. Do you have a certain sense of being among the younger players in Berlin, or do you feel in touch with their particular scene? I'm wondering about players for whom FMP is perhaps problematic for some reason, irrelevant to or objectionable for some reason to them?"

"That some people might feel some distance from FMP, for whatever reason, is understandable, because Jost Gebers is a man with a mind of his own," he says. "If someone doesn't happen to agree with his idea of the best music and programming, there will obviously be some disagreement. But I have no problem with that; I play also with many other musicians if I'm interested in the music."

"And those with whom you play, it is just a matter of personal taste whether they like FMP's work here or not?"

"Much of it has to do with their own musical offering. Axel Dörner, for instance, is a trumpeter with an exceptional sound whose work falls both within and outside of the FMP aesthetic, I would say. No conflict."

composition/improvisation

"We've had here in East Berlin a very good relationship with new-music composers over the years," Johannes tells me. "In the '70s, we worked a lot with pianist-composer Hermann Keller, and in recent years with Georg Katzer; and I did a composed piece by Helmut Zapf for tape and trombone, with whom I've also played a lot as an improviser while he plays the organ. This is also an area that has been very important for me; I am no interpreter, these pieces all used me as an improviser, and that worked very well."

"Do you listen much to new music without improvisation? Webern and so on?"

"Yes. That is not so new, of course, but I love the second Viennese school. My favorite composer now is perhaps Lutoslawski; the list would be long, but Lutoslawski's work strikes me very deeply. I think the overlap between improvised music here and the new music lies in a similarity of musical material and different approaches to how it is handled. The composer's music stems from his way of organizing the material in a personally distinctive way, while the improvised music has much more to do with the interactions between people meeting in the music. The musical material and ideas are really the same, the difference between composed and improvised playing doesn't lie there. But I've noticed that the possibilities of soundmaking are taken much farther in improvised than in interpreted music. This development of the soundworld itself is something I think improvised music does far better than composed music seems to be able to do."

sociopolitics of the music

"Brötzmann and Sommer and Gumpert impressed on me in my interviews with them a certain worldview," I say, "a political consciousness about the extra-musical

associations accompanying their music, in the culture here. I felt they were speaking from a position of giving the music its primacy in that mix—but does anything like that have a place in your own experience here as a player. For instance, the issue of racism in Germany—"

"Well, yes, it is catastrophic that racism is a continuing social problem, but it is something apart from making the music. I believe that improvised music is a very special way of interpersonal exchange, up there on the stage, and one can see in that itself a political statement. Everyone has his own idea to bring and express. But beyond that, political intrigue is so stupid, how can the music be much affected by it?"

"How about this, then: you also have a personal history and relationship with German history and culture now. How does that impact on you and your music? For example, you mentioned this experience of being in the military, and your attraction to the Prussian intensity and so on; Kowald and Brötzmann, by contrast, felt it was problematic to engage anything of such stark German identity. How would you reconcile your feeling with theirs?"

"It is problematic to be German whether you embrace that identity or not," he says. "I don't find it easy to be German with the history we have in this century, which is simply dreadful. But I live with it, I have to, I am German, German is the language I speak."

"How is it then difficult?"

"Well, because I play a lot out of the country, and this background of the Nazi era is in fact largely still there."

"Not so much so with Americans, though, surely?"

"Not so much, strangely enough; but then America is far away."

"And black Americans probably feel even less hostility, yeah?"

"Right."

"I've also noticed that the older musicians I've interviewed have been influenced mostly by black Americans, hardly ever any whites (contrary to what I read about the 1950s jazz scene here). But you've probably been less influenced by the jazz tradition generally…"

"Jazz was not really the music that originally got to me in youth," he confirms. "My father was a preacher, and in our house was only church music, the early Baroque music that he loved and had in his church. *When I listen to music at all, that still tends to be my choice."*

Sven-Âke Johansson

We end our study of FMP artists with a look at one of German free jazz' first voices, in trio with Brötzmann and Kowald, and, later, in duo with Schlippenbach. Sven-Åke Johansson was the drummer on *Machine Gun* and other early FMP classics; he's gone on to develop the potential of free improvisation and experimental composition both in a way that interests the younger players on the scene, and that in a personal and musical way one might easily compare to those of Anthony Braxton and Alvin Lucier, combined in one, at Wesleyan.

His flat, near Dörner's, comprises two rooms spacious enough to house a large collection of percussion instruments, along with the many books and recordings and the other usual accoutrements of the casually and seriously cultured life. Among them, on an artist's work table, stands a dollhouse-sized stage set, a mock-up for a theatrical-musical performance he's designing.

Johansson moved from his home country Sweden to Paris in the early 1960s, to work there on the international jazz scene. It was his forays to Germany, through Cologne and Wuppertal to Berlin, that started his work in what he describes as "improvisation *free of metric strictures*, more of an expressive music." That led him to a variety of different experiences with *geräusch* and *klangfarblich* music, along with what he calls "new metric music"—his own self-generated rhythmic patterns notated to provide material for improvisation—all of which he has cultivated since. His musical universe roughly comprises interpretive forays into jazz ("the West Coast style from the '50s," and, especially these days, American songbook classics by Noel Coward) and Hans Eisler's "*Kampflieder* and other songs, with a small combo, here in Berlin;" improvised words and songs, with accordion and other music; and his own composed pieces ("different organizations or groups typically ask me to create something for them, and that's how my list has grown over time").

His current such project is the one that made me feel he'd fit in well at the Wesleyan music department. "I must create an hour-long piece for the radio. I've thought about what to do, and have decided to go to France and record the horns, or sound signals, from twenty different autos. Here the traffic is so much quieter than there, one really doesn't know the sound of the horns because they are hardly ever used. I want to use only horn sound signals in the auto as instruments, material in the studio, with which to make chords, and melodies." And, on the improvising front, "I also have a project coming up in Münster to play with Rüdiger Carl in a duo concert. We've been playing duo concerts for some ten to fifteen years. After we improvise together for awhile, I have a small solo piece for telephone book, melodic variations for telephone book. Then we sing and play piano after the pause, more historical material, interpretations of simple American songs. So it's modern, idiosyncratic, then

interpretive of conventional repertoire, the American songbook from the '30s and '40s. Which is really not so old-fashioned, when you think of Schönberg's 1910 music as modern.

"I have always, even when I was playing the most free jazz, been making pieces and keeping my eyes open for possibilities to have them performed,[5] simply to have that much more material than that afforded by a-thematic spontaneity. Also, this expressive music that is so intertwined with improvisation is so much a self-expression, and one doesn't always want to express oneself so much as other things."

What is most unique about Johansson's work as an improviser is his use of the accordion and his word improvisations. I ask him about both.

"How have you incorporated your Scandinavian roots, your work as an accordionist there in practical contexts, and your interest in words and the voice in your improvising, along with pulse, rhythms, and sound explorations? How do these things combine to constitute your musical world?"

"As for the accordion, I can only say that as a youth I played drums a lot in many ensembles in Sweden, and dance groups that included accordion; it led me to explore the possibilities of the sound potentials within the accordion. I wasn't so much a conventional accordionist as I was someone interested in the possibilities the instrument contained for sound generation. I worked in the '70s as a free jazz accordionist; I explored the sounds much more than melody or chords. That's how I see my development as an accordionist from those beginnings.

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[5]. Among the materials he gave me were copies of commissioned pieces, graphic notations he devised to denote variable pools of rhythmic patterns, time windows, and phrasings from which specified instruments (some "found," like rakes and shovels) were to construct actions and interactions. Again, something similar to some of Braxton's, or Christian Wolff's work. His *MusikTexte* (48: 13) article "Musik in Raum" (Music in Space) is a pithy summation of his philosophy of music as a function of specific environments, both temporal and spatial.

"As far as the language aspect, it was something that seemed to be taboo in the free jazz realm because of the weight of history it enjoyed in opera and art music in both European and American free music. I'm talking not about making sounds with the voice but about improvising words, stories—something entirely different than sheer vocal sounds. It always interested me to improvise poetry in the same way I do sheer sounds. They seem so intertwined to me."

"To me too," I tell him. "I must say, it is the part of your work that interests me the most, because I'm a writer, and also a musician. And I've noticed that in this trio with Axel Dörner and Matthias Bauer, that Matthias has perhaps drawn much from your example in this area."

"Oh yes, he's always been interested in doing the same sort of thing."

"Does this fascination have any grounding in your Scandinavian background through the old bardic poetry, epic sagas and so forth?"

"No, I don't think so. I've been away from that world for some time, and I don't think it was of any importance when I was there."

"In your music-listening life, have you sought out other existing examples of music with words?"

"No, but one thing I did work on, during the time I played classic American jazz, was switching from my habitual right-handed to a left-handed handwriting practice. I am naturally left-handed, but in school one had to write with the right hand. So this was a way for me to become more ambidexterous as a jazz drummer. I would try this for a few hours a day for awhile, to work on a style of free-association writing. That might have something to do with what I tried to do later as an improvising poet."

"Do you also like to read a lot of literature?"

"Yes, although not a lot of poetry."

Johansson is the perfect person to ask about the long arc of the European free jazz gestures, with his seminal roles in both its earliest and latest words.

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"Has it been an important, perhaps problematic issue with you over the years, in your work, this question of which direction the freedom of improvised music will go in the European scene? Explosive, or sound-research, words or not words, and so on?

"Yes…I don't know. I think this explosion of the expressive side was necessary in the flush of the '60s, an expression of youth, of individuation from what came before; it was something I myself was in the thick of. But it's not something one can sit on the stage and do forever."

"Do you see it as having given birth to two or three parallel areas—the energy music, the sound research, maybe something else?"

"It's hard to simply capsulize what has gone on in Berlin. I work, for example, with the younger players, the next generation. They claim a variety of styles as options for expression, they don't have one certain stylistic area they limit themselves to. The postmodern *Gestalt* has no such restrictions to stylistic areas, so I can't really say…"

"Like Axel Dörner?"

"Yes, he's a good example. He draws on the sound research area, but he also works as a conceptual composer; many of the younger improvisers function as composers in that sense."

Interesting in the light of Johansson's close relationships with these younger players—and that of this study's alertness to the culture of childhood as most pertinent to improvisation—are his words about his mature creative processes: "You asked me about my source of ideas or inspirations for compositions or

improvisations," he says. *"In thinking about that, I realized I returned often to my youth.* All these things take on a relevance in the improvisations as material."

"You remember things, and then play from them?"

"It's not so much like remembering as it is that they come out unconsciously. The conscious part lies in deciding from the infinity of possibilities—what do you do when, and why? when there's empty space, where do you go next? should the hand simply make its move?"—he makes a gesture. "That's how most improvisation functions, most art, I would say—and very often it is a gesture one realizes one also spontaneously did quite often in one's youth, in play. Much of real value in the music world must come out of one's own inner resources, and I've found that much of that for me goes right back to my youth."

I tell him about Miles Davis' words about Tony Williams' drumming and childhood. "I'm also reminded of the interview you gave Noglik, where you said your music was a product of the extremities of your body: the farthest left and right, in your hands, the farthest south, in your feet, and of course your head, directing the body from the north—as opposed to, say, wind players, whose breath was the immediate source. As a percussionist, your music issued from those parts of your body. I also understood you to be saying that there was a certain field of tension between your body and the world where the music took place, as though the stage, or the whole world, was your instrument. And that through percussion (in that broadest sense), and through playing percussion, theater inevitably and naturally arose—"

"—right, because one must constantly move between one's different soundmakers, continually engage them to get the sequences of short sounds they yield."

"I had never thought of the act of making percussion music this way before. One is much more active and, in a way, extroverted, than a horn player sustaining a steady

cyclical flow of breath through the same one soundmaker. A different way of unfolding the subconscious."

"It also goes back to the history of the drummer in the old vaudeville bands, which was always very theatrical."

"It reminds me of Günter Sommer's *Hörmusik*, where he's hidden. This difference between introverted and extroverted gestures reminds me that you say you have little interest in the direction of the explosive gesture. I've also noticed that you have an interest in quiet *Geräuschmusik*, with your cardboard cymbal."

"That is a tool with which I can make a sound and immediately rein it in."

"Can we say that all these things that you do make up a *Gestalt* for you?"

"Yes. It allows me the option to go with my mood on a given evening. Sometimes I really only want to play percussion, others to sing, others to realize a piece, others simply to interpret a jazz-stylistic piece or a composition."

"I've noticed this spectrum working in others here," I observe. "I've seen Schlippenbach and Axel Dörner both perform in, variously, free jazz, *Geräuschmusik*, rock, English-style improvisation, and straight jazz contexts from one night to the next. I gather it's just the experience of the professional musician's life here."

"Yes, for those of us who do it all."

Nothing could end this part of our study more perfectly than the description Johansson gave me of a performance piece he'd recently done on commission, to take place in a country village's castle.

"It's a small performance piece, maybe two minutes long, consisting of the scene, at a certain time of day, the noises, and the images of the car and building from a former world. When we did it, we did it three times in a day, from two in the afternoon to ten at night, for different lights. The sound was different, too, each time.

It was a regular day for the 'audience,' with other art and music to view and hear in the surrounding buildings.

"The 'score' is a diagram of this old castle in a village, the street running to and through it. My idea was to have this old Ford Eifel"—a rare, "extinct" car from the '30s, a prewar European make by Ford in Cologne, named Eifel after the region—"drive into the village from the road, from the distance, then come into the courtyard of the castle, where the driver would get out and ring a large metal bell hanging up a story above. He rings it after the noise of the approaching auto has stopped, while it waits in the courtyard, to see if someone is there. Nobody answers the door, and he gets back in the car and takes off again. The idea is that the place is really a ghost town, and the car is something from the past too.

"My desire was to bring two elements from two different continents: the car, the castle, representing America and Europe, New World and Old World. Suddenly, haphazardly, they meet for an instant. Neither exists any more, the one calling on the other. I called the piece "*Henry F kommt zu besuch*" (Henry F. comes to visit).

"Sometimes I just get obsessed with such ideas," he smiles; "I think of them as scenic music. A setting, images, the sounds bearing the piece's essence. For instance, this piece has an interesting story behind it. This region was very sedate, a place painters liked to paint and so on, and then in 1930, Henry Ford's factory was started up in Cologne; around 1934 or so came the first auto it produced in Germany. In the factory there was an historical photo of Henry Ford visiting in Köln; he was standing there with Adenauer, who was the mayor of Cologne at the time. He was dressed in a top hat and tails in the grand old style, surrounded by other men in the short Alpen pants German men wore, with suspenders—and here was Ford in a bowler hat and

pintstripe suit, the picture of a modern man. The meeting of the New and Old Worlds."

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This look at the newer voices in FMP's roster, at their overlaps with and distinctions from the first-hour players—indeed, at the newer "sayings" of those older players—reveals patterns in the process of identity improvising itself into idiom. We saw the initial impulse of 1968 to include both a grounding in Western music and jazz history and a variety of self-conscious breaks from it; we saw that many of the most future-reaching such breaks were cued by reaches back into pasts deeper than recent history, deeper too than ancient history, and into a "spacetime" outside of history altogether, into the authority of the sheerly animal cry, into irrational languages of sound unwedded to speech's mental representations. We also saw that once this ground was broken, collectively, it was staked out by its various scouts for their own peculiar explorations and projects; it was also claimed as territory on a continuum with the world the scouts had come from, as logically extending, bearing rather than breaking with, tradition.

We started this study musing over the ways the Old and the New switched their roles, even identities, in culture and history; consider the ways that's happened in this chapter. Willi Kellers has distinguished himself by letting in the American drumming style of swing and drive that so many *Emanzipation* drummers tried to leave behind; Thomas Borgmann has embraced the free-jazz moments of the 1960s in a way that has Jost Gebers see him as something of a neo-conservative, like Wynton Marsalis trying to stake a new claim on old jazz; Axel Dörner is doing a similar thing with the music of Thelonious Monk, and Wolfgang Fuchs with that of Dolphy; even Johannes Bauer, to stretch the analogy, distinguishes himself from his older brother by

developing a style of playing mostly undistorted chromatic pitches, while the latter inclines more toward the *Geräusch* area of post-serial music in his improvisations.

Of these, Fuchs and Dörner stand as the most obvious innovators, scouts into territory newer than that charted from FMP's first hour; their new areas overlap with each other, with Dörner's also opening up to the arena of contemporary commercial-genre possibilities (as, say, Kowald's excursions into a kind of alternative "world music" open possibilities for occasional "hits" in the commercial mainstream of that genre). Like *Empfindsamkeit* composers to the Baroques—or even like the first jazz musicians to record—they distill moments from the flow of the free, present them as sonic emblems of the musical truths that motivate them, tinker with the emblems for the new ground they in turn might yield, as the *Romantics* mined the *Empfindsamkeit* "Classicists."

Finally, the elders included here take their place in the obviously mutually beneficial symbiosis between them and their younger colleagues; Brötzmann, Kowald, von Schlippenbach, and Petrovsky (as also Gumpert, Sommer, and Connie Bauer, though not mentioned in this chapter's examples) all stand clearly in the time-honored role of the elder authority both helping the young ones along and getting fresh life from them too.

Johansson is the most interesting of those for me because he went from being a European drummer on important mainstream records in the '60s, to *Machine Gun*, to the one who introduced wordplay into the free-improvisational discourse to, finally, his current persona as "performance artist." The whole gamut—composer, improviser, bardic poet, dramatist, visualist—is in his mature work, even as a one-man show, and that gamut takes us back to the Greek μουσικ ("mousike") mentioned in Chapter One, the spectacle of theater and its acting, dancing, speaking bodies and

its myth-making scenery and stories and its music all as a seamless garment of expression.

(From sea to sea, Neusiedler to Caspian, I have walked. My run through the steppes shook away the thoughts of life and death, new and old, it had begun by calling forth. New and old so finely, fitly balanced in my own Changed body, I run to relish its power and freedom, the surprise it is again to me. As I run around the northshore of the Caspian, then south to the Caucasus, I stop running, walk rather with greatest glee at reaching home. When I feel myself to be due east from Lake Constance, I know my cave is near. I scour the landscape obsessively, even as my body continues to find its own way, just to be completely present to this return.

I find my cave. It is cold, dark, quiet in the world, indescribably beautiful and warm in me. In sheer ecstasy at finally being home, knowing I can stay as long as I wish, undisturbed, can fast and sleep or feed and nurture as I choose, with all that I've seen and done and been and known and said and thought, I tilt my head and raise my hands to the full moon and hit the highest, most piercing sound my voice can make. I let it hang with the stars in the black and blue of my whitegold world, then glide like a hawk down to the same sound in midrange, arms falling and spreading straight out from me in wide open embrace of the horizon—of my horizon, of all I can sense with senses—then to the same sound again, to ground, deep in my chest as the earth within my cave, arms dropped to hang straight down. Satisfied, winded, I pat my thick belly and crawl into that sweet dark, to join it.)