



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING

AMS AMERICAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Indeterminacy, Free Improvisation, and the Mixed Avant-Garde: Experimental Music in London, 1965–1975

Author(s): Benjamin Piekut

Source: *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Fall 2014), pp. 769–824

Published by: [University of California Press](#) on behalf of the [American Musicological Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jams.2014.67.3.769>

Accessed: 03/01/2015 11:24

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of California Press and American Musicological Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the American Musicological Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Indeterminacy, Free Improvisation, and the Mixed Avant-Garde: Experimental Music in London, 1965–1975

BENJAMIN PIEKUT

What's going on in England these days is not a return to the past or a rebellion against it. It's what I've described elsewhere as a getting *out* of history.

—Morton Feldman, 1967

In 1967, Victor Schonfield founded the nonprofit organization Music Now, which produced over eighty concerts in London, the provinces, and Europe before it dissolved in 1976. Schonfield was in the thick of the experimental music scene during these years, first as a fan and journalist, then as a manager, agent, and promoter for many of the era's important musical innovators. He also served as a primary European contact for a host of musicians from abroad, including Ornette Coleman, Sun Ra, John Cage, Takehisa Kosugi, and Musica Elettronica Viva, among others. Schonfield's enthusiasm and advocacy for both indeterminate composition and free improvisation evidences a certain admixture that is at odds with prevailing accounts of this music; this admixture suggests that we still have much to learn about the specifics of experimental music history. With the following account, I hope to document and detail the consequential activities of Music Now, as well as its effects on musical discourse in London during these years. Although there exist valuable descriptions of individual pieces and composers from this era, a careful history will reveal an unexpectedly variegated collection of musical tendencies, or what I refer to below as a "mixed" avant-garde.

It will come as no surprise that this narrative of experimental music life in London between 1965 and 1975, told from the perspective of a supporting

The author wishes to thank Virginia Anderson, Steve Beresford, Eric Drott, and Victor Schonfield for their assistance with this essay.

Many of reviews, articles, etc. referred to in this article were collected in clipping folders. In such cases, I have given as much information as possible in the notes themselves and listed only the title of the periodical in the Works Cited. Books and the other secondary sources are listed in the usual manner.

Journal of the American Musicological Society, Vol. 67, Number 3, pp. 769–823 ISSN 0003-0139, electronic ISSN 1547-3848. © 2014 by the American Musicological Society. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions website, www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp. DOI: 10.1525/jams.2014.67.3.769.

character, unfolds differently than it might have done from the perspective of a major mover like the composer Cornelius Cardew. And therein lies its value: in this story, British saxophonist Evan Parker improvises with the American ensemble Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV) in one of London's renowned underground rock clubs, while Cardew's Scratch Orchestra gets compared to Sun Ra's Solar Arkestra in *Rolling Stone*, and Karlheinz Stockhausen is nothing more than a minor character who chips in from the sidelines. The meeting ground for these different avant-gardes was the musical practice of spontaneity, which had great currency for both the "classical" indeterminacy of John Cage and the "jazz" improvisation of Ornette Coleman.¹ Any student of experimental music knows Cage's position on improvisation: it is too ego-driven, it is too discursive, and it is too expressive. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that Cage's own performances in the 1960s and 1970s proceeded in an improvisational mode. In a 1965 letter, the composer wrote that his customary performance of *Variations IV* with David Tudor "has become an improvisation," and Leta Miller has also reported that Cage improvised on electronics with his assistants during this period.² He composed a series of works called "Improvisations" in the 1970s, and, as we will see, he used that exact word to describe his 1972 performance in London.³ The post-Cagean free improvisation groups AMM and MEV are also commonly thought to have employed a special kind of improvisation that avoids self-expression and emotion, even though members of both groups (particularly Cardew, Curran, and Rzewski) often commented on their practice in precisely these terms. Indeed, the difference between these groups and, say, London's Spontaneous Music Ensemble (SME) or the Art Ensemble of Chicago, would seem to turn on questions of educational background and the racial associations that accrued to musical style. Schonfield, for example, was surely aware of these "extra-musical" distinctions in a 1970s interview, when he set Sun Ra side by side with MEV, "who are comparable artistically but who've got white skins and letters after their names."⁴

In the present study, then, I proceed from a position similar to the one outlined by George E. Lewis. He argued that the New York School of composers, and the scholars who studied them, employed the term *indeterminacy* instead of *improvisation* in order to elide the considerable presence and influence of African American musical forms of spontaneity in the postwar years, and to deny these latter innovators a coeval role in the development

1. Belgrad, *Culture of Spontaneity*.

2. John Cage to Edward Downes, March 31, 1965, John Cage Collection, Northwestern University Music Library; Miller, "Cage, Cunningham, and Collaborators: The Odyssey of *Variations V*," *Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 545–67.

3. See Feisst, "John Cage and Improvisation: An Unresolved Relationship."

4. Ronald Atkins, untitled interview with Victor Schonfield, *Guardian*, November 24, 1970.

of experimental music.⁵ Scholars of this music continue to cultivate an oddly narrow understanding of improvisation at precisely the moment when studies of the practice are exploding across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences; this narrow understanding has kept us from charting a larger field of musical experimentalism with a diverse range of practices. I do not intend to imply that there are no differences between an ensemble like MEV and one like SME; of course there are differences, but just as many differences might be found within each apparently unified and coherent category of musical spontaneity—for example, between the music of John Stevens and that of Derek Bailey. The history detailed below will show that the obsessive focus on a few narrowly defined differences has come at the cost of recognizing a significant number of commonalities that were forged across an avant-garde network like the one in London between 1965 and 1975.

More generally, this case study offers a methodological argument for researchers about the drawing of borderlines, both by scholars and by our historical actors. Experimentalism, like any music-historical entity, was a messy series of encounters and performances; it was made and remade in specific acts of translation (the rendering of differences into equivalences), and these acts were never centrally controlled. To gloss Bruno Latour, we could say that “experimental music” does not exist, but it “is the name that has been pasted onto certain sections of certain networks, associations that are so sparse and fragile that they would have escaped attention altogether if everything had not been attributed to them.”⁶ The task for music scholars is to trace these ramshackle sets of associations that spill out across conventional parsings of the world. We report on the shape of the network at a given moment in history, rather than issue evaluations about whether this or that artist (or musical practice, such as improvisation) belongs in a conversation about experimentalism “proper.” The value of this kind of empirical work lies in its capacity to challenge accepted acts of scholarly grouping with evidence of more haphazard acts of practical grouping performed by historical actors.⁷ For this reason, it should be evident that my goal is not to endorse the vision of Music Now, but to document its effects accurately and analyze them in comparison with existing accounts of experimental music. What kind of fantastical or wild couplings might these actors offer, were we only prepared to follow them in their wanderings?

I hope to show that this particular wild coupling of post-Cagean and post-Coleman spontaneous musics did not just happen in sound itself, but

5. Lewis, “Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives.”

6. Latour, *Pasteurization of France*, 216.

7. For a more detailed discussion of actor-network theory in the context of music history writing, see Piekut, “Actor-Networks in Music History”; see also idem, *Experimentalism Otherwise*, introduction and epilogue.

also in material infrastructure. Music Now set up a publicity network and funding channels that were directed toward a new conglomeration of experimental musics in the UK. Such mixing is never complete, but Schonfield booked many of London's mid-sized halls with concerts of both "composed" and "improvised" music, and he brought to London a similarly varied collection of notable musicians from overseas. He produced these performances—haphazardly, as often as not—in venues as varied as the buttoned-up Purcell Room, the rock-identified Roundhouse, the avant-garde Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), and the gigantic Royal Albert Hall, an anarchic distribution of events that further underscores the contingency of the network he established. As I will argue, this mixed avant-garde became rather unmixed in Michael Nyman's important 1974 text, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, which is the enduring document of this period. Like Schonfield, Nyman offered a specific sort of grouping, but his grouping drew a borderline between indeterminate and improvised music that would condition conversations about experimentalism for decades to come. Nonetheless, as we will see, the world of Music Now erected borderlines of its own—one cannot create networks of association without doing so.

Before we turn to these stories, it will be useful to establish a few themes that will return in the episodes to follow, and to examine how improvisation became such a fertile meeting ground during these years. The first theme concerns the reshuffling of what had been high and low cultural forms. As the American critic Alan Rich wrote in 1967, "For whatever reason the sociologists care to advance, there has been an interesting rapprochement taking place between the so-called popular and the so-called serious worlds, with results that are all around us."⁸ The spur to Rich's speculation was Ornette Coleman, who had composed several chamber works in the early 1960s, likely in a bid to shed the restrictions imposed by the "jazz" label. As we will see, this concern of Coleman's would feature strongly during his visits to the UK, where the paradigmatic example of low-to-high crossover was, of course, the Beatles. But listeners were soon exploring more obscure artists. For example, the composer and critic Tim Souster surveyed a scene that had piled up the pop DJ John Peel, Anton Webern, Roland Kirk, the Soft Machine, Luciano Berio, the Swingle Singers, and Richard Wagner, and asked, "To what extent is all this overlapping a superficial and passing mutual flirtation, and to what extent is it evidence of a profound convergence of the 'serious' and 'popular' branches of music?"⁹ For Souster, the overlaps of the late 1960s differed profoundly from earlier efforts like that "most miserable" example, third-stream jazz. He credited "a general creative atmosphere in which numerous factors—electronics, the emphasis on performance and on

8. Alan Rich, "Jazz and Classical Styles Converging," *New York/World Journal Tribune*, April 23, 1967.

9. Tim Souster, "Through the Sound Barrier," *Observer Magazine*, October 5, 1969.

sheer sound and the idea of music-making as a social activity—are common to ‘pop’ and ‘serious’ music.”¹⁰ With close analyses of La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Cardew, the Soft Machine, the Who, and the Velvet Underground, Souster sketched out an emergent grouping of like-minded musics. His recommendation of “some records to try out” gives a good sense of this mixed category of adventurous music: *White Light/White Heat* by the Velvet Underground, *In C* by Terry Riley, *The Marble Index* by Nico, *Variations IV* by John Cage, and a six-LP Deutsche Grammophon set, *Avantgarde*, that featured works by artists like Karlheinz Stockhausen and György Ligeti.

While Souster leaned toward rock, John Lewis favored jazz in his appraisal of contemporary improvisation in *Time Out*. But in a measure of how jumbled up the categories had become by 1972, he also noted that “Cage is probably the greatest influence on free music.”¹¹ For this author, the American had become the progenitor not only of Cardew’s Scratch Orchestra and AMM, but also of the free improvisation of Evan Parker, drummers John Stevens and Frank Perry, and vocalist Maggie Nicols. The meeting ground for these traditions, it must again be stressed, was improvisation. Given its importance in the jazz tradition, and its culmination there in the form of free jazz, it was no surprise that free music would develop among jazz players. But, Lewis pointed out, “straight” musicians were reaching the same conclusions: “We might as well just play, eliminating the composer,” he reasoned.¹² This conception of improvisation as a kind of pivot between different styles was common during these years.¹³

The second theme has to do with performer freedom and self-expression as they relate to the presentation of indeterminate music. In the US setting, Cage and his associates had been strict about limiting a performer’s liberties. For example, Morton Feldman realized by the early 1960s that the “most important flaw” of his indeterminate music had been “liberating the performer,” and Cage had been burned often enough by unsympathetic musicians that he had begun by the end of that decade to make specific and strict rehearsal demands.¹⁴ Cage extended credit only to preapproved borrowers of his musical aesthetic, chief among them Tudor. This was not the case in the UK. Largely through Cardew’s proselytizing and interpretation, Cagean

10. Ibid.

11. John Lewis, “So What Do You Want from Your Music—Security?” *Time Out*, December 8–14, 1972, 38–40, at 38–39.

12. Ibid.

13. For example, see Cornelius Cardew, “Application for Living Artist Award,” March 1, 1966, archives of the Arts Council of Great Britain, London, series 50, box 1399 (hereafter ACGB); and Max Harrison’s appraisal of the SME, “Crossing the Musical Divide,” *Record Collector*, November 1971.

14. Feldman, “Liner Notes” (1962), in *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 6; on Cage, see Piekut, “When Orchestras Attack! John Cage Meets the New York Philharmonic,” in *Experimentalism Otherwise*, 20–64; and Joseph, “HPSCHD—Ghost Or Monster?”

indeterminacy there was understood to offer a kind of emancipation; it was a tool, in the words of one critic, “to overcome the tame subservience of the modern performer.”¹⁵ Such language was very common in the British discourse about this music by the late 1960s. Michael Parsons wrote that Cage, Feldman, and Christian Wolff “have given up some measure of control” in order to “preserve and extend the performer’s role.”¹⁶ But Cardew had gone one step further, he wrote: “He regards notation more as a stimulus to the players’ imagination than a blueprint for exact sounds.”¹⁷ These “indeterminists,” according to Schonfield in 1967, “want composers to stop telling performers what to do, and start forcing them to be creative.”¹⁸ In a striking difference from Cage, Cardew was equally committed to the emotional dimension of this creativity. He described his little opera, *Schooltime Compositions*, as “a matrix to draw out an interpreter’s feelings about certain topics or materials.”¹⁹ He was, in short, “committed to a music which is going wild again.”²⁰

Cardew’s preference for performer creativity created a specifically British elaboration of Cagean indeterminacy along the lines of improvisation. In a 1962 concert program, for example, Cardew wrote, “For performances of such pieces a high degree of awareness is required. . . . The ability to react spontaneously within situations that are familiar and yet always fresh in detail is a skill that has to be acquired.”²¹ Once Cardew joined the free improvisation group AMM in spring 1966, the emphasis on spontaneity became even stronger, and by the end of the decade the story was set: free improvisation was the “logical end” of indeterminate music. In a review of AMM’s debut album, *The Times*’s critic Stanley Sadie wrote, “Possibly the idea seems far-fetched, but it is a perfectly logical extension of the recognized and accepted processes of aleatory music.”²² Souster, too, advanced a view of experimental music history that ended up at free improvisation. For him, Cage’s use of live electronics had led to many new groups “dedicated to the exploration of new sound worlds and holding to no preconceived notions of method or form.” He continued, “In America almost every university now has a free improvisation group and in this country a growing field is led by the AMM.”²³ For this British writer, then, Cage was a pioneer of live electronics

15. Tony Palmer, “The Road to Nowhere,” *London Magazine*, July 1967, 85–89.

16. Michael Parsons, “Sounds of Discovery,” *Musical Times*, May 1968, 429–30.

17. *Ibid.*, 430.

18. Victor Schonfield, “Arts in Society: Sergeant Pepper’s Favourite Composer,” *New Society*, September 7, 1967, 331.

19. Cornelius Cardew, “Sitting in the Dark,” *Musical Times*, March 1968, 233–34.

20. “Cornelius Cardew” (interview), *International Times*, February 2–15, 1968; see also Michael Parsons, “Michael Parsons Writes About the Music of Cornelius Cardew,” *Listener*, November 30, 1967, 728–29.

21. The Generation of Music 3 program, Wigmore Hall, June 2, 1962, Victor Schonfield personal archive (hereafter VSA).

22. Stanley Sadie, “Carrying Improvisation to its Logical End,” *The Times*, August 4, 1967.

23. Tim Souster, “Sounds of Discovery,” *Financial Times*, May 21, 1968.

and free music, not merely chance operations. Schonfield also articulated a version of this interpretation, particularly in regard to AMM. Cardew may have taken experimental composition “as far as it can go,” he wrote, but the composer was still present in indeterminate works like *Treatise* (1964–67) and *The Tiger’s Mind* (1967) as their creator. AMM, on the other hand, dispensed with the composer altogether in favor of sounds alone, and therefore had taken the next step beyond Cage and Cardew.²⁴

I have mapped this territory in such detail because it was the discursive ground upon which Schonfield established Music Now. The networks of jazz, rock, and classical music had become intimately intertwined in the UK by the end of the 1960s, and the contact zone among all of them was improvisation.²⁵ “The concept of improvisation has become highly distorted in recent years,” wrote one critic in 1968.

It doesn’t mean memorising Herr X’s cadenza for a Mozart concerto (which he carefully composed, anyway). Nor Herr Y permitting the performers to play the sections of Kontakt-Lens IX in any order they choose. Nor even Soul-Brother Z running through his best twenty-five choruses on the chords of ‘Sweet Sue.’ When Sonny Rollins was last in London, he opened his performance—there was no rehearsal—by telling the bassist to play something. Just like that. The player was in shock for a few moments, and then began what turned out to be a half-hour trio.²⁶

As this passage indicates, one of the “distortions” produced by improvisation was that formerly distinct traditions were now held in the same critical space, even if distinctions continued to be marked: “I doubt if any members of Spacecraft [MEV] or AMM are musicians of Rollins’s stature—not yet, anyway.”²⁷ Unlike this critic, however, Schonfield was not just making connections among different improvisational musics as a listener at the point of *reception*; significantly, he undertook to effect these entanglements from the end of *distribution*. He relied on his artists to handle most of the programming or artistic direction of the organization, but he still pushed to diversify Music Now’s activities. He told me, “Music Now was originally avant-garde classical, and it was my mission to broaden it out through AMM into other improvised things. . . . My mission, I used to tell myself, was to keep the clock moving, and make sure that the new people and idioms had a crack of the whip alongside the old.”²⁸ As we will see, these dynamics of the mixed

24. Victor Schonfield, “Cornelius Cardew, AMM, and the Path to Perfect Hearing,” *Jazz Monthly*, May 1968, 10–11.

25. For a novel perspective on this intertwining, centering on rock “freak outs” from the late 1960s on, see Jay Keister, “‘The Long Freak Out’: Musique inachevée et folie contre-culturelle dans le rock d’avant-garde des années 1960 et 1970,” trans. Dario Rudy, *Volume! La revue des musiques populaires* 9, no. 2 (2012): 69–90.

26. Stanley Myers, “Shock Tactics,” *Spectator*, May 31, 1968.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Victor Schonfield, interview with the author, London, April 20, 2012.

avant-garde were shot through with a history of race discourse, of which Schonfield was certainly aware. In 1970, he commented, “I discovered there was room for a society which would devote itself to contemporary music and which did not have an artistic colour bar.”²⁹ I will return to the subject of race (and other limitations and boundaries in this historical ecology) at the end of this essay, but now I will turn to the history itself.

Before Music Now

Born in London in 1940, Schonfield studied history at the London School of Economics from 1962 to 1965, but his passion was jazz. For a few years beginning in 1961, he was an assistant for Live New Departures, the concert wing of the important British publication devoted to Beat poetry and experimental performance. *New Departures*, in the Cagean words of co-founder Michael Horovitz, “was conceived in the name of experiment—an act, or course of action, of which the outcome is unknown.”³⁰ Live New Departures had presented about 300 events in that five-year span. These occasions usually combined poetry readings with theatrical scenes, jazz, and European avant-garde music. Cardew served as its musical director, and arranged performances of Cage, Feldman, Wolff, Young, and George Brecht “as points of departure for improvisation.”³¹ Even at this relatively early date, Cardew was setting into motion an interpretation of American experimentalism that highlighted performer freedom and improvisation. It was inflected further by the emphasis placed on the “experimental phase” of jazz history (bebop) by Horovitz and his principal collaborator, Pete Brown, who performed jazz/poetry fusions with the New Departures Quintet—they were beatniks, after all.

For his part, Schonfield assisted on events for Horovitz and Brown, as well as poets Adrian Mitchell and Stevie Smith, and for musicians such as Cardew, John Tilbury, Stan Tracey, Bobby Wellins, Ginger Baker, and the Soft Machine. But do not let the mention of Ginger Baker and the Soft Machine fool you: Schonfield was a jazz man, and he maintains that he never had interest in rock. As a critic and journalist, he contributed reviews and features throughout the 1960s to all the big jazz magazines, including *Down Beat*, *Jazz Monthly*, and *Jazz Journal*, plus occasional pieces in *Melody Maker*, *International Times*, and *Music and Musicians*.

So Schonfield already had a foot in London’s jazz world by the summer of 1964, when he traveled to New York City and soon found himself in a

29. Atkins, untitled interview with Victor Schonfield.

30. Michael Horovitz, “A Circle for a Square World,” *Times Literary Supplement*, August 6, 1964, 710.

31. *Ibid.*

downtown apartment with Ornette Coleman, who, frustrated by the disrespectful playing conditions of the jazz clubs, had taken a two-year hiatus from live performance. The two talked jazz for a while, and then Coleman took out his violin and played a twenty-minute solo. It was a road to Damascus moment for the young Brit. “At that point, I suddenly understood what free improvisation was about. . . . It was the new world, and he opened it up for me.”³² Schonfield was now a free jazz fan, so nearly a year later, when he got a call from a friend at Ronnie Scott’s telling him that Coleman was now in London and wished to see him, he jumped at the invitation. It turned out that he wanted Schonfield to organize a concert in London as a way of kicking off his first European tour.

In order to circumvent racially discriminatory union rules that required foreign “jazz artists” to employ an equivalent number of British musicians, Schonfield got Coleman classified as a “concert artist,” which came with no such requirement. He did this by asking Coleman if he could program one of his scored compositions—either *Dedication to Poets and Writers* or *City Minds and Country Hearts*, which Schonfield knew about from his avid reading of *Down Beat*.³³ Coleman not only agreed, but also promised to write a new piece for the occasion. (Although Schonfield had stuck to the letter of the law, the Musicians Union was not pleased, and placed him on its “Unfair List” for a number of years, which meant that MU members were forbidden to work with him. Schonfield pleaded his case directly in a press statement on the occasion of Coleman’s return to London in February 1968, from which this account is drawn.)³⁴ Since beginning his hiatus in 1962, Coleman had been emphasizing his “classical” bona-fides, and when he returned to London in early 1968—presenting his work *Emotion Modulations* with Yoko Ono at the Royal Albert Hall—his production company sent out press releases that included a biographical outline of his “classical” compositions. (He would soon write his orchestral piece, *Skies of America*, with the help of a Guggenheim award.)

Schonfield drew on his New Departures connections to put on the concert at Fairfield Hall in Croydon on August 29, 1965. A quintet led by Bobby Wellins and Stan Tracey was supposed to kick off the evening, but the MU squelched that plan, so a non-Union quartet led by Mike Taylor (piano) was swapped in. They accompanied poetry by Horovitz and Brown. Next came the Virtuoso Ensemble, an esteemed London group, performing Coleman’s *Forms and Sounds for Wind Quintet*, the thirty-minute work that he had written in the preceding weeks. To close the concert, Coleman

32. Victor Schonfield, interview with the author, London, July 17, 2013.

33. *Dedication to Poets and Writers* can be heard on Ornette Coleman, *Town Hall 1962*, ESP-Disk 1006, [1965] 2008.

34. Victor Schonfield, “Press Statement,” February 27, 1968, VSA.

appeared for about ninety minutes in his trio formation with David Izenzon and Charles Moffett.³⁵

As the celebrated recording of this concert attests, the trio was astonishing, and the London jazz critics were floored.³⁶ Barry McRae, for example, referred to the concert as “some of the greatest jazz ever presented in this country.”³⁷ Schonfield’s program notes, however, indicate that he had begun to hear Coleman’s music in relation not only to jazz, but to a wider field of the musical avant-garde: “His vision stretches beyond the horizons of jazz as a specific, localised musical form to approach developments in contemporary academic music.”³⁸ These developments, according to Schonfield, would mark the nascence of a new, expanded kind of avant-garde, but also the terminus for the older line. “Ornette’s revolution will very probably be the last in the pure jazz tradition. From this time, jazz musicians will have more direct access to European musical culture.”³⁹ In other words, new associations and the concomitant erasure of existing borderlines were inseparable from dissociation and the establishment of new borderlines. As we will see, Schonfield took it as his working brief to provide performance opportunities for this emerging, heterogeneous experimentalism.

The other backstory for Music Now begins in early 1966, when Cardew contacted the Arts Council to request support for three concerts he hoped to produce that spring, “to be part of a sporadic series that I started in 1960 under the title Generation Music” (so called because the performer takes “a large and positive part” in the generation of the music).⁴⁰ He originally had in mind works by himself, David Bedford, George Self, John White, Michael von Biel, Stockhausen, Cage, Wolff, Toshi Ichihyanagi, Feldman, Rzewski, Giuseppe Chiari, Mischa Mengelberg, and a concert of improvised music by a group “under the direction of Keith Rowe.”⁴¹ Describing the proposed series as a “unique and unprecedented event in London’s musical life,” he noted that it would allow the public to learn about experimental music without the “slander” of the critics.⁴²

35. An Evening with Ornette Coleman program, Fairfield Hall, Croydon, August 29, 1965, VSA.

36. These two sets were issued as a 2LP box set in 1967 by Polydor: *An Evening with Ornette Coleman*, Polydor 623 246/247, 1967. See “Polydor Drive on Jazz Market with Coleman Set,” *Record Retailer*, December 6, 1967.

37. Barry McRae, “Ornette Coleman—Live,” *Jazz Journal*, October 1965. See also Jack Cooke, “Ornette Coleman at Croydon,” *Jazz Monthly*, October 1965, 23–24; Derek Jewell, “Just Punch a Button and Blow Wind,” *Encounter*, November 1965, 39–42; B. H. [Bob Houston], “ORNETTE: Justification For the Faithful,” *Melody Maker*, September 4, 1965, 6; Victor Schonfield, “Ornette Coleman,” *Down Beat*, July 14, 1966.

38. An Evening with Ornette Coleman program, VSA.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Cornelius Cardew to John Cruft, March 1, 1966, ACGB 50/1399.

41. *Ibid.*; and Cornelius Cardew to John Cruft, April 25, 1966, ACGB 50/1399.

42. Cardew to Cruft, April 25, 1966, ACGB 50/1399.

Planning moved slowly, however, and soon Cardew was off to Buffalo for the autumn term. Meanwhile, Schonfield had been teaching in further education colleges around London, and his colleague at one of them was the pianist John Tilbury, whom Schonfield already knew from the Live New Departures days. The two hit it off, and during the winter of 1964–65, Tilbury brought him up to speed on developments in the Cagean wing of experimental music (in parallel with Schonfield's enthusiastic study of the newest developments in jazz). Later in 1965, Schonfield had received an invitation to attend the weekly sessions of a few members of Mike Westbrook's big band, who were exploring free improvisation in a semipublic setting on the side.⁴³ This group, AMM, would soon welcome Cardew as a member in spring 1966.⁴⁴

Schonfield attended as many of these sessions as he could (about twenty by that summer), and eventually began to act as AMM's manager.⁴⁵ He would perform the same duties for Cardew individually—but not, as it turned out, in regard to the 1967 concert series. In fact, Michael White, a well-known West End theatre producer who had brought the Merce Cunningham Dance Company to London in 1964, had already apparently been planning a concert or two of experimental music for the spring of 1967, so he and Cardew joined forces. Their collaboration resulted in four evenings of music in April 1967 at the Commonwealth Institute: the first was devoted to a performance of Cardew's recently completed graphic score, *Treatise* (all 193 pages); the second featured multipiano works by Terry Riley, Earle Brown, Cage, and Feldman; the third presented continuous, simultaneous performances of pieces by Young, Brecht, Ichihyanagi, and Cage; and the fourth offered AMM in concert. The musicians on each concert included members of AMM and some Cardew "classical music" regulars. The series drew between fifty and eighty punters a night.⁴⁶

Cardew, meanwhile, had made his way into the funding system, and was awarded, in late 1966, a £600 bursary to finish *Treatise*.⁴⁷ The Arts Council

43. See Hannah Charlton, "Rapidly Circling the Plaza," *Collusion* 3 (June–September 1982): 28–32; and Edwin Prévost, "AMM and the Practice of Self-Invention," in *No Sound Is Innocent*, 7–29.

44. For more on the early years of AMM, and the role of the audience in their early performances, see the PhD dissertation of Seymour Wright: "Group Learning of an Original Creative Practice: 1960s Emergent-AMM."

45. Victor Schonfield concert log, 1966, VSA.

46. Michael White, Statement of Accounts and Programmes, May 1, 1967, ACGB 50/1399. See R. L. H., "Pianissimo Study by 4 Musicians," *Daily Telegraph*, April 14, 1967; Ronald Crichton, "Improvisation," *Financial Times*, April 21, 1967; Tony Palmer, "The Road to Nowhere," *London Magazine*, July 1967, 85–89; Patrick Carnegie, "Next to Nothing," *Observer*, April 16, 1967; and Schonfield, "Arts in Society: Uncaged Music," *New Society*, April 13, 1967, 543.

47. Nigel J. Abercrombie to Cornelius Cardew, award letter, November 15, 1966, ACGB 50/1399.

even let him use their Drawing Room to put on a concert of excerpts from that piece on January 16, 1967.⁴⁸ But if Cardew was going to get Arts Council money to put on his own events, he would need a nonprofit organization (the Council did not fund artists directly outside of the bursary scheme). Because his production company was a commercial venture, White was not the solution (and the Arts Council never should have funded him in the first place).⁴⁹ Schonfield, then, was the person to run it, especially given that he was already managing Cardew and AMM (and now Tilbury, too). He began in the summer of 1967 to put together the organization that would eventually (by March 1968) be called “Music Now.”⁵⁰ He chose the founding members of the Executive Committee with care. “I thought the name of the game was to get people of standing, who would actually keep an eye on me, but not pervert my [goals].”⁵¹ They included Quintin Hoare, Peter Wollen, Charles Fox, Dan Gillon, and Michael White.⁵² Eventually, a perceived conflict of interest (his work on behalf of the Arts Council) would lead Fox to step down from the Committee, and he was replaced by Martin Davidson, who ran an important record label devoted to free improvisation, called Emanem. Many years later, in his Director’s Report of May 1975, Schonfield reported that the Executive Committee had decided to co-opt additional members, and issued invitations to Bob Houston (Melody Maker, Cream), Michael Nyman (journalist/composer), Tom Phillips (artist/composer), Val Wilmer (journalist/photographer), and Robert Wyatt (Soft Machine/Matching Mole). With the exception of Nyman and White, every one of these actual or potential board members was a jazz or rock enthusiast: this avant-garde institution—small as it was—had an unusually close relationship to demotic musical forms with roots in African American expressive culture.

A Series of Series

Music Now kicked off in May 1968 with an inaugural series of four concerts called “Sounds of Discovery.” The organization made known its catholic

48. Ronald Maxwell, “Believe It or Not, The Arts Council Gives Taxpayers’ Money for Music From Balloons,” *Sunday Mirror*, January 29, 1967; “An All-Embracing View of Sound,” *The Times*, January 17, 1967.

49. David Reynolds acknowledges this mistake in an internal memo to Music Director [John Cruft], January 25, 1967, ACGB 50/1399.

50. See various letters in July and August, 1967, in ACGB 50/1399, and especially Victor Schonfield to John Cruft, January 5, 1968; Keith Winter to John Cruft, internal memo, March 30, 1968; and Keith Winter to Herb Robinson, internal memo, April 22, 1968.

51. Victor Schonfield, interview with the author, London, July 17, 2013.

52. Hoare, the honorary Chairman, was a noted writer for the *New Left Review* (and would go on to translate Gramsci’s prison notebooks); Wollen was a filmmaker, critic, and theorist; Fox was perhaps the most respected jazz critic in England (and, importantly, served on the Jazz Sub-Committee of the Music Panel for the Arts Council); Gillon was a journalist specializing in the Middle East, and a close friend of Schonfield’s.

view of the music by promising “experiments in indeterminacy, live electronics, [and] improvisation.”⁵³ Cardew largely programmed the events.⁵⁴ The first three performances were held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts: works by La Monte Young and Terry Riley on the 18th; *Musica Elettronica Viva* on the 19th; and the works of Christian Wolff on the 22nd. To close out the week, AMM were featured in the final concert, on the 23rd, at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.⁵⁵ Schonfield used his contacts to place previews in a few different publications.⁵⁶ With these publications, news of the festival could reach different kinds of potential audience members: regular patrons of the ICA, classical-leaning readers, and jazz fans.⁵⁷

In the first concert, Cardew led an ad-hoc ensemble in a 90-minute performance of Riley’s *In C*, followed by a somewhat shorter rendition of Young’s *Death Chant*. According to Jill Phillips of the *Musical Times*, they played “loud and fast.”⁵⁸ The next night, MEV performed their group improvisation called *Spacecraft*,⁵⁹ in which the members of the group—Frederic Rzewski, Alvin Curran, Jon Phetteplace, and Allan Bryant—built up a cacophony of individual sonic worlds that they must eventually “escape” by lifting off into a greater musical unity.⁶⁰ The Wolff concert offered four of the composer’s works and featured many of the same performers. For their concert on the 23rd, AMM was joined by Hobbs and Wolff.⁶¹

53. Music Now, Sounds of Discovery press release, undated [May 1968], VSA.

54. In *Cornelius Cardew: A Life Unfinished*, 351, John Tilbury states that Christopher Hobbs was responsible for the first program, which the latter has confirmed in an e-mail to the author, September 23, 2013.

55. Music Now, Sounds of Discovery press release.

56. Christopher Hobbs wrote an advance piece for the ICA magazine, and Parsons wrote another for the *Musical Times*. Christopher Hobbs, “Listen, Act,” *Magazine of the Institute of Contemporary Arts*, May 1968; Michael Parsons, “Sounds of Discovery,” *Musical Times*, May 1968, 429–30. Schonfield himself contributed a preview of the AMM and MEV concerts in *Jazz Monthly*—“Cornelius Cardew, AMM, and the Path to Perfect Hearing.” There was also a brief preview in *The Times*: P. H. S., “Amplified Rubber Bands, &c,” *The Times*, May 14, 1968. The event likely also received publicity from Roger Smalley’s enthusiastic review of Cardew’s *Treatise*; see Roger Smalley, “A Beautiful Score,” *Musical Times*, May 1968, 462.

57. Cardew was also riding high on the copious publicity he received for the premiere of *Schooltime Compositions* in March, even if many of the critics agreed with Michael Reynolds’s appraisal: “An incredibly pretentious evening of crucifying boredom”; “For Consenting Students,” *Daily Mail*, March 12, 1967. Other reviews appeared in *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Times*, *Guardian*, *The Times*, *Stage*, and *Sunday Times*. He was also highlighted in the underground press, with a long interview feature in the *International Times* of February 2–15, 1968 (“Cornelius Cardew” [interview]).

58. Jill Phillips, “Sounds of Discovery,” *Musical Times*, July 1968.

59. See Rzewski, “Casting Lines to Another Soul: Plan For Spacecraft.”

60. Richard Teitelbaum and Ivan Vandor did not accompany the group on this trip. See also G. W., “Not All Sound and Fury,” *The Times*, May 22, 1968; Tim Souster, “Sounds of Discovery,” *Financial Times*, May 21, 1968.

61. Victor Schonfield concert log, 1968, VSA.

Ronald Atkins's review in *The Guardian* gives a detailed earwitness account of the group's magisterial sound during this period:

The evening began with Cardew using an electric vibrator on the piano strings which set up a drone that remained, in one form or another, for the whole performance. Muffled accompaniment then, after twenty minutes, the saxophone came in with long notes, and, after thirty, the drums. This led to a five-minute electronic tutti, then back to the drone, violin and whistles. Around the ninety-minute mark the organ lights were turned on and we reached the musical and visual apex; with Cardew (I presume) silhouetted against the orange glow and blending the organ chords with Rowe's bowed guitar. A decrescendo set in after ten minutes which was still resolving itself when I left some fifty minutes later.⁶²

AMM's position as the culminating event of the series (in Queen Elizabeth Hall) lent a certain gravity to their performance. They gathered the most reviews, and one could certainly be forgiven for receiving the strong impression that they represented the pinnacle of the avant-garde tendencies exhibited in the previous three concerts.⁶³ MEV's performance was broadcast on the BBC, and Tilbury and Wolff were featured on BBC television.⁶⁴ The series was a great success, especially when compared with Cardew's four concerts the year before: attendance had more than doubled for the first three concerts, and AMM alone sold over 500 tickets for their QEHL performance.⁶⁵

Music Now sought to build on this success in early 1969 with a collection of three concerts by Tilbury called "The Contemporary Pianist." As he explained to Parsons in the *Musical Times*, Tilbury was interested in exploring the distinction between the piano as a keyboard and the instrument as a total sound source, and he wanted to present the whole range of techniques expected from a pianist working in the late 1960s.⁶⁶ The program explained, "After an introductory keyboard piece, most of the other pieces take Tilbury inside the piano, or away from it altogether for live electronics and other new

62. Ronald Atkins, "AMM at the QEHL," *Guardian*, May 24, 1968.

63. Favorable (if occasionally bewildered) reviews of AMM appeared in a variety of publications: Stephen Walsh, "Enjoying AMM Music," *The Times*, May 24, 1968; Russell Unwin, "Avant-Garde Music," *Morning Star*, May 25, 1968; Tim Souster, "The Strength of AMM Music," *Financial Times*, May 28, 1968; Michael Parsons, "Changing Timbres," *Sunday Times*, May 26, 1968; Ronald Atkins, "The AMM at the QEHL," *Guardian*, May 24, 1968; Stanley Myers, "Shock Tactics," *Spectator*, May 31, 1968; Jill Phillips, "Sounds of Discovery," *Musical Times*, July 1968; Michael Chanan, "AMM," *International Times*, May 31–June 13, 1968.

64. Victor Schonfield, "Director's Report, June 1970," ACGB 50/1399. An excerpt from the MEV performance was later published on one side of the album *Live Electronic Music Improvised*, Mainstream MS-5002 (AMM was on the other side).

65. See esp. the Certified Statement of Accounts, August 16, 1968, ACGB 50/1399.

66. Michael Parsons, "The Contemporary Pianist," *Musical Times*, February 1969, 150–52. Other previews and notice appeared in "Music Notes," *Financial Times*, January 15, 1969; and Parsons, "Music for Piano & Live Electronics," *International Times*, January 31, 1969.

devices.”⁶⁷ On February 3, the program consisted of Stockhausen’s *Plus-Minus*, Cardew’s *February Pieces*, Webern’s *Variations*, op. 27, and Bryars’s *Mr. Sunshine*. For the critics, the first and last works stood out. In the case of *Plus-Minus*, Tilbury and Bryars had concocted a version of the composition that converted the arch-modernist’s indeterminate notation into snatches of harmless Victorian melody that better captured the fancies of its performer. “I want my playing of the piece to reflect my taste, not his,” Tilbury told one interlocutor.⁶⁸ Writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, Peter Stadlen (who had studied with Anton Webern and favored Stockhausen) called this approach “a legalistic way of playing Mr. Stockhausen’s game and not, it seems to me, altogether unpolemical.”⁶⁹ The Bryars work, however, came in for more abuse, owing to its fifty-minute length and relatively consistent texture; as one critic put it, “If this was intended to produce an effect of mind-deadening spirit-crushing monotony, then it was brilliantly successful.”⁷⁰

Tilbury’s second concert, on February 17, was devoted to works of the New York School: two pieces by Wolff, six by Feldman, and the first complete performance in the UK of Cage’s *Music of Changes*.⁷¹ The series finale took place on February 24, and featured Cardew’s *Treatise* (in a version for live electronics and piano), Ashley’s recently completed *Purposeful Lady Slow Afternoon*, and Alvin Lucier’s *Music for Solo Performer*. The Ashley work was typically suggestive: while the pianist arpeggiated a large chord for about fifteen minutes, three female singers—“young, good-looking, and fashionably dressed”—cooed and moaned into microphones.⁷² Lucier’s work uses sensors on the skull to pick up alpha waves, which are then amplified and used to vibrate acoustic objects—in this case, snare drums, gongs, and the piano. Anyone familiar with this piece knows that it can be difficult to bear in

67. The Contemporary Pianist program, Purcell Room, London, February 3, 17, 24, 1969, VSA.

68. Parsons, “The Contemporary Pianist,” *Musical Times*, February 1969, 151. Stockhausen’s indeterminate work had a history of serving as a kind of punching bag for the English experimentalists; see Anderson, “‘Well, It’s a Vertebrate . . .’: Performer Choice in Cardew’s *Treatise*.”

69. Peter Stadlen, “Piano Playing of Pointed Delicacy,” *Daily Telegraph*, February 4, 1969. Schonfield frequently wrote to newspapers that printed what he viewed as erroneous or biased information; in a reply to one of these letters, Stadlen told him, “I have often asserted that Cage was not being taken seriously by anyone until Stockhausen’s sell-out rendered indeterminacy respectable.” Peter Stadlen to Victor Schonfield, November 20, 1971, VSA.

70. M. H., “Negative Virtue,” *The Times*, February 4, 1969. The concert was also reviewed in Michael Parsons, “John Tilbury,” *Financial Times*, February 4, 1969; P. H. “A Hit, But Only For the Brave,” *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, February 14, 1969; and Michael Nyman, “Demolition Squad,” *Spectator*, February 14, 1969.

71. A. E. P., “Premiere of Key Cage Work,” *Daily Telegraph*, February 18, 1969; Gillian Widdicombe, “Cage Work in Full,” *The Times*, February 18, 1969; Dominic Gill, “John Tilbury—2,” *Financial Times*, February 19, 1969.

72. The text about the singers comes from Ashley’s directions, which are quoted in Christopher Hobbs’s program notes, VSA.

performance, and one critic likened Tilbury's offering to "a ceremonial expiation of crimes against music by public electrocution."⁷³ Indeed, the critics were on the whole quite unkind in their appraisals of the series, but that did not stop the audience from coming in—more than 600 attended the concerts at the Purcell Room on the South Bank.⁷⁴

"The Contemporary Pianist" had barely wrapped up when Music Now began to promote another spring concert series—"Sounds of Discovery" had been so successful the year before, they had decided to do it again. For this four-concert series Music Now featured the American Sonic Arts Group in two evenings (May 3 and 8), alternating with a day-long happening by the Music Now Ensemble under the direction of Cardew (May 4) and another concluding performance by AMM (May 9).⁷⁵ All of the concerts occurred at the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm, which, because of its flexible interior, was particularly suited to the theatrical and mixed-media emphasis of the series.⁷⁶

It was the first visit to the UK for the Sonic Arts Group (SAG, not yet known as Sonic Arts Union), who were touring in their expanded "husbands and wives" configuration: Robert and Mary Ashley, Alvin and Mary Lucier, David Behrman and Shigeo Kubota, and Gordon Mumma and Barbara Lloyd—and, characteristically, they presented works that mixed the theatrical and musical registers.⁷⁷ Perhaps inspired by SAG's dramatic flair, Cardew organized for the second concert a seven-hour event—with more than 50 musicians, including regulars, new faces like Maggie Nicols and Hugh Davies, and students from Morley College and Maidstone College of Art—that featured overlapping presentations of several works, all nestled within one giant realization of Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis*. (See the Appendix for a list of the works performed, as well as a chronological summary of Music Now productions.)

For reviewers, Paragraph 2 of Cardew's *The Great Digest* was the notable success of the day. With its bunches of drummer/singer groups scattered

73. Felix Aprahamian, untitled, *Sunday Times*, March 2, 1969. See also Jill Phillips, "The Contemporary Pianist," *Musical Times*, April 1969; "Alpha Wave Music," *Evening Standard*, February 25, 1969; Andrew Porter, "John Tilbury," *Financial Times*, February 25, 1969; Max Harrison, "Industrial Noises," *The Times*, February 25, 1969; David Simmons, "London Music," *Musical Opinion*, April 1969; and Martin Cooper, "35 Min of Silence Put Audience 'With It,'" *Daily Telegraph*, February 25, 1969. For a reply to Simmons and Aprahamian, see Schonfield, "The Indeterminate Critic [letter]," *Musical Opinion*, May 1969.

74. Certified Statement of Accounts, March 14, 1969, ACGB 50/1399.

75. Sounds of Discovery program and Press Release, VSA.

76. The Roundhouse was London's countercultural venue *nonpareil* during this period, and therefore had already been the site of many freewheeling happenings, perhaps most notably the launch of *International Times* in 1966; see Miles, *London Calling: A Countercultural History of London since 1945*.

77. The repertoire list in the Appendix does not completely match that of the program and press release, which are incorrect when compared with journalist accounts.

around the hall, interlocking rhythmic patterns and modal pitch language, the work bore the faint influence of Riley's *In C*. Writing in *Tempo*, Souster enthused, "One has come to expect bold strokes from Cardew, and a strong atmospheric quality in his ideas, but no-one could have foreseen the strength, vitality and even ebullience of this wild but happy music. I cannot remember having used the word 'happy' in connection with a piece of new music before."⁷⁸ Michael Nyman called Paragraph 2 "one of those rare works of such power and freshness that they seem to reinvent music from its very sources by somersaulting musical history."⁷⁹ The performance was notable for another historical reason: it was the first public presentation by the group that would eventually be known as the Scratch Orchestra; in a rehearsal on the morning of the gig, Cardew announced that the initiatory meeting of that body would take place on July 1. He had already written the draft constitution, which would shortly appear in the *Musical Times*.⁸⁰

But compared with the inaugural Music Now series the year before, the 1969 installment was something of a letdown. Plenty of critics dropped by (and their reviews were, on the whole, more sympathetic than not), but the total audience for the four concerts numbered fewer than 500 (compared with about 1,000 in 1968).⁸¹ The Roundhouse was a special kind of venue, more associated with rock than with art music, and concertgoers-goers may have been unwilling to venture outside of Central London for the events.⁸² In any case, Schonfield was undeterred.

By the time 1970 rolled around, Cardew's activities with the Scratch Orchestra had gathered much momentum, so Music Now's vernal series that year was devoted to five concerts by the group of more than fifty members, "chiefly consisting of non-musicians," as the press release put it.⁸³ They

78. Tim Souster, "Three 'Music Now' Programmes," *Tempo* 89 (Summer 1969): 25.

79. Michael Nyman, "This Way Madness," *Spectator*, May 9, 1969.

80. See Tilbury, *Cornelius Cardew*, 353–59, for an eyewitness account.

81. These figures come from the Certified Statements of Accounts that Music Now had to submit to the Arts Council as a condition of their funding. Reviews included: P. H., "Music Now, Without Music," *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, May 7, 1969; Meirion Bowen, "Music Now," *Guardian*, May 5 1969; Stanley Sadie, "Experimental Music," *The Times*, May 5, 1969; Michael Parsons, "Sonic Arts Group," *Financial Times*, May 9, 1969; David Simmons, "Music," *Jewish Chronicle*, May 9, 1969; Nyman, "This Way Madness"; Gillian Widdicombe, "Trial and Error," *Sunday Times*, May 11, 1969; Souster, "Three 'Music Now' Programmes"; Brigitte Schiffer, "Wo sind die Grenzen des Amerikanischen Musiktheaters?" *Melos*, July–August 1969[?], 337–39. Jill Phillips, "New Music," *Musical Times*, July 1969.

82. The disappointing box office was a major point of discussion between Schonfield and the Arts Council; Keith Winter to Victor Schonfield, July 25 1969, and Victor Schonfield to Keith Winter, August 13, 1969, both ACGB 50/1399.

83. Scratch Orchestra Concerts April 1970 press release, n.d., VSA. On the history of the Scratch Orchestra, and a chronological list of their presentations, see Kathryn Gleasman Pisaro, "Music from Scratch: Cornelius Cardew, Experimental Music and the Scratch Orchestra in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s," PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2001; see also Virginia Anderson's master's thesis, "British Experimental Music: Cornelius Cardew and his Contemporaries,"

had some good buzz. In January, BBC television broadcast a feature on the Scratch, followed by an appraisal and discussion by an odd miscellany of “experts.” In the press release, Schonfield reported, “Bernard Herrmann . . . said the film made him want to jump into the nearest river, but Jimmy Page . . . and Roger Smalley said it made them want to attend the actual performances.”⁸⁴ Indeed, Smalley was the group’s biggest booster in the “straight music” halls of power. A composer-in-residence at King’s College, Cambridge, he also sat on the Music Panel of the Arts Council, where he often stuck up for the underdog concert presenter (more on this in a moment). Although he was more of a Stockhausen man, Smalley’s aesthetic sensibility was somewhat compatible with the mission of Music Now (and he corresponded with Schonfield to this effect during these years). In fact, in 1969 he was in the process of starting his own electronic improvisation ensemble, called Intermodulation, with his colleague Souster.⁸⁵

The Scratch Orchestra’s five events took place in April at St. Pancras Town Hall, the International Student House, and St. John’s Smith Square, and each was programmed by the youngest members of the group (in accordance with the rules outlined in the Draft Constitution). Too many things happened at these concerts to be recounted in full here (and there exist several informative sources on the Scratch), but it will suffice to say that the programs mixed recent avant-garde hits (Young’s “Death Chant,” Wolff’s “Play”) with compositions by Scratch members (Shrapnel, Bryn Harris) and instances of “Scratch music,” which bore some resemblance to the event scores of Brecht—small, private actions to be executed in concert with other similarly focused comrades. Receiving the most attention was the April 24 concert, titled “Roger Smalley Memorial Concert,” at which the subject of the commemoration joined in for several works, including his own “Study for Pulses 1.”⁸⁶

According to the certified statement of accounts, Music Now sold only 178 tickets for all five concerts. Since almost all of its members were amateurs and charged no musicians’ fees, the Scratch Orchestra was not expensive to

MM thesis, University of Redlands (California), 1983, which offers the first scholarly account of many of the figures discussed in the present essay; and Tilbury, *Cornelius Cardew*.

84. Scratch Orchestra Concerts April 1970 press release, n.d., VSA. It was also reported by Keith Spence in “Television,” *Musical Times*, March 1970.

85. They played things like Terry Riley’s *Keyboard Studies* and Stockhausen’s “improvisation” pieces, *Aus den sieben Tagen*. In a 1970 letter to jazz critic Max Harrison, Schonfield wrote, “Roger and Tim [Souster] are well-meaning and hard-working champions of experimental composers as well as of themselves, but . . . they’re certainly not much good at Cage, Cardew, LaMonte [sic] Young etc on past form.” Schonfield to Harrison, October 13, 1970, VSA.

86. Roger Smalley Memorial Concert program, April 24, 1970, St. John the Evangelist, London, VSA. The concert was reviewed in the following: “Live Concert,” *Evening Standard*, 9 April 1970; Hugo Cole, “The Sight of Music,” *Guardian*, April 24, 1970; “Scratch Music,” *New Society*, April 30, 1970; and Brigitte Schiffer, “Mixed Media im Londoner Musikleben,” *Melos*, July–August 1970.

put on, but Schonfield still lost money on the venture. The effort to recoup these costs, and then to obtain from the Arts Council an advanced guarantee against losses for the Scratch's November 23 concert at the more prestigious Queen Elizabeth Hall (the guarantee didn't happen), would stretch on for years, and would sour the relationship between Music Now and its most important patron. The Council maintained that it did not fund non-professionals, and its Music Director, John Cruft, along with some members of the Music Panel, did not think that the Scratch's activities were really "music." For their part, Music Now maintained that they had demonstrated their seriousness as a presenting organization, and that the Council was set up to aid precisely the kind of money-losing ventures represented by the Scratch Orchestra. There was a vigorous debate among the members of the Music Panel, with Smalley leading the defense. In the end, they did offer a subsidy to help the organization recoup some of its losses, but distinguished between this kind of aid for Music Now and direct support of something like the Scratch Orchestra; it was the arts funding equivalent of "love the sinner, hate the sin."⁸⁷

Labors of Love

Music Now had always been more than just an arts presenting nonprofit; Schonfield also worked hard to get his artists concerts, recording contracts, radio engagements, and other opportunities for professional advancement, all of which took place during these early years. In this role as agent, he conducted business at once for indeterminacy- and improvisation-affiliated artists. There was a grey area between these "commercial" activities and the publicly funded ones, but, in one of those rare moments of bureaucratic enlightenment, a legal advisor with the Arts Council told Schonfield not to

87. I am summarizing the story told in the following documents: John Cruft to Victor Schonfield, October 12, 1970, ACGB 50/1399; Quintin Hoare to John Cruft, October 14, 1970, ACGB 50/1399; John Cruft to Quintin Hoare, October 22, 1970, ACGB 50/1399; Meeting of General Subcommittee of the Music Panel, Arts Council of Great Britain, October 21, 1970, ACGB 51/181; Meeting of the General Subcommittee of the Music Panel, Arts Council of Great Britain, November 20, 1970, ACGB 51/181; Music Panel of the Arts Council of Great Britain, 110th meeting, January 18, 1971, ACGB 51/303; John Cruft to Lord Goodman internal memo, March 2, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; Victor Schonfield to Lord Goodman, April 8, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; John Cruft to Lord Goodman, internal memo, April 16, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; Lord Goodman to Victor Schonfield, April 30, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; Victor Schonfield to Lord Goodman, May 27, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; John Cruft to Lord Harewood, October 8, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; Victor Schonfield to Sir Hugh Willatt, January 14, 1972; Sir Hugh Willatt to Victor Schonfield, February 7, 1972, ACGB 50/1399. Some years later, when Music Now's financial situation had grown dire, they found unlikely supporters on the Music Panel, including composer Harrison Birtwistle and opera director Colin Graham; see ACGB Music Panel minutes, 123rd Meeting, March 22, 1973, ACGB 51/303.

worry about it: the stakes were small, and if Music Now continued to promote the public performance of avant-garde music in England, the Council would be satisfied. After all, there was little chance of Schonfield using the organization to advance his own career, the advisor wrote: "I guess that an impresario who expected to earn his living would not be anxious to touch most of the work the Society undertakes."⁸⁸ But Schonfield was in it for love, not money, and he applied himself with vigor to managing the affairs of AMM, Cardew, and Tilbury, and to providing production and promotion services for a wide range of other musicians.

For his jazz-leaning clients, Schonfield arranged a series of British tours that turned out, in retrospect, to have served as a kind of pilot mission for what became known after 1971 as the "Contemporary Music Network," a program sparked by the Arts Council's contemporary music officer Keith Winter, but carried through by his successor, Annette Morreau.⁸⁹ The object of the scheme was to subsidize the regional arts associations outside of London so that they could afford the fees of contemporary music groups. Winter was scheming about the scheme as early as March 1968:

Concerning the suggested Universities tour, I should think that this is probably the best outlet for avant-garde music in the provinces. What funds would be available? Shall I ask Schonfield whether he is thinking in terms of provincial bookings? This new society will probably also be handling "The Spontaneous Music Ensemble" and "The Amalgam," two avant-garde jazz groups (of whom Charles Fox is an admirer) which could similarly be willing to tour.⁹⁰

But it would turn out that the first such tour would go to the Music Improvisation Company, which was made up of Parker on saxophones, Derek Bailey on guitar, Jamie Muir on percussion, and Hugh Davies on live electronics (they would add vocalist Christine Jeffrey in late 1970). "Together we feel we have an original contribution to the development of modern music to make," Parker wrote to Winter in July 1969.⁹¹ Under the auspices of Music Now, the group played twelve concerts between February and May 1970, many of which took place in the greater London area, but also in Leeds, Bristol, Brighton, Coventry, and Norwich.⁹² Music Now followed up by arranging an eleven-concert tour for John Stevens's Spontaneous Music Ensemble, which took them to arts centers and universities across England

88. M. J. McRobert to John Cruft, January 25, 1971, ACGB 50/1399.

89. Important sources in this history include Annette Morreau, "Report on Contemporary Music Subsidy," February 1971, ACGB 51/302; and "Note of a Meeting to Discuss Contemporary Music Held on 30th March 1971 at 105 Piccadilly," ACGB 51/54.

90. Keith Winter to John Cruft, internal memo, March 20, 1968, ACGB 50/1399.

91. Evan Parker to Keith Winter, July 28, 1969, ACGB 1/1970.

92. Schonfield, "Director's Report, June 1970." I have not found much press about this tour, but see Meirion Bowen, "Improvisation," *Guardian*, January 31, 1970; and Ann Hardman, "Howls and Groans at the Musical Happening," [Bristol] *Evening Post*, 1 May 1970. The latter was not a positive review: "Anything goes as they say and I went."

(and even to Scotland) that October and November.⁹³ Long championed by Schonfield, the group performed Stevens's new composition, *The Source*,⁹⁴ which was a six-part suite that proceeded through a series of themes, each leading to a section of group improvisation (akin to the structure of Coltrane's *Ascension*).⁹⁵ Finally, Schonfield arranged a funded tour in the spring of 1972 for Trevor Watts's group, Amalgam (Bob Norden [trombone and piano], Ron Herman [bass], and John Stevens [percussion]), which took the ensemble out to the provinces before returning to greater London. On this tour, they played his *Unity Suite*, which he had recently completed with help from the Arts Council.⁹⁶

Overseas Opportunities, Overseas Guests

Schonfield procured many UK gigs for his stable of artists (including the persistent task of securing a facility for AMM's weekly sessions), but he was just as diligent finding foreign engagements. Tilbury performed at many festivals and concerts in continental Europe between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, mainly in Italy but also in West Germany and Poland; he went on a US tour that Schonfield booked for him in spring 1972. In March 1968, AMM played four concerts in New York's Steinway Hall as part of Benjamin Patterson's "January through June 1968" concert series, which also featured concerts by Terry Jennings, La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, Jon Higgins, Terry Riley, Yuji Takahashi, Don Heckman, and the Sonic Arts Group.⁹⁷ Although Schonfield was not involved in the booking for this visit, he assisted for a second tour of the US and Canada in October 1971 and procured occasional gigs on the continent.⁹⁸ He corresponded frequently with representatives of the Instant Composers Pool (Amsterdam),

93. The SME was a flexible ensemble. On this tour, every concert featured Stevens on percussion, Trevor Watts on soprano sax, Ray Warleigh on alto saxophone and flute, and Mike Payne on piano; this core was joined by one or two musicians drawn from Adelhard Roidinger (bass), Marcio Mattos (bass), Bob Norden (trombone), Kenny Wheeler (flugelhorn), and Brian Smith (saxophones). Spontaneous Music Ensemble, *The Source*, program in VSA.

94. See, for example, Victor Schonfield, "Rule Britannia?" *Down Beat*, July 11, 1968, 24–25, 32. The tour was announced in *Jazz Monthly*, October 1970; *Jazz Journal*, October 1970; "SME on Tour," *Melody Maker*, October 10, 1970. A review appeared in Greg Murphy, "SME," *Sounds*, October 10, 1970. A recording of the work appeared on Tangent (TNGS 107) in early 1971.

95. Spontaneous Music Ensemble, *The Source*, program in VSA.

96. Amalgam, tour program, VSA. Amalgam was formed by Watts in 1967 to play his more "traditional" jazz compositions. See Fred Norris, "New Formula at the Lab," *Birmingham Evening Mail*, March 21, 1972.

97. Benjamin Patterson and Victor Schonfield, various correspondence, VSA.

98. Tom Johnson, "Music," *Village Voice*, November 25, 1971. Rena Fruchter, "Improvisation Group Group [*sic*] Has No Pat Answer," *Home News* [Rutgers University], November 14, 1971.

Free Music Production (Berlin), and ESP-Disk (New York), trading records, contacts, and opportunities.

Perhaps Schonfield's greatest overseas success was organizing the British avant-garde music delegation for the 1973 installment of the Europalia International Arts Festival in Brussels.⁹⁹ Founded in 1969, Europalia is a bi-annual celebration of one nation's cultural heritage; in 1973, the festival was devoted to Great Britain. Schonfield arranged seven concerts in seven days (October 27 to November 2), featuring a wide range of the mixed avant-garde that he had done so much to promote in prior years. The SME performed with US trumpeter Bobby Bradford (for whom Schonfield had arranged some British appearances), while AMM appeared in their duo configuration of Prévost and Gare, and also an expanded version with Bailey and two bassists. Bailey appeared solo in a shared bill with Frank Perry (who likewise played without accompaniment). Tilbury performed early Cardew works, as well as the composer's then-recent arrangements of Irish and Chinese revolutionary songs (and a few of Cardew's own). With a medium-sized ensemble of Belgian musicians, Gavin Bryars presented his enduring works *The Sinking of the Titanic* and *Jesus's Blood Never Failed Me Yet*, while Hobbs and White performed their own melodic and system-based compositions in a duo format. The final concert featured People's Liberation Music, the political folk rock band that Tilbury had founded in 1973 with Laurie and Brigid Scott-Baker and John Marcangelo after his turn to Maoism. Many years later, Bryars would recall Europalia—this traveling roadshow of indeterminacy and improvisation—as a “measure of the increasing international awareness of [English experimental music].”¹⁰⁰

Just as Schonfield endeavored to put his clients into international circulation, he also worked hard to bring adventurous, improvising musicians from around the world to London. Artists from abroad giving their first UK performances with Schonfield's help included Coleman, Wolff, Sun Ra, Musica Elettronica Viva, and the Sonic Arts Union. As Ashley wrote in a letter of 1970, “Yours is one of the few [E]uropean organizations that is doing something for [A]merican musicians.”¹⁰¹ In 1969, 1971, and 1973, Schonfield arranged UK tours for the Sonic Arts Group/Union, and a separate lecture and concert tour for Lucier in spring 1973.¹⁰² We have already noted the May 1968 concert of Wolff's compositions; not only was it his concert debut

99. A. J. [Adrian Jack], “New Music,” *Music and Musicians* 22, no. 3 (November 1973): 16, 18; and Roger Berthoud, “Cultural Feast Set Before the Belgians,” *The Times*, November 1, 1973.

100. Bryars, “Foreword,” in *Ashgate Research Companion to Experimental Music*, xv.

101. Robert Ashley to Victor Schonfield, December 25, 1970, VSA.

102. See above for documentation of their 1969 visit. For 1971, see Brigitte Schiffer, “London entdeckt einen neuen Interpreten zeitgenössischer Klaviermusik,” *Melos* 38 (December 1971): 542–44. For 1973, see A. J. [Adrian Jack], “New Music,” *Music and Musicians* (November 1973); Adrian Jack, “Sonic Arts,” *Music and Musicians* 22, no. 6 (February 1974): 51–52. For Lucier in particular, see K. S. P. [Keith Potter], “Environmental Music,” *Music and Musicians* (August 1973); Dominic Gill, “Alvin Lucier,” *Financial Times*, June 25, 1973; William

in England, but it was also the first concert solely devoted to his work, anywhere. On March 28, 1972, Music Now also sponsored the British premiere of Wolff's large work, *Burdocks*, which was performed by the Scratch Orchestra with help from many of London's contemporary music ensembles. The piece, for up to ten "orchestras" (of as few as five members), mixed prose instructions and musical notation in its ten parts, which could be ordered and superimposed freely by the performers; it was, in short, the perfect piece of directed improvisation for the Scratch, and received copious press attention.¹⁰³ Finally, Schonfield also arranged (in 1973) the first British performance by the Instant Composers Pool, the group of Dutch improvisers that included Willem Breuker, Han Bennink, and Mischa Mengelberg. The concert was part of the "Anglo-Dutch Music Days," organized by the Gaudeamus Foundation in collaboration with a number of London concert promoters.¹⁰⁴

Schonfield's foreign contacts did not come only from Europe. During July 1971, Takehisa Kosugi's free improvisation ensemble, the Taj Mahal Travellers, were in Stockholm, performing every night for a month at the Moderna Museet show "Utopias and Visions."¹⁰⁵ According to David Behrman, it was such a sudden invitation that they had no time to set up any other European gigs. But, he wrote, "Concerts by The Taj Mahal Travellers were among the chief pleasures of a trip to Japan I made a year ago," so he urged Schonfield to help them out.¹⁰⁶ Kosugi himself soon contacted him, and three concerts were quickly arranged: at the Young Vic Theatre in London on November 7, at Leicester Polytechnic on the 9th, and at Newport College of Art in Wales on the 11th.¹⁰⁷

Kosugi (b. 1938) had been a mover on the international avant-garde scene for about ten years, forging a tangled itinerary that again makes clear the multiplicity of spontaneous music making during this period. A central figure in Fluxus, he had also formed a strong connection with Cage and Tudor, performing with them and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company when they

Mann, "Alvin Lucier," *The Times*, June 25, 1973; and Paul Griffiths, "Lucier," *Musical Times*, September 1973.

103. Michael Nyman, "Music Now and the Scratch Orchestra," *Time Out*, March 24–30, 1972; "For Orchestras," *The Times*, March 28, 1972; Keith Horner, "Christian Wolff," *The Times*, March 29, 1972; Dominic Gill, "Burdocks," *Financial Times*, March 30, 1972; M. N. [Michael Nyman], "Christian Wolff," *Music and Musicians*, April 1972; Peter Heyworth, "Damped-down Verdi," *The Observer*, April 2, 1972; Paul Griffiths, "Christian Wolff," *Musical Times*, May 1972; and Adrian Jack, "Burdocks," *Music and Musicians*, June 1972.

104. Ronald Atkins, "ICP Group," *Guardian*, December 6, 1973; Arthur Jacobs, "Dutch Earthquake," *Jewish Chronicle*, December 14, 1973; and Mal Dean, "Instant Composers Pool," *Melody Maker*, December 15, 1973.

105. Eva Geijerstam, "Japanska musiker besöker Stockholm på väg till Taj Mahal," *Dagens Nyheter* [Stockholm], July 9, 1971.

106. David Behrman to Victor Schonfield, July 15, 1971, VSA.

107. Gavin Bryars had recently taken up a post at Leicester Polytechnic, and was probably responsible for that gig. See Anderson, "British Experimental Music after Nyman," in *Tomorrow Is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*, ed. Piekut (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 159–79.

toured Japan in 1964. But he was far more invested in improvisation than these associations would suggest. As a student at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music in the late 1950s, Kosugi studied ethnomusicology with India specialist Fumio Koizumi, who instilled in his student a fascination with South Asian improvisatory practices, as well as a working knowledge of non-Western and non-Japanese instruments. A violinist, Kosugi brought these interests into the Music group, the free improvisation ensemble that he formed in 1959–60 with Yasunao Tone, Chieko Shiomi, Shūkō Mizuno, and other students at the University.¹⁰⁸

Koizumi's influence on Kosugi was even more evident in the case of the Taj Mahal Travellers, a seven-member group that the latter founded with the bassist and artist Ryo Koike in December 1969. They played droning improvisations with a certain rock feel, which came from their amplification, the use of short ostinati, the feedback and heavy reverb of psychedelia, and the overall informality of their concert presentation—uniformly hirsute, they spread out on the floor with their gaggle of world instruments and electronic equipment. Their instrumentarium was impressive: violin, contrabass, oscillators, numerous wooden flutes, trumpet, shakuhachi, shehnai, sheng, santur, biwa, sho, khaen, tree branches, and hand percussion of all types. Kosugi also set up electric fans at the front of the stage, directing their air flow into microphones. This was the scene at the Young Vic on November 7, 1971, captured in photographs by Christopher Davies. The music was unabashedly sensual, and accompanied meditative, color films of seascapes that had been shot by Kosugi and Koike. In a deliciously snotty but vivid review, the *Daily Telegraph* critic described what he heard.

A storm brewed, though its fierceness was intermittent, not once reaching gale force. Evocative harmonic patterns grew distinct as the drone, supported by the incessant amplified violins, downward three-note cadence, repeated trumpet slabs and nonterrestrial [*sic*] gull-calls orally accounted for this watery abyss. . . . Out at sea a deep-voiced Buddhist chant eventually echoed my judgment with its firmly repeated groan: “Nay!”¹⁰⁹

Nonetheless, the other reviews were generally good, and more than two hundred people came out.¹¹⁰ They may have been drawn by Michael Nyman's advance write-up in the underground magazine *Seven Days*, where he promised that the Travellers “should provide the British experimental and

108. For more on this important history and the specific cultural strands it collected, see William Marotti, “Challenge to Music: The Music Group's Sonic Politics,” in *Tomorrow is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*, ed. Benjamin Piekut (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 109–38.

109. R. W. “Verdict was ‘Nay!’” *Daily Telegraph*, November 8, 1971.

110. “Taj Mahal Travellers Accounts, November 1971,” VSA. See also Nicolas Soames, “Sea's Sounds,” *Hampstead and Highgate Express and News*, November 12, 1971; and Brigitte Schiffer, [London diary?], *St. Galler Tagblatt*, December 8, 1971.

rock scenes with an unprecedented sound experience.”¹¹¹ Indeed, Kosugi’s band was about the closest Schonfield got to the rock world.¹¹²

Two Big Fish: Sun Ra and John Cage

Without a doubt, though, Schonfield’s two biggest catches from overseas were Sun Ra and John Cage. He had long been an enthusiast of Ra, and began working in late 1969 to bring the Arkestra to Europe. A significant contact for this goal was Schonfield’s friend and colleague, Joachim-Ernst Berendt, who ran the Berlin Jazz Days festival as well as the jazz programming at Südwestfunk, the public broadcasting station in Baden-Baden. They had been in touch for a few years, and Schonfield seems to have single-handedly brought British free improvisation (SME, AMM, Brotherhood of Breath) to Berendt’s attention. As the latter wrote to Schonfield in 1967, “With the ‘common market’ now, we are informed about French, Italian, Swedish etc., jazz very well, but the British record companies don’t seem to think yet ‘[E]uropean.’ If they would, there would be 10 times more playing possibilities for British musicians in this country than now.”¹¹³ Schonfield did his part, sharing LPs with Berendt and putting him in touch with record stores who could keep him abreast of developments in British free music.

Ra’s visit would not have happened without Berendt’s invitation to the Berlin festival, which included airfare for his 22-person ensemble. It was an important milestone in Ra’s career: “As you know we have never been abroad as a unit,” the composer wrote to Schonfield in January 1970. “Somehow everyone else has been given a chance but this arkestra. I am sure that the happiness we represent will be pleasing to Britain as well as other parts of the world.”¹¹⁴ To make the whole thing financially feasible, Schonfield (with some help from Berendt) arranged a series of dates in Europe, including the Donaueschingen festival, where the Arkestra was heard by fellow traveler of the cosmos, Karlheinz Stockhausen.¹¹⁵

On November 9, 1970, they played to a sold-out room at the Queen Elizabeth Hall; as many as two hundred were turned away. Writing in the *Melody Maker* a few days before, Richard Williams built up the anticipation by comparing the appearance to the two most significant overseas visitors in

111. Michael Nyman, “Taj Mahal Travellers,” *Seven Days*, November 3, 1971.

112. For an account of Taj Mahal Travellers from a rock perspective, see Julian Cope, *Japrock sampler: How the Post-War Japanese Blew their Minds on Rock ‘n’ Roll* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 195–204.

113. Joachim Berendt to Victor Schonfield, July 27, 1967, VSA.

114. Sun Ra to Victor Schonfield, January 9, 1970, VSA.

115. For more on this tour, see John F. Szwed, *Space is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra* (New York: Pantheon, 1997), 280–85.

the recent past: John Coltrane's 1961 tour and Coleman's 1965 London concert.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, Schonfield prepared a sixteen-page souvenir program booklet that collected excerpts from Ra's interviews, writings, and poetry, as well as a discography for the interested fan. The composer began the evening with a proclamation from the stage that was Cagean, but with a difference: "I demand discipline and precision! Not only from black men, but from everybody here!"¹¹⁷ Against the ensuing backdrop of films, color slides, and lights, Ra played several solos on Farfisa and Moog organs; for his featured turn on the piano, he was joined by cellist Alan Silva (who was the most featured soloist after Ra, according to one observer). Several reviewers noted the "winsome" melody sung by the entire band ("We Travel the Spaceways," perhaps?), as well as the collective improvisation that closed out the first set. Following the interval, the Arkestra roared into action with a dense blast of African-style drumming that was followed by a long solo by John Gilmore, who rose up, tenor saxophone in hand, from behind the drum kit he had been playing. Pat Patrick and Danny Thompson gradually joined in on baritone saxes, strolling out into the audience to trade a short riff behind Gilmore's freer exploration. Meanwhile, the rest of the saxes snuck offstage, only to surprise the audience by bursting into the hall from the back and blowing everybody away.

This event was a knockout, and it garnered a lot of press—most of it very favorable. "Ra's stature as an artist, on whatever level he cares to inhabit, is absolutely beyond argument," crowed *The Guardian's* critic, Ronald Atkins.¹¹⁸ A few years later, Schonfield told an interviewer, "Of all the things

116. Richard Williams, "Night of the Giants," *Melody Maker*, November 7, 1970. Other advanced publicity included "Rock Dates," *Time Out*, October 31–November 14, 1970; and Sun Ra, "Humanity," *Jazz Monthly* (November 1970): 6–7.

117. Quoted in Robert Greenfield, "Sun Ra & Europe's Space Music Scene," *Rolling Stone*, January 7, 1971, 17.

118. Ronald Atkins, "Sun Ra," *Guardian*, November 10, 1970; see also Richard Williams, "Sun Ra," *The Times*, November 10, 1970; idem., "Sun Ra," *Melody Maker*, November 14, 1970; Peter Clayton, "Angel Cakewalk," *Sunday Telegraph*, November 15, 1970; Derek Jewell, "Free For All," *Sunday Times*, November 15, 1970; Mal Dean, "Sun Ra & His Intergalactic Solar-Research Arkestra in Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall," *International Times*, November 20–December 3, 1970; Charles Fox, "Ra, Mingus," *New Statesman*, November 20, 1970; Dominic Gill, "What Zen?" *New Statesman*, November 13, 1970, 654; Bill Luckin, "Sun Ra," *Times Educational Supplement*, November 20, 1970; Michael Walters, "Sun Ra," *Sounds*, November 21, 1970; Brian Blevins, "Sun Ra," *Record Retailer*, November 25, 1970; Michael Walters, "SUN RA and Infinity Music," *Sounds*, December 5, 1970; Jerry Palmer, "Intergalactic Sun Ra," *Friends*, December 11, 1970; Brian Priestley, "Sun Ra and the Intergalactic Research Arkestra," *Jazz Monthly*, January 1971; and Michael Chanan, "Contemporary," *Music and Musicians*, February 1971.

Barry McRae reviewed a second, smaller gig on November 12: "Sun Ra at Seymour Hall," *Jazz Journal*, January 1971. For accounts of some of the European dates, see Robert Butheau, "Sun Ra, une nouvelle syntaxe pour le free-jazz," *Le Progrès* [Lyon], November 14, 1970; Daniel Caux, "Le triomphe de Sun Ra," *Combat*, October 15, 1970; D. C., "Sun Ra à Nanterre," *Le Monde*, October 11, 1970; R. R. K., "Sensationeel Concert Sun Ra in Paradiso," *Volkskrant* [Amsterdam], November 19, 1970; Wilfried W. Bruchhäuser, "An Vielfalt war gewiss kein

‘Music Now’ has done, this had the sort of result nearest to what we’d always hoped for, in terms of advancing the artist’s career, and putting him on the map.”¹¹⁹ Moreover, it enacted the kind of mixed avant-garde he had been after for many years, and in a very visible way. Schonfield was explicit about what he took to be the social value of his productions, writing in the back of the Sun Ra program, “Music Now rejects the racial discrimination of other serious music organizations, and considers black music an essential part of its activities.”¹²⁰ In an interview that ran in *The Guardian* a few weeks later, Schonfield clarified his position as follows: “On the whole, the union regards all black music as ‘popular,’ which is why we have had to fix a reciprocal exchange for such a serious concert artist as Sun Ra. When we presented *Musica Electronica [sic] Viva*, . . . there was no question of an exchange.”¹²¹

And yet, the Elizabeth Hall concert and the European tour as a whole were a financial disaster for Music Now. In order to make back the Arkestra’s fee for the London gig, they needed to sell more seats, but no larger halls were available.¹²² More importantly, however, Music Now fronted the payments to Sun Ra’s travel agent, with the understanding that the composer would settle up from the road in installments paid out of his concert fees. It never happened. The Arkestra returned to the US and Music Now was left holding the bag (and nearly £3,000 in debt). The Executive Committee kept the creditors at bay for a little while with no-interest loans, but it would take several years before the organization was back on its feet. For his part, Sun Ra was sympathetic, if somewhat obtuse, in his replies to Schonfield’s entreaties: “Stop being emotional and afraid,” he told him a few weeks later. “You did the best thing you ever did in causing the best thing that ever happened to England to happen and time will prove that you did.”¹²³ Although Ra was adamant that he would clear his debts with Music Now (“A little

Mangel,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, November 10, 1970; Wolfgang Krasse, “Himmel und Erde,” *Der Abend*, November 9, 1970; Kurt Homolka, “Wie Menschen hauchen und zwitschern,” *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, October 20, 1970; Helga Böhmer, “Stockhausens ‘Mantra,’” *Südwest Presse*, October 19, 1970; Wolfgang Bürde, “Forum leidenschaftlicher Anteilnahme,” *Tagespiegel*, October 21, 1970; “Neues aus dem All,” *Spandauer Volksblatt*, September 29, 1970; and Bengt Hambraeus, “Rapport från Donaueschingen oktober 1970,” *Nutida Musik* [Sweden] 3 (1970–71).

119. Richard Leigh, “MUSIC NOW: An Interview with Victor Schonfield,” *Musics* 5 (December 1975–January 1976): 4–10, at 4.

120. Sun Ra Intergalactic Research Arkestra program, November 9, 1970, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, VSA.

121. Atkins, untitled interview with Victor Schonfield.

122. The details of the following narrative come from “Big Sun Ra Loss,” *Melody Maker*, December 5, 1970; Victor Schonfield to Lord Goodman, March 17, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; John Cruft to Lord Goodman, March 26, 1971, ACGB 50/1399; Victor Schonfield to Annette Morreau, ACGB 50/1399; Victor Schonfield to Acting Chairman, Music Panel, January 17, 1973, ACGB 1/1970; and “Sale of Paintings at Christie’s,” *GLAA Newsletter*, June 1973, ACGB 1/2960.

123. Sun Ra to Victor Schonfield, December 15, 1970, VSA.

touch of the Ra technique can get things in order again”), that never happened either.¹²⁴

How could Schonfield dig his way out of this financial hole? One important part of the plan was a concert by Cage himself. When Music Now presented the composer and Tudor in May 1972 at the Royal Albert Hall, it was the pair’s first appearance in the country since 1966, when they served as house band for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company during a two-week London run and presented a few smallish recitals on the side. Schonfield was counting on a windfall in ticket sales, so he booked the 5,000-seat Royal Albert Hall and secured a fair bit of advanced publicity.¹²⁵ In *Microphone*, a small zine dedicated equally to experimental and improvised music in London, Cage provided his own preview of the concert by retelling the story of the mushroom haiku that he had by then been crafting for many years. The point of the story is that Cage thought it possible to remove syntax from the English language, following the example of Japanese ideograms in Bashō’s poetry. Stripping away syntax would allow another kind of meaning to emerge, one based on tone, materiality, and performance.

This “demilitarization” of language was one of Cage’s prevailing concerns at the time, exemplified in *Mureau*, the piece he intended to perform simultaneously with Tudor’s *Rainforest II*.¹²⁶ To create this text, Cage subjected all of Thoreau’s references to music and sound in the *Journals* to chance operations, which determined their order and also their typesetting on the page. He composed the piece around the same time he was working on *Sixty-two Mesostics re Merce Cunningham*. For his remarks on *Mureau* in *Microphone*, he borrowed words from his prefatory comments on the *Mesostics*, indicating that he conceived the two pieces along similar lines. He wrote, “Speaking without syntax, we notice that cadence . . . takes over. . . . Therefore we tried whispering. Encouraged we began to chant. . . . To raise language’s temperature we not only remove syntax: we give each letter undivided attention setting it in unique face and size: *to read* becomes the verb *to sing*.”¹²⁷ In other words, although these texts were visually striking, they were intended to be performed off the page, as improvisations. “The chants to be heard in London on the 22nd of this month . . . are improvised on fixed texts. These texts are my most recent attempts to free English from syntax.”¹²⁸ Cage and Tudor performed *Mureau/Rainforest II* in Bremen

124. Sun Ra to Victor Schonfield, June 1971, VSA.

125. Previews and notices appeared in *Studio International*, *Records and Recording*, *Music and Musicians*, *Dance and Dancers*, and *Melody Maker*, while longer articles and interviews appeared in *Evening Standard*, *Time Out*, *The Times*, and *Guardian*.

126. See Cage, *A Year from Monday: New Lectures and Writings*, 7; and idem, *M: Writings ‘67–’72*, 160. For a good discussion of Cage’s poetry, see Perloff, *Poetry On & Off the Page: Essays for Emergent Occasions*, 290–308.

127. John Cage, untitled, *Microphone*, May 1972.

128. Ibid.

shortly before arriving in London; contributing to the ballyhoo was a live BBC broadcast of that event on May 8.¹²⁹

Cage's war on syntax dovetailed with other ongoing concerns of the time, namely, revolution in general and Mao's China in particular. The latter subject seemed to come up a lot. On a late-night television program, Cage apparently averred that one reason China developed from a peasant backwater to the most hopeful country for the future was the lack of syntax in its language.¹³⁰ As he told one journalist in print, "I think a great and beautiful change that has been made in Chinese society was made possible in a large part by the big character posters which must surely have had in China a less oppressive effect than the syntactical statements would have if they were plastered around our cities."¹³¹ The uncredited writer of an *Evening Standard* piece observed that Cage's admiration for China was "unbounded," but that the composer knew that his music would not go over well there. And Cage ended his short contribution to *Microphone* with the following exhortation: "We must find something else to do than art: we are going to China."¹³²

Cage may have been talking about China so much because of the sharp Maoist critique he received upon his arrival; Cardew's widely noted essay "John Cage—Ghost or Monster?" was published in the BBC magazine, *The Listener*, in early May, a few weeks before the Albert Hall concert. The gist of Cardew's critique was that, unlike ten years before and earlier, Cage's music now served the bourgeoisie, and, furthermore, that it represented the world in terms of undifferentiated randomness, an "oppressive chaos resulting from the lack of planning characteristic of a capitalist system in decay."¹³³ According to Cardew, the surface dynamism of his compositions ignored the underlying structure of the economy, and therefore obscured the true causes of the contemporary predicament.¹³⁴ *The Listener* was no small zine, and Cardew's essay was widely read; advance articles in the *Evening Standard*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times* all mentioned the attack ahead of the concert. Another member of AMM, Keith Rowe, launched a blunter assault a few weeks later in the June issue of *Microphone* (in the form of a concert review).¹³⁵ In it, he bristled at Cage's mystical valorization of

129. A notice in *Melody Maker* gives the 8th as the date of broadcast, but the date of the concert was May 5—either *MM* got the date wrong, or the May 8 broadcast was "live from tape," i.e., unedited. One can hear an edit of the original, three-hour Bremen performance on David Tudor and John Cage, *Rainforest II / Mureau*, New World 80540-2, 2000.

130. I have been unable to find precise details on this television appearance, but both Rowe and Chanan mention it in their reviews of the RAH concert.

131. Hugo Cole, "An Easy Composure," interview with John Cage, *Guardian*, May 22, 1972.

132. Cage, untitled, *Microphone*, May 1972.

133. Cornelius Cardew, "John Cage—Ghost or Monster?" *The Listener*, May 4, 1972, 597.

134. For a fuller discussion, see Joseph, "HPSCHD—Ghost Or Monster?"

135. Keith Rowe, "Cage Review," *Microphone*, June 1972.

the power of the Chinese language to modernize that society, rather than the hard work of the peasants over the previous thirty years. He also noted that Cage's music mixed the unnecessary and the frivolous, the grand and the idiotic. Rowe was not sanguine about Cage's prospects: "The outlook for Cage and the Imperialist Class reeling from one defeat to another both economically and politically is very dark."¹³⁶

Cage had remarked to a British journalist, "I like an auditorium where the audience do not sit tight together in straight rows, but are free to move around, and to leave without embarrassment."¹³⁷ He must have loved the facilities at the Albert Hall, then, because the venue was only about half full on the night of the concert. Schonfield had originally booked the Rainbow Theatre, but when that hall went bankrupt unexpectedly he had to scramble. "The only night [the Albert Hall] was free was a night when everything else was happening in London, too, that was of interest to Cage's audience, an avant-garde audience," Schonfield told Richard Leigh in 1975. "There was a poetry festival, and Boulez conducting a promenade concert of modern music—everything clashed with our concert, and so it just didn't live up to expectations."¹³⁸

For the first half, Cage and Tudor sat on a darkened stage, the former voicing *Mureau* and the latter performing *Rainforest II*. According to press accounts of the event, as well as the recording of the Bremen concert a few weeks prior, we can surmise that Cage's vocalizations were pitched low and slow; the *Daily Telegraph's* Stadlen compared the sound to "two low-voiced drunks, making their way home, to the steady accompaniment of high-pitched Tinnitus . . . and taking all of an hour over it."¹³⁹ Eight loudspeakers carried the fluttering drones of *Rainforest* around the hall, and a lone spotlight illuminated a model of a mushroom with some leaves on it (a reference to the Bashō poem discussed above). After the interval, things got brighter and louder. Fully lit, Cage moved about between four microphones lined up in a row, giving Hugo Cole of the *Guardian* the impression of a wall with battlements.¹⁴⁰ (Each of the mikes was connected to a different loudspeaker.) The composer wailed and moaned his way through selections from the *Mesostics re Merce Cunningham*, vocalizing each stanza with a single breath, while Tudor accompanied him with an untitled piece that, in the unusually

136. Ibid. These attacks by Cardew and Rowe were met with a variety of responses in the *Listener* and *Microphone*, among them one by Prévost—a sign of the disagreements driving AMM apart, as well as the broader rearrangement of the experimental music network in the years after 1972.

137. "Mao Music," *The Times*, May 22, 1972.

138. Leigh, "MUSIC NOW," 5. Schonfield got a minor detail wrong: Boulez conducted the BBC orchestra at the Roundhouse that night (in works by Bussotti, Lutyens, Globokar, Schaffer, and Maxwell Davies, among others); advertisement, *The Times*, May 20, 1972.

139. Peter Stadlen, "Cage's Music Gets Sparse Audience," *Daily Telegraph*, May 23, 1972.

140. Hugo Cole, "Cage/Tudor," *Guardian*, May 23, 1972.

perceptive account of Bernas, “worked on the principle of electronic components producing sound themselves, rather than modifying instruments, as in *Rain Forest*. By bringing different modules into unexpected configurations, he created a remarkably bright texture, ebullient to the point of frenetic.”¹⁴¹ Frenetic indeed: other critics wrote of pain, confusion, aggression, violence, and ferocity. Stanley Sadie left after thirty minutes to preserve his hearing, and Russell Unwin of *Melody Maker* summed up, “If you can take this for 45 minutes you can take anything.”¹⁴² Overall, however, these reviews (with the exception of Stadlen’s) were generally sympathetic, curious, and respectful. But Schonfield not only failed to recuperate his Sun Ra money—he was, like Cage himself during this spring, pushed further into the red.

Tangles Undone

It would take several years to wind down, but 1972 was the beginning of the end for Music Now. Schonfield continued putting on concerts into 1976, including the world premiere of Bryars’s *The Sinking of the Titanic* in December 1972, and further performances by the Scratch Orchestra, AMM, Eddie Prévoist, Derek Bailey, Frank Perry, John Stevens, Richard Reason, Evan Parker, and John Tilbury. He also organized a few events for the younger generation of improvisers and composers: Steve Beresford, John Russell, and Roger Smith (among others) on the one hand, and the Promenade Theatre Orchestra (Hobbs, White, Shrapnel, and Alec Hill), Parsons, Skempton, and Brian Dennis on the other.

But things had changed. The new organizational energy on the improvisation scene was associated with *Musics* magazine (founded in spring 1975) and eventually the London Musicians Collective (founded in early 1976). This “second generation” of improvisers included such figures as Beresford, Russell, David Toop, Colin Wood, Paul Burwell, Peter Cusack, and many others, none of whom struck a strong aesthetic chord with Schonfield. In 1975, he commented, “There’s very little good music being played, as far as I can tell. There are people trying to, who in other circumstances would be capable of it, but something is missing—whether it’s clarity of aim, or something missing in the backgrounds of the people concerned, or that they lack a leader.”¹⁴³ Moreover, older stalwarts like Stevens and Watts had moved on to a new project called Away, which explored a jazz-rock style that did not

141. Richard Bernas, “Mister Natural,” *New Statesman*, May 26, 1972. Bernas had collaborated with Cage in the past, which helps explain the subtlety of his explanation. On Cage’s wails and moans, see Michael Chanan, “An Evening with Cage,” *Observer*, May 28, 1972.

142. Russell Unwin, “Cage/Tudor,” *Melody Maker*, May 27, 1972; Stanley Sadie, “John Cage, David Tudor,” *Times*, May 23, 1972.

143. Leigh, “MUSIC NOW,” 8, 11.

really interest him. And in the post-Cardew, post-Scratch end of the network, the younger composers had largely eschewed spontaneity and indeterminacy in favor of melody, diatonicism, and system-based composition. As Parsons wrote to Schonfield in 1976, in a proposal seemingly at pains to point out the historical caesura taking place, “All their music is clearly structured and fully composed, and does not involve improvisation.”¹⁴⁴ From Schonfield’s perspective, the heterogeneous avant-garde that he had observed for the previous ten years was running out of steam.

In addition to these generational shifts, deep rifts were opening up along ideological axes. “The real culprit was Chairman Mao, who was responsible for breaking up AMM and breaking up the Scratch Orchestra,” Schonfield recalled in 2012.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, Cardew’s attack on Cage was just one drop in a tidal wave of Maoism that broke onto—and broke up—those two ensembles around 1972.¹⁴⁶ While the Scratch Orchestra splintered into smaller subgroups and limped on until about 1974, AMM had contracted into a duo formation of Prévost and Gare by the end of 1972.¹⁴⁷ Cardew gave several reasons for his abandonment of experimental practice: “the exclusiveness of the avant garde, its fragmentation, its indifference to the real situation in the world today, its individualistic outlook, and not least its class character.”¹⁴⁸ In March 1974, Music Now sponsored a concert of Cardew’s new revolutionary piano pieces, as well as his arrangements of proletarian and Chinese revolutionary songs, including Maoist hits like “I Polish My Rifle Clean.” The composer was joined by soprano Jane Manning, a noted contemporary music specialist, as well as Tilbury and People’s Liberation Music, who played behind a giant red banner festooned with portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, and Stalin.¹⁴⁹ In their public rollout the previous summer, PLM stressed that the clear lyrical delivery of Marxist-Leninist content took precedence over the group’s sound: “The music is secondary,”

144. Michael Parsons to Victor Schonfield, January 26, 1976, VSA.

145. Schonfield, interview with the author, April 20, 2012.

146. For details about the Scratch Orchestra’s slow dissolution, see Tilbury, *Cornelius Cardew*.

147. See Prévost, “AMM and the Practice of Self-Invention.”

148. New Works by Cornelius Cardew program, March 5, 1974, Purcell Room, London, VSA. He articulated his developing position in the essay collection *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* (London: Latimer, 1974), which was widely reviewed, and in a few substantial interviews: Adrian Jack, “Cornelius Cardew,” *Music and Musicians*, 23, no. 9 (May 1975): 30–32, 34; Keith Potter, “Some Aspects of a Political Attitude,” *Contact* 10 (Winter 1974–75): 22–26.

149. Because it was Cardew’s first concert in some time, the event was reviewed widely: David Simmons, “When the Avant-Garde Sees the Maoist Light,” *International Herald-Tribune*, March 22, 1974; Steve Lake, “Cornelius Cardew,” *Melody Maker*, March 16, 1974; Rodney Milnes, “Political Ends,” *Times Educational Supplement*, March 15, 1974; Edward Greenfield, “Cardew,” *Guardian*, March 7, 1974; and Paul Griffiths, “Cornelius Cardew,” *The Times*, March 6, 1974.

they told an interviewer.¹⁵⁰ Many observers agreed. When Richard Leigh spoke of their “dreadful songs, really bad imitations of the bad imitations of rock on ‘Hair,’ about the coming revolution,” Schonfield replied, “I think you’re being much too kind to their music.”¹⁵¹

Nonetheless, Schonfield continued to work on Cardew’s behalf, even though the latter was leaving behind improvisational practices in his Marxist-Leninist phase. Among Schonfield’s last events in 1976 was the January concert called “Music of Resistance,” which offered the British premiere of Rzewski’s *Coming Together* and *Attica*, as well as Cardew’s *Thälmann Variations* and some arias from Yin Cheng-Tsung’s revolutionary Peking Opera, *The Red Lantern*. By this stage in the game, however, Schonfield’s energies were depleted. Although he shared many leftist sympathies with his old friend, Schonfield came to the realization that the music was not making an impact, “not even in the arts world, let alone on society at large.”¹⁵² So, as he threw himself into political organizing on behalf of socialism, but within the Labour Party, it was with a certain disillusion. “We have shown people in our best work what human potential is and what human dignity and a happy society can be, and they’ve looked, and even when they’ve understood, as Cage says, they leave the concert hall and carry on as before.”¹⁵³

Schonfield was also undoubtedly worn down by his constant struggles with the Arts Council, who continually seemed to offer guarantees and grants for about 75 percent of the amount that he estimated he would need for an event. Furthermore, for many years Music Now was awarded less than half the annual subsidies received by each of the other three major contemporary music presenters in London—the Park Lane Group, Macnaghten Concerts, and the Music Section of the ICA. Given that these all more or less presented the same kind of material (mainstream contemporary music, complete with composers, works, scores, and performers), the discrepancy with Music Now’s funding seemed ideologically (or aesthetically) motivated.¹⁵⁴

150. Steve Peacock, “The White City Dogma Tracks,” *Sounds*, August 18, 1973; see also John Fordham, “People’s Liberation Music,” *Time Out*, September 14–20, 1973; and Richard Williams, “Up Against the Wall,” *Melody Maker*, August 25, 1973.

151. Leigh, “Music Now,” 10.

152. *Ibid.*

153. *Ibid.* It is also clear that Schonfield, learning on the job, was not as successful at promotion as he wished to be. In a tough-love letter of March 1970, Prévost beseeched his friend to get organized and devote more time to his activities: “It seems utterly pointless from your own personal point of view, to pursue [*sic*] so many activities, so badly organized, with relatively little time, without success, satisfaction, and ‘thanks’ ” (VSA). And yet, as Prévost well knew, Schonfield was a poorly paid semiprofessional who had to work a day job to keep his love-based enterprise afloat.

154. Brief mention should also be made of the Musicians’ Cooperative, which formed in September 1970 and organized concerts and festivals in jazz-identified venues; the organizers included Bailey, Parker, Barry Guy, and others. It is doubtful whether the Coop was a significant drain on funding that might have otherwise gone to Music Now.

True, Schonfield had made some mistakes with Ra and Cage, but the resulting deficits were quite small compared to the sums involved for the other organizations; the Arts Council gave the Park Lane Group a grant of £8,100 to clear a deficit in 1975, and the Macnaghten Concerts had run up debt of £21,000 that year.¹⁵⁵ And although the tours he put together for the Music Improvisation Company (MIC), SME, and Amalgam in the early 1970s were practically a pilot program for the Contemporary Music Network, all of Schonfield's proposals for the "official" Network were stonewalled after 1972, including applications on behalf of AMM, the Sonic Arts Union, Sun Ra (again), and the Instant Composers Pool. (Cardew was awarded a tour in autumn 1974.) Vocal about his disapproval of how the Network was being run, he was not the only one who thought Music Now's absence from the scheme was odd. One music officer from the regions served by the Network protested in 1973 to the chair of the selection committee: "All in all, I do think that Victor has had a rough deal. . . . [T]he committee has said on various occasions that it would like to include some more 'way-out' material, yet we have *never* seriously considered the Music Now list."¹⁵⁶ Eventually, Schonfield's persistence paid off, in the form of larger annual subsidies and a substantial grant in 1975 to cover past debts, but by 1976 he had almost totally transitioned to his political work, and soon signed over Music Now's charitable status (and its name) to the London Musicians Collective, who did not keep up its activities.

There's *Possibly* an Influence

As I hope to have shown with the preceding chronicle, Music Now's concert operations both reflected and conditioned an understanding of the avant-garde in London that was based around the notion of "convergence."

155. Minutes of the 133rd Meeting of the Music Panel of the Arts Council of Great Britain, April 17, 1975, ACGB 51/303. On the Park Lane Group's troubles, see Richard Bernas, "A Route to the Public," *Time Out*, January 16, 1976, 11–13.

156. Kevin Stephens to David Drew, December 13, 1973, VSA. Schonfield sent a report, "Abuses in Contemporary Music Activities of the Arts Council of Great Britain," to an inquiry into the public funding of the arts that was being carried out by the Gulbenkian Foundation in 1975 (copy in VSA). Evan Parker voiced his own criticisms in his letter to the editor, *Musics* 4 (October–November 1975): 2–3; the Arts Council responded with John Cruft, letter to the editor, *Musics* 5 (December 1975–January 1976): 3; and John Cruft, letter to the editor, *Musics* 8 (July 1976): 3. Space doesn't permit a full account of the struggles between the Arts Council and experimental and improvised music communities in the UK, but the tussle continued after Schonfield's exit in 1976; one achievement, however, was Parker's invitation to sit on the Jazz Sub-Committee of the Music Panel in late 1975. Prévost would also sit on that committee later in the decade.

Schonfield summarized this understanding in his 1968 dispatch on the British scene in *Down Beat*:

Attempts to blend jazz and European music have failed to create a music capable of independent life, perhaps because the musical materials and values of the parents did not coincide. Perhaps a new music could result only if jazz and European music had both evolved to a point where they were committed to the same things—in which case the new language would surely exist without anyone trying to bring it about. The jazz musicians and European musicians who united as AMM evolved over two years ago to a point where they speak a common language, call it neither “jazz” nor “European music” but simply “AMM music.”¹⁵⁷

When authoring a profile of the MIC in 1970, Michael Walters encountered a similar interpretation of recent music history, particularly from the electronic musician Hugh Davies, who had been an assistant to Stockhausen in Cologne, and who improvised on electronic instruments of his own design. “Davies detects certain differences in working with the Music Improvisation Company from improvising in a contemporary classical background, but feels that they are not great, and that the group operates ‘at a point where the two different backgrounds meet,’” Walters wrote.¹⁵⁸ Nonetheless, there were differences of opinion among the members of MIC: Parker and Muir still thought of what they did as part of the jazz tradition, while Bailey was adamant about the value of pursuing no tradition, no goals, and no expectations. The point is, however, that this meeting of the worlds was posed as a problematic: it was now a question that needed to be addressed, though often with different answers. And the notion of a mixed avant-garde was not only articulated by those who regarded it as a salutary development. The *Times*’s Miles Kington, for example, agreed that “labels are no longer of any use,” but that did not mean that he was bursting with affection for the SME: “It does not matter that they no longer play jazz; what makes their music difficult to approach is that they offer the listener no alternative point of contact. What must seem wholly absorbing to them seems self-indulgent to the outsider.”¹⁵⁹

The public discourse in the music journals reflected a private discourse that, though more fleeting, communicated just as strongly the feeling that avant-garde traditions were converging. In 1970, Behrman wrote to Schonfield about a hoped-for meeting of traditions: “A number of us in NY are bent

157. Victor Schonfield, “Rule Britannia?” *Down Beat*, July 11, 1968, 32. He articulated a similar sentiment in “Free Jazz in Britain,” *Music Maker*, June 1967, 22. Indeed, AMM’s position at the top (or the front) of this mixed heap is suggested in an undated letter from Prévost to Schonfield (likely dating from 1968), in which the drummer effectively proposed that AMM become employees of Music Now, which would then be devoted primarily to helping AMM find success, thereby lifting the other boats on their rising tide (VSA).

158. Michael Walters, “The Open-Ended Music Company,” *Sounds*, October 24, 1970.

159. Miles Kington, “Trip Beyond Jazz’s Outermost Fringe,” *The Times*, November 30, 1967.

upon the idea of forming a New Native Orchestra. With salutations to Floating Lotus and to Scratch. One idea is to bring black jazz musicians together with white a-g ones, or some among both groups anyway. In the hope that something new might arise.”¹⁶⁰ According to Frederic Rzewski, the ensemble was being planned by Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and members of the Sonic Arts Union and MEV. “It would present itself as a serious alternative to the decadent orchestras now receiving heavy subsidies, and lay claim to a share of these.”¹⁶¹ The Scratch was indeed a model, but he noted that the New Native Orchestra would place more of an emphasis on jazz. Closer to home, Schonfield heard rumors of a more surprising intersection. One year earlier, in advance of the Baden Baden Free Jazz Meeting in December 1969, Berendt reported, “Stockhausen plans to come (and participate???) He works with free musicians now).”¹⁶²

It had come to this: so established was the idea of free improvisation in the avant-garde that even Stockhausen—the big Darmstadt baddie—was rumored to be getting in on it. (The composer’s venture into “intuitive music,” *Aus den sieben Tagen*, had been written in May 1968. Although these pieces—and others like them—seemed to indicate Stockhausen’s interest in the distributed creativity and emergent structure of improvisation, Martin Iddon has shown that “the inclusive ideas of collective composition he put forward were entirely subverted by his actual actions.”)¹⁶³ Hot off his star turn on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper’s*, Stockhausen seemed to be popping up all over the place. In *Rolling Stone*, Robert Greenfield likened him to a kind of cheap German knock-off (“continental substitute”) of Sun Ra in his survey of Europe’s “Space Music Scene.”¹⁶⁴ In a *Melody Maker* interview, Stockhausen weighed in on Ra’s appearance at Donaueschingen, exclaiming, “Every time he touched a key it was like an electrification of the whole public and his co-players. I tell you, this first 20 minutes was first-class avant garde experimental music that you can’t put in any box. . . . Very electrifying. It seemed that all of a sudden a race of other beings had arrived.”¹⁶⁵

Stockhausen was not the only one getting his head blown by Sun Ra and the band. Upon their trip to New York in March 1968, the members of

160. David Behrman to Victor Schonfield, September 17, 1970, VSA.

161. Frederic Rzewski to Victor Schonfield, August 27, 1970, VSA.

162. Berendt to Schonfield, November 20, 1969, VSA.

163. Martin Iddon, “The Haus That Karlheinz Built: Composition, Authority, and Control at the 1968 Darmstadt Ferienkurse,” *Musical Quarterly* 87 (2004):87–118, at 88.

164. Robert Greenfield, “Sun Ra & Europe’s Space Music Scene,” *Rolling Stone*, January 7, 1971, 17–18. The other space travelers included Pink Floyd, SME, Keith Tippett’s Centipede, and the Scratch Orchestra.

165. Michael Watts, “Karlheinz Stockhausen” (interview), *Melody Maker*, March 4, 1972. He was much less enthusiastic about the “saloon wishy-washy music” that followed. For Stockhausen on rock, see also Steve Lake and Karl Dallas, “Stockhausen—Free As a Bird,” *Melody Maker*, April 24, 1976.

AMM visited Slug's Saloon on the Lower East Side to catch the Arkestra in action. Lou Gare later recalled, "After the music a beautiful feeling of quiet receptivity pervaded the room, such as we find in the silences of an AMM session."¹⁶⁶ Cardew went along that night, but it was not until the Arkestra came to London in 1971 that he commented publicly on them. This time, however, it was the Scratch Orchestra that was getting compared to the Solar Arkestra:

"We're much more unpredictable than Sun Ra. Sun Ra works towards an ideal, one particular sound . . . and I certainly admire him the most of those in jazz. The greatest respect." He pauses for a moment. "There's *possibly* an influence. Like Sun Ra, our music has come out of a desperate situation. Modern music (e.g. Cage, Stockhausen) has become precious, isolated, more restricted. And it had to be changed."¹⁶⁷

If comparing the isolation of the avant-garde to the desperation of black radicalism in the days of COINTELPRO (the FBI's counterintelligence program) strikes one as a bit oblivious, consider *New Statesman* critic Dominic Gill's rather more racist description of the Arkestra: "A kind of Negro Scratch Orchestra in costume."¹⁶⁸

I have discussed how the British reception of Cage, the yin to Stockhausen's yang, leaned toward free improvisation.¹⁶⁹ Some improvisers held the opinion that their music not only converged with Euro-American avant-garde, but perhaps even surpassed it. In the underground newspaper *International Times*, Parker told Schonfield:

There has to be a music that is post-Cage, and of course I'm committed to the idea that group improvisation will be that music. This involves to some extent a reappraisal of Cage's idea that sounds are just sounds. Instead we act in a system of sound relationships which we have selected (however intuitively and spontaneously) for qualities which transcend the sum of the parts, the individual sound components.¹⁷⁰

Parker may have developed these ideas about a post-Cage music when he guested with the post-Cage Americans in MEV and the Sonic Arts Group during their London sojourns in 1968 and 1969.¹⁷¹ In any case, the ideas

166. Lou Gare, "Memories of a Sun Ra Session," unpublished manuscript, VSA.

167. Robert Greenfield, "Sun Ra & Europe's Space Music Scene," *Rolling Stone*, January 7, 1971, 17–18.

168. Dominic Gill, "What Zen?" *New Statesman*, November 13, 1970, 654.

169. I have borrowed this yin-yang formulation from Lake and Dallas, "Prophet, Seers, and Sages," *Melody Maker*, April 24, 1976.

170. Victor Schonfield, "Total Improvisation," *International Times*, March 28, 1969, 15.

171. According to Schonfield's concert notes, Parker appeared with MEV at the psychedelic club Middle Earth, along with Hugh Davies, in May 1968; the gig was tacked on to MEV's Sounds of Discovery appearance so that they could afford to make the trip to London. The logistics are discussed in an undated letter from Allan Bryant to Victor Schonfield, VSA.

were widely held. Schonfield recalled later that he understood the relationship between Cagean experimentalism and collective free improvisation in the terms of a somewhat muted nationalism. “I thought it axiomatic,” he said. “John Cage made history, Ornette Coleman made history. It wasn’t [like I thought,] ‘Now we’re taking over,’ but just it so happens that this is the new work that’s being done in the field, and it deserves equal respect.”¹⁷² This comment suggests that even though many different adventurous musics were bumping up against each other in London during this period, there was, for some prominent figures on the scene, a strong sense of historicity and chronological progression: it was an avant-garde, after all. But the issue of influence, *pace* Cardew, is both more and less complicated than it might appear. Rather than skeptically probing the musical tea leaves in search of an interior, “hidden nucleus” of possible influence among these artists, we might better follow Foucault’s advice, and “go towards its external conditions of possibility, towards what gives rise to the aleatory series of these events, and fixes its limits.”¹⁷³ The present article is an attempt to provide such an account.

Cutting the Network

One reason that this kind of heterogeneous avant-garde could emerge in the UK has to do with the racial homogeneity of its participants. The color line there was sonic, to turn a phrase of Jennifer Stoeber-Ackerman, but it usually was not phenotypical.¹⁷⁴ Except for his African American guests, Schonfield worked with white men, including those who played a jazz-derived kind of free improvisation (Prévost, Gare, Rowe, Parker, Bailey, Stevens, Watts). It was easier to keep post-Cage and post-Coleman free musics in the same conversation when this convergence took place on a plane of whiteness—which takes nothing away from Schonfield’s rightfully proud claims about rejecting the racial discrimination of other serious music presenters.¹⁷⁵

Where were the women? Gender difference is present here and there in these stories, but it is muted. Although the Sonic Arts Group contained four women and four men when they came to London in 1969, one would not learn that from the reviews, which uniformly failed to mention any of

Parker states that he played with the SAG in a letter to Keith Winter, July 28, 1969, ACGB 1/1970, but I have not been able to confirm this claim.

172. Schonfield, interview with the author, 20 April 2012.

173. Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse,” trans. Ian McLeod, in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 67.

174. Jennifer Stoeber-Ackerman, “Splicing the Sonic Color-Line: Tony Schwartz Remixes Postwar *Nueva York*,” *Social Text* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 59–85.

175. For more on whiteness in British jazz, see McKay, *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain*, 87–128.

the women except Mary Ashley (whose work on the program was unavoidable).¹⁷⁶ Critics did, however, take note (at times leeringly) of the young, good-looking, and fashionably dressed women who sang in *Purposeful Lady Slow Afternoon*. If Steve Reich was correct that Nyman's *Experimental Music* truly captured the "real thrust" of this music scene, then the book's five passing references to women (two in photo captions) suggest an essentially androcentric collection of men and events. One notable exception could be found in the Scratch Orchestra, which, according to Virginia Anderson, was composed of 30 percent women. But even there, gender difference was apparently marked; as Carole Finer told Kathryn Pisaro in 1996, "Chairman Mao was the chairman and if you were incorrect you were told. Particularly women and particularly artists."¹⁷⁷

I raise the issue of gender to make the point that erasing (or blurring) the boundary line between the presentation of classical- and jazz-derived improvisation does not mean that other lines of difference similarly faded away. Indeed, the convergence of these two music worlds took place in a greater ecology that offered just as many examples of divergence, reterritorialization, limitation, and friction between the emerging arrangement and other repeating patterns of culture. For example, until the founding of PLM, rock or any other popular music is largely absent from this particular narrative. Although he had been asked to serve as their manager at one point, Schonfield could not bring himself to enjoy the Soft Machine; Brian Eno participated in the Portsmouth Sinfonia, and Jamie Muir went on from the MIC to play percussion for a time with King Crimson. But that was about all. Although Henry Cow invited Bailey, Toop, Burwell, Lol Coxhill, and the Scratch Orchestra to perform with them in spring 1973, that band never registered in the Schonfield universe.¹⁷⁸ The aesthetic gulf between Music Now's mixed avant-garde and rock experimentalism was further recapitulated in their respective attitudes toward recording technology. While the Soft Machine and Henry Cow seized on the compositional possibilities of magnetic tape (in the latter case, used to augment and extend free improvisation), Schonfield's idea of proper recording always came back to the recreation of the live concert scenario. Of Bob Woolford, the important go-to engineer during these years, Schonfield comments, "He pioneered that whole concept of the recording engineer being in the place of the audience, instead of being somebody in a control room with all sorts of directionality and zooming and separation and headphones. He was the opposite: he was a master of recording with two microphones on the same stand."¹⁷⁹ This mimetic notion of

176. For instance, Jill Phillips described the Sonic Arts Group as "a highly professional and dedicated unit of composer/performers and their wives." Jill Phillips, "New Music," *Musical Times*, July 1969.

177. Carole Finer, quoted in Pisaro, "Music from Scratch," 84.

178. Various Henry Cow Explorer's Club programs and flyers in the author's possession.

179. Schonfield, interview with the author, April 20, 2012.

recording—strictly non-rock and pre-*Bitches Brew*—was held in common with other figures like Cardew and Bailey.¹⁸⁰

The other significant asymmetry that limited the mixed avant-garde during these years was the problem of government funding for these new configurations of musical labor, particularly those involving free improvisation. The Arts Council struggled to come to terms with the shifting ground of avant-garde musical production between the late 1960s and late 1970s. If there was no composer, there was no composition, and if there was no composition, how could one award a commission for a new work? The music assistant Keith Winter was the furthest in front of his colleagues, writing as early as May 1969 about free improvisation in the jazz context: “The music has certainly freed itself from all limitations of the parent artform and now exists in a limbo; its nearest neighbour, I would say, is avant garde European [*sic*] music.”¹⁸¹ His successor, Morreau, shared his sense of improvisation. She enthused about the SME and MIC to a colleague in the Scottish Arts Council in 1970:

They represent by far and away the most way-out but talented groups in the avant-garde, whether jazz or serious, today. You will see if you go to their concerts that really the term ‘jazz’ is meaningless for their type of music, and appreciate the problems which these groups face in being totally acceptable neither to jazz audiences, nor ‘serious avant-garde’ audiences because of their luckless association with the jazz world.¹⁸²

But despite these individual enthusiasms, as we have seen, the Arts Council failed to support significantly the mixed improvisational avant-garde in the 1970s.

Supporters and practitioners continued to pressure the institution, however. Upon his appointment to the Jazz Sub-Committee in late 1975, Parker submitted a report on the working conditions of “a growing number of musicians for whom improvisation, freedom and ‘different’ sets of working procedures form the basis of their music.”¹⁸³ (It was accompanied by further reports and appeals by Beresford and Toop.) Following a letter to the editor of *Musics* that alleged a persistent lack of attention for the music on the Council’s part, its Music Director wrote a reply that indicated his familiarity with the emerging aesthetic: “‘Free music’ is an area which touches on both jazz and ‘straight’ contemporary music. In recent years the use of improvisation in contemporary

180. See Cornelius Cardew, “Towards an Ethic of Improvisation” (1971), in *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*, ed. Edwin Prévost, 125–33 (Matching Tye, Essex: Copula, 2006); Edward Greenfield, “Shoot the Pianist, Not the Composer,” *Guardian*, August 5, 1967; and Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music* (New York: Da Capo, 1993).

181. Keith Winter, “Concerts of Avant Garde Music 9 and 10 May 1969, Edinburgh College of Art,” report for Arts Council, May 16, 1969, ACGB 50/740.

182. Annette Morreau to Maggie Gibbs, November 3, 1970, ACGB 50/740.

183. Evan Parker, untitled report, June 1976, ACGB 51/91.

music has greatly increased, and the distinctions between improvised ‘free jazz’ and improvised ‘straight’ music has largely disappeared.”¹⁸⁴ Yet growing awareness about a mixed avant-garde did not necessarily lead to funding initiatives. As Cruft explained to Parker in a private letter, “There is a well-founded case for commissioning composers to write pieces, but comparatively little interest in improvisation outside the familiar jazz contexts.”¹⁸⁵

These exchanges over the years reveal that there were real limits to how far the mixed avant-garde could be established. Imagine the scene, for example, described in the following record of the General Sub-Committee of the Music Panel in March 1972 (they are discussing Prévost’s *Spirals*): “Miss [Daphne] Oram, Mr. [Richard Rodney] Bennett and Mr. [David] Drew had studied Mr. Prévost’s ‘score’ and all reported negatively. Miss Oram suggested that policy in relation to awards for such improvisations, based on words rather than notes, should be discussed. It was recommended that no further award be made.”¹⁸⁶ Even this eclectic group—Oram was a pioneer of tape- and film-based electronic music at the Radiophonic Workshop, Bennett composed in jazz and art-music styles, and Drew was a fan of the cabaret modernism of Weill—had neither the aesthetic background nor the institutional protocols to assess improvisation “based on words rather than notes.” Indeed, contrary to Feldman’s claim in this article’s epigraph, the English experimentalists could *not* move out of history—historical patterns were always getting repeated, in funding structures, criticism, labor rules, “expert” judgment, and in the legacies of racial discourse. For example, the constant relegation of the improvisers’ creative practice to second-tier status by institutions like the Musicians’ Union and the Arts Council demonstrates, in the words of George E. Lewis, “the degree to which even European free jazz musicians, with few or no African Americans around, still experience the reception of their art through the modalities of race.”¹⁸⁷

Just as significant as these limitations of race, gender, genre, and institutional recognition, however, were the new asymmetries established in the lasting document of this period, Nyman’s *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (1974), which joined Cage’s *Silence* as an essential—indeed foundational—text for students of this music. Flipping through these pages, one finds a veritable transcript of Music Now concerts, stripped of their status as events and converted into a formalist discussion of musical (anti-)works. Cardew, Wolff, MEV, SAU, AMM, Kosugi, Scratch, Tilbury, Bryars, Hobbs, White—Nyman could write about these figures because Schonfield had presented them. In most cases, the compositions discussed in the book were

184. John Cruft, letter to the editor, *Musics* 8 (July 1976): 3.

185. John Cruft to Evan Parker, July 12, 1976, ACGB 51/91.

186. Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Music Panel, General Sub-Committee, Arts Council of Great Britain, March 28, 1972, ACGB 51/302.

187. George E. Lewis, review of *Northern Sun, Southern Moon* by Mike Hefley, *Current Musicology* no. 78 (Fall 2004): 84.

the exact ones presented in concert during these years—Nyman was employed as a music critic.¹⁸⁸ (He also lived right around the corner from Schonfield, who recalls the writer frequently stopping by to get opinions on drafts.) Rereading *Experimental Music* as a kind of concert chronicle helps to explain the more significant omissions. Pauline Oliveros did not end up in the Sonic Arts Group, and therefore did not visit London in the late 1960s, and therefore did not make it into the book; Charlotte Moorman, on the other hand, was in the country for Harvey Matusow's International Carnival of Experimental Sound at the Roundhouse in August 1972, so she was in (indeed, she seemed to be the only female experimentalist whom Nyman witnessed in the flesh).¹⁸⁹

But what happened to “free music”? Of course Nyman had to discuss AMM—the group included Cardew, to whom Feldman himself had referred in 1967 as the “moral centre” of new music in England.¹⁹⁰ He also touched on MEV, with whom AMM shared a split LP on the 1970 release *Live Electronic Music Improvised*.¹⁹¹ But the SME, MIC, and Bailey are nowhere to be found. My sense is that he had internalized Cage's take on improvisation, and heard the music of these groups as the expression of individual egos. His 1971 article on the Taj Mahal Travellers would seem to support this interpretation, since he explicitly counterposes improvisation and discipline in it.¹⁹² In *Experimental Music*, Nyman cautioned that the improvisations of AMM, MEV, or the TMT were not a “mandate for self-indulgence,” and yet he curiously quotes Cardew voicing the opposite sentiment: “[W]hat I've found in AMM that I haven't found before is just the fact that I can go there and play, and play exactly what you want, and that's something I've always wanted to do.”¹⁹³ My point here is not to assert one interpretation of the group as more correct than another, but rather to take confusions like this one as further evidence of the ambivalence of improvisation in this mixed avant-garde. Nyman knew what Cage thought about improvisation, but his experimental musical actors in the UK did not seem to conform to the rule. In this sense, the author was reasserting Cage's opinion on improvisation over and against the discursive and material elaboration of an experimentalism that was more ecumenical in London than in New York.¹⁹⁴

188. For the general outlines of Nyman's journalism during this period, see Pwyll ap Siôn, *Music of Michael Nyman: Texts, Contexts and Intertexts*, 29–58.

189. Andrew Raffo Dewar, “Handmade Sounds: The Sonic Arts Union and American Technoculture,” PhD diss., Wesleyan University, 2009, 52–53. International Carnival of Experimental Sound program, August 1972, The Roundhouse, London.

190. Morton Feldman, “Conversations without Stravinsky,” *London Magazine*, March 1967, 86–94, at 88.

191. MEV/AMM, *Live Electronic Music Improvised*, Mainstream MS/5002, 1970.

192. Nyman, “Taj Mahal Travellers.”

193. Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, 126.

194. The present study contributes to a broader, comparative investigation of heterogeneous avant-garde music scenes; see also Lewis, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and*

“There are several books on experimental music worth writing. . . . Michael Nyman gives us only one of them, but undoubtedly the one which fills the greatest need and best suggests the others,” Schonfield wrote in his thoughtful and positive review, a review that nonetheless chides Nyman for his “failure to get really to grips with the thorny borderline cases—one could also mention improvisation.”¹⁹⁵ But the borderline was home to critically important figures like Parker and Bailey precisely because Nyman was drawing it—so, too, were the Arts Council, the BBC, and some critics. A 1976 survey of avant-garde “Prophets, Seers and Sages” in the *Melody Maker* offers good evidence for the effectiveness of Nyman’s border drawing.¹⁹⁶ One finds there the kind of jumbled salmagundi of musics that we have come to expect: old-school precursors like Satie, Ives, Varèse, Schaeffer, and even Schoenberg are introduced alongside newer figures like Cage, Ligeti, and Cardew. The discussion of minimalism begins with Young, Riley, Reich, and Glass, but continues to the Velvet Underground, Soft Machine, Gong, Mike Oldfield, Faust, and Can. But aside from a brief mention of Hugh Davies and “the Improvisation Music Company” (*sic*), the purveyors of free improvisation in the UK have fallen through the cracks; indeed, the closest we get is Henry Cow, “the world’s only genuine experimental rock band,” who are offered as exemplars of not improvisation but revolutionary ideals. In four short years, we have come a long way from that pre-Nyman assertion in *Time Out* that Cage was “the greatest influence on free music.”¹⁹⁷

Told from the perspective of Schonfield, then, the experimental music network in London would seem to offer a shifting configuration of these borderlines. Examining Music Now’s experimental performance infrastructure in comparison with Nyman’s post-hoc account, one gets less an impression of a parallax view of the same events than a partial eclipse of the Solar Arkestra, Coleman, and the British improvisers. Just because Schonfield established the grounds for considering Sun Ra and the Scratch Orchestra together, or the MIC and MEV as two parts of the same musical movement, does not mean that his suggestion would be taken up by others. These days, however, when “jazz” and “classical” continue to offer such odd fits for an international network of mixed experimental performance, the situation warrants a continuing, persistent search for a useable past—and a historical record of borderlines and their erasure.

American Experimental Music; Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968–1981*; Adlington, *Composing Dissent: Avant-Garde Music in 1960s Amsterdam*; and Feisst, *Der Begriff “Improvisation” in der neuen Musik*.

195. Victor Schonfield, “Monumental Brevity,” review of Nyman, *Experimental Music*, *Studio International*, November 1974, 211–12.

196. Steve Lake and Karl Dallas, “Prophet, Seers and Sages,” *Melody Maker*, April 24, 1976.

197. John Lewis, “So What Do You Want from Your Music—Security?” *Time Out*, December 8–14, 1972, 38–39.

Appendix Music Now Productions

Date	Event/Artist	Location	Notes
May 1968	Sounds of Discovery		
May 18, 1968	Music Now Ensemble, dir. Cornelius Cardew	Royal Institute Galleries, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London	Riley, <i>In C*</i> Young, <i>Death Chant*</i> <i>Spacecraft</i> (improvisation)
May 19, 1968	Musica Electronica Viva*	Royal Institute Galleries, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London	Wolff, <i>Trio II*</i> , <i>Septet*</i> , <i>Edges**</i> , and <i>Play**</i>
May 22, 1968	Music Now Ensemble, dir. Christian Wolff	International Students House, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London	Improvisation
May 23, 1968	AMM (Cardew, Gare, Prévost, Rowe, Hobbs, Wolff)	Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	Improvisation
June 15, 1968	Eddie Prévost's <i>Spirals**</i>	Commonwealth Institute, London	Rowe, Tilbury, Gare, Cardew, Prévost, Hobbs
Jan. 25, 1969	AMM (Cardew, Gare, Hobbs, Prévost, Rowe)	City Hall, Carlisle	Improvisation
Feb. 1969	The Contemporary Pianist		
Feb. 3, 1969	John Tilbury, piano	Purcell Room, London	Stockhausen, <i>Plus-Minus</i> Cardew, <i>February Pieces</i> Webern, <i>Variations op. 27</i> Bryars, <i>Mr. Sunshine</i> Wolff, <i>Tilbury**</i>
Feb. 17, 1969	John Tilbury, piano	Purcell Room, London	Feldman, <i>Piano Piece 1956 for Cymbia</i> Feldman, <i>Intermission V</i> Feldman, <i>Piano Piece 1956</i> Feldman, <i>Piano Piece for Philip Guston</i> Feldman, <i>Intersection III*</i>

Feb. 24, 1969	John Tilbury, piano	Purcell Room, London	Feldman, <i>Piano Piece 1952</i> Cage, <i>Music of Changes</i> * Cardew, <i>Treatise</i> R. Ashley, <i>Purposeful Lady Slow Afternoon</i> * Lucier, <i>Music for Solo Performer</i> *
May 1969	Four concerts		M. Ashley, <i>Soft Centers</i> * Mumma, <i>Hornpipe</i> * Behrman, <i>Questions from the Floor</i> * Lucier, <i>Vespers</i> * Cage, <i>Atlas Eclipticalis</i> Wolff, "Stones"*
May 3, 1969	Sonic Arts Group*	Roundhouse, London	Skempton, <i>Scumbling</i> * Prévost, <i>Silver Pyramid</i> ** Young, String Trio* Jennings, String Quartet* Brecht, "Candle Piece for Radios" Hobbs, <i>Voicepiece</i>
May 4, 1969	Music Now Ensemble, dir. Cardew	Roundhouse, London	Cardew, Paragraph 2, <i>The Great Digest</i> ** Behrman, <i>Runthrough</i> * Lloyd and Mumma, <i>Home</i> * Lucier, <i>Chambers</i> *
May 8, 1969	Sonic Arts Group	Roundhouse, London	R. Ashley, <i>The Wolfman Motor City Review</i> * (program repeated at Dartington College of Arts on May 4, and York University on May 6)

(Continued)

Date	Event/Artist	Location	Notes
May 9, 1969	AMM (Rowe, Prévost, Hobbs, Gare, Cardew)	Roundhouse, London	Improvisation
June 21, 1969	AMM (Rowe, Prévost, Hobbs, Gare, Cardew)	Corn Exchange, Bristol	Improvisation
Aug. 13, 1969	AMM (Hobbs, Prévost, Gare, Rowe)	Artists' Place, London	Improvisation
Aug. 16, 1969	Bryars, Tilbury, Hobbs	Artists' Place, London	Cage, <i>Solo for Piano</i> Cage, WBAI
Aug. 20, 1969	Bryars, Tilbury, Hobbs	Artists' Place, London	Cage, <i>Diary: How to Improve the World</i> Bryars, <i>Private Music</i> Chiari, <i>fuori</i> Hobbs, <i>Untitled Graphic**</i>
Dec. 20, 1969	Scratch Orchestra Nucleus Group (SONG)	The Theatre, Southeast Berkshire College, Bracknell	Young, <i>Composition 1960 No. 7</i> David Jackman, <i>Breath</i> Chant, <i>Private Company Plays Cricket as Drama</i>
Feb. to May, 1970	Music Improvisation Company tour (12 concerts)	London, Leeds, Brighton, Bristol, Norwich, Coventry	Cardew, <i>Tonic Formula</i> Hobbs, <i>Song 1</i> Harris, <i>Actions I and II, 120869</i> Skempton, <i>Waves of Bracknell**</i> and <i>Scrambling</i> Shrapnel, <i>Space Time Music**</i> Parsons, <i>Scratch Music</i>
April 1970	Scratch Orchestra concerts		Improvisation
April 2, 1970	Scratch Orchestra	St. Pancras Town Hall, London	Program devised by Mike Harper Cardew, <i>Great Digest</i> (Paragraph 6)**

April 9, 1970	Scratch Orchestra	International Student House, London	Program devised by Roger Sutherland Wolff, <i>Play</i> Ichiyanagi, <i>Distance</i> Young, <i>Poem</i> Shrapnel, <i>Space-Time Music</i> Von Biel, <i>World II**</i> Program devised by Diane Jackman Program devised by Bryn Harris Young, <i>Death Chant</i> Young, <i>Composition 1960 #7</i> Smalley, <i>Study for Pulses I**</i> Chant, <i>Lyric**</i> Cardew, <i>Treatise</i> Harris, <i>In Memoriam Roger Smalley and Tim Souster**</i> Harris, <i>Sixties Reunion in Seventy</i> Program devised by Howard Skempton
April 16, 1970 April 24, 1970	Scratch Orchestra, Rocks Scratch Orchestra, Roger Smalley Memorial Concert	St. Pancras Town Hall, London St. John the Evangelist, Smith Square, London	
April 30, 1970	Scratch Orchestra, Prizewinners' Concert	St. Pancras Town Hall, London	
Oct. to Nov. 1970	Spontaneous Music Ensemble tour (11 concerts)	Liverpool, Aberdeen, Halifax, Huddersfield, Canterbury, Rutland, Norfolk, Devon, Leicester, Burnley Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	Stevens, <i>The Source**</i>
Nov. 9, 1970	Sun Ra and the Intergalactic Research Arkestra*	Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	Parsons, <i>Mindfulness Occupied with the Body**</i> <i>Improvisation Rite HISTPR41</i>
Nov. 23, 1970	Scratch Orchestra, Pilgrimage from scattered points on the exterior surface of the body to the brain, via the stomach, the heart and the inner ear		Ascough, <i>Rationalization of Realization**</i> Tchaikovsky, <i>1812 Overture</i> Strauss, <i>Blue Danube Waltz</i>

(Continued)

Date	Event/Artist	Location	Notes
April 29, 1971	Sonic Arts Union	American Embassy, London	Riley, <i>In C</i> Mahler, <i>Sixth Symphony</i> Morton and Behrman, <i>Counter-Irritant*</i> Lucier, <i>The Duke of York*</i> Mumma, <i>Hornpipe</i> R Ashley, <i>Fancy Free*</i> Behrman, <i>Playing with Circuits*</i> White, <i>Machine for Tuba and Cello</i> Improvisation Parsons, <i>Orchestra Piece 1971**</i> Skempton, <i>Movement for Orchestra**</i> Hill, <i>Annabelle's London Surprise**</i> Hobbs, <i>Phobairiadad Exercise**</i> Hobbs, <i>55 Endings from 66 Chorale Improvisations in 8 Major Keys**</i> Dennis, <i>Frame 30:30**</i> White, <i>Autumn Countdown Machine**</i> Shrapnel, <i>Elegy**</i> Byrnes, <i>1, 2, 1-2-3-4**</i> See above
May 17, 1971	John White and Cornelius Cardew	Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	
June 10, 1971	AMM (Gare, Prévost, Rowe, Cardew)	Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	
Oct. 15, 1971	Young British Composers	Bluecoat Hall, Liverpool	
Oct. 16, 1971	Young British Composers	College Hall, Royal Manchester College of Music	
Oct. 18, 1971	Young British Composers	Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	
Nov. 7, 1971	Taj Mahal Travellers*	Young Vic Theatre, London	
Nov. 9, 1971	Taj Mahal Travellers	Leicester Polytechnic	
Nov. 11, 1971	Taj Mahal Travellers	College of Art, Newport (Wales)	
Nov. 12, 1971	John Tilbury	Liverpool	Cage, <i>Sonatas and Interludes</i>

Feb. to March 1972	Amalgam tour (11 concerts)	Leicester, Manchester, Oxford, Swansea, Bristol, Chesterfield, Birmingham, Harlow, Rochester, London	Watts, <i>Unity Suite</i> ** Watts, <i>Try Again</i>
March 28, 1972	Music Now ensemble, dir. Wolff	Cecil Sharp House, London	Wolff, <i>Burdocks</i> *
May 22, 1972	John Cage and David Tudor	Royal Albert Hall, London	Cage, <i>Murreau</i> * Tudor, <i>Rainforest II</i> *
June 17, 1972	Scratch Orchestra	Westway Theatre, London	Cage, <i>Messias vs Merce Cunningham</i> *
Oct. 5–11, 1972	Cardew, Scratch Orchestra [?], and Promenade Theatre Orchestra (Hill, Hobbs, Shrapnel, White)	Hente-Onstad Foundation, Oslo, Norway	Tudor, <i>Untitled</i> * Scratch, <i>In the Shadow of Westway</i>
Dec. 11, 1972	Gavin Bryars and Portsmouth Sinfonia, with John Tilbury and Derek Bailey	Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	Bryars, <i>The Squirrel and the Rickety-Rackety Bridge</i> **
March 2, 1973	Eddie Prévošt's <i>Spirals</i> (large ens. version) and AMIM (Prévost and Gare)	Round House, London	Bryars, <i>The Sinking of the Titanic</i> ** Portsmouth Sinf, popular classics Bryars–Dwoskin, <i>Jesus's Blood Never Failed Me Yet</i> (film)** For <i>Spirals</i> : Stevens, drums leader Gare, winds leader Bryars, strings leader White, percussion leader AMM, improvisation
Oct. 27–Nov. 2, 1973	Europalia Festival	Philharmonic Society, Brussels	AMM (Prévost and Gare), Bailey, Perry, SME, Tilbury, Hobbs, White, Sonic Arts Union, Bryars PLM

(Continued)

Appendix continued	Date	Event/Artist	Location	Notes
Dec. 3, 1973	Improvised Music Now 1	Wigmore Hall, London	Derek Bailey Frank Perry	
Dec. 5, 1973	Improvised Music Now 2: Anglo-Dutch Music Days	Collegiate Theatre, London	Instant Composers Pool* (Breuker, H. Bennink, Mengelberg, van Manen, van Regteren Altena, P. Bennink)	
Mar. 5, 1974	New Works by Cornelius Cardew	Purcell Room, London	Cardew (arr.), Hatred In My Heart Sprouts a Hundredfold* Cardew (arr.), Swing Your Swords The Great Road Cardew (arr.), I Polish My Rifle Clean Cardew (arr.), Golden Mountain in Peking The East Is Red Cardew (arr.), Wild Lilies Bloom Red As Flame*	
Jan. 25, 1975	John Stevens & His Dance Orchestra, Spontaneous Music Ensemble, and Spontaneous Music Orchestra	St. John's—Smith Square, London	Cardew, <i>Piano Album 1973</i> (Charge!, Bring the Land a New Life, Red Flag Prelude, Soon!, The Croppy Boy, Father Murphy, Four Principles on Ireland, Long Live Chairman Mao) Cardew (arr.), Statement of May 20th PLM (arr.), Bold Fenian Men PLM (arr.), Peking's Golden Hill PLM (arr.), Internationale Improvisation	

Sept. 27, 1975	More Works by Richard Reason	Wigmore Hall, London	<i>Circus**</i> <i>A Couple of April Fools**</i> <i>Piano Piece</i> <i>Tom Tiger**</i> <i>Four Settings of "Mine"*</i> <i>The Works of Richard Reason**</i> <i>Pass the Parcel*</i> Rzewski, <i>Coming Together/Arctica*</i> Cardew, <i>Thälmann Variations</i> Rzewski, <i>Variations on No Place to Go</i> <i>But Around*</i> Yin Cheng-Tsung, <i>The Red Lantern</i> (excerpts)
Jan. 22, 1976	Music of Resistance	St. Pancras Assembly Rooms, London	
June 1976	Festival of Free Music		
June 15, 1976	Evan Parker Quartet (Parker, Bailey, Lovens, Lytton)	Leicester Palace, London	Improvisation
June 22, 1976	Nine New Improvisers (Coombes, Smith, Wood, Megiddo, Russell, Beresford, Todd, Waiswiz, van Regteren Altena)	Leicester Palace, London	Improvisation
June 29, 1976	Trevor Watts Ensemble (Danachie, Spencer, Cole, Hayton, Cooper, McKenzie, Genockey, Watts)	Leicester Palace, London	Improvisation

* British premiere

** World premiere

Works Cited

Archives

Arts Council of Great Britain, London. Abbreviated ACGB.
 John Cage Collection, Northwestern University Music Library, Evanston, IL.
 Victor Schonfield personal archive, London. Abbreviated VSA.

Press (alphabetical list of journal and newspaper titles cited in the notes, with date ranges of the citations)

- Der Abend*, 1970
Berliner Morgenpost, 1970
Birmingham Evening Mail, 1972
Collusion 3, 1982
Combat, 1970
Contact, 1974–1975
Dagens Nyheter [Stockholm], 1971
Daily Mail, 1967
Daily Telegraph, 1967–1972
Down Beat, 1966–1968
Encounter, 1965
Evening Post [Bristol], 1970
Evening Standard, 1969–1970
Financial Times, 1967–1973
Friends, 1970
GLAA Newsletter, 1973
Guardian, 1967–74
Hampstead and Highgate Express, 1969–1971
Home News [Rutgers University], 1971
International Herald-Tribune, 1974
International Times, 1968–1970
Jazz Journal, 1965–1971
Jazz Monthly, 1965–1971
Jewish Chronicle, 1969
Music and Musicians, 1972–1975
Listener, 1967–1972
London Magazine, 1967
Magazine of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1968
Melos, 1969–1972
Melody Maker, 1965–1976
Microphone, 1972
Le Monde, 1970
Morning Star, 1968
Music and Musicians, 1971–1975
Music Maker, 1967
Musical Opinion, 1969
Musical Times, 1968–1973
Musics, 1975–1976
New Society, 1967–1970
New Statesman, 1970–1972
Nutida Musik [Sweden], 1970–1971
Observer, 1967–1972
Le Progrès [Lyon], 1970
Record Collector, 1971
Record Retailer, 1967–1970
Rolling Stone, 1971
Seven Days, 1971
Spectator, 1968
Sounds, 1970–1973
Spandauer Volksblatt, 1970
Spectator, 1969
St. Galler Tagblatt, 1971
Studio International, 1974
Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 1970
Südwest Presse, 1970
Sunday Mirror, 1967
Sunday Telegraph, 1970
Sunday Times, 1968–1970
Tagesspiegel, 1970
Tempo, 1969
Time Out, 1970–1976
Times (London), 1967–1974
Times Educational Supplement, 1970–1974
Times Literary Supplement, 1964
Village Voice, 1971
Volkskrant [Amsterdam], 1970

Secondary Sources

- Adlington, Robert. *Composing Dissent: Avant-Garde Music in 1960s Amsterdam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Anderson, Virginia. "British Experimental Music: Cornelius Cardew and his Contemporaries." MM thesis, University of Redlands (California), 1983.
- . "British Experimental Music after Nyman." In *Tomorrow Is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*, edited by Benjamin Pickut, 159–79. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014.
- . "'Well, It's a Vertebrate . . .': Performer Choice in Cardew's *Treatise*." *Journal of Musicological Research* 25 (2006): 291–317.
- Bailey, Derek. *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*. New York: Da Capo, 1993. Originally published in 1980.
- Belgrad, Daniel. *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Bryars, Gavin. "Foreword." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Experimental Music*, edited by James Saunders, xiii–xvi (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).
- Cage, John. *A Year from Monday: New Lectures and Writings*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1969.
- . *M: Writings '67-'72*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973.
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism, and Other Articles: With Commentary and Notes*. London: Latimer, 1974.
- . "Towards an Ethic of Improvisation." In *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*, edited by Edwin Prévost, 125–33. Matching Tye, Essex, UK: Copula, 2006. Originally published in 1971.
- Cope, Julian. *Japrock sampler: How the Post-War Japanese Blew Their Minds on Rock 'n' Roll*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.
- Dewar, Andrew Raffo. "Handmade Sounds: The Sonic Arts Union and American Technoculture." PhD diss., Wesleyan University, 2009.
- Drott, Eric. *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968–1981*. California Studies in 20th-Century Music. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Feldman, Morton. "Liner Notes". In *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 3–7. Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 2000. Originally published in 1962.
- Feisst, Sabine. *Der Begriff "Improvisation" in der neuen Musik*. Sinzig: Studio Verlag, 1997.
- . "John Cage and Improvisation: An Unresolved Relationship." In *Musical Improvisation: Art, Education, and Society*. Edited by Gabriel Solis and Bruno Nettle, 38–51. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Order of Discourse." Translated by Ian McLeod. In *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, edited by Robert Young, 48–78. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Iddon, Martin. "The Haus That Karlheinz Built: Composition, Authority, and Control at the 1968 Darmstadt Ferienkurse." *Musical Quarterly* 87 (2004): 87–118.
- Joseph, Branden W. "HPSCHD—Ghost Or Monster?" In *Mainframe Experimentalism: Early Computing and the Foundations of the Digital Arts*, edited by Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn, 147–69. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

- Keister, Jay. "‘The Long Freak Out’: Musique inachevée et folie contre-culturelle dans le rock d’avant-garde des années 1960 et 1970." Translated by Dario Rudy. *Volume! La revue des musiques populaires* 9, no. 2 (2012): 69–90.
- Latour, Bruno. *The Pasteurization of France*. Translated by Alan Sheridan and John Law. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Lewis, George E. "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives." In *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue*, edited by Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble, 131–62. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004. Originally published in 1996.
- . *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- . Review of *Northern Sun, Southern Moon*, by Mike Heffley. *Current Musicology* 78 (Fall 2004): 77–91.
- Marotti, William. "Challenge to Music: The Music Group’s Sonic Politics." In *Tomorrow Is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*, edited by Benjamin Piekut, 109–38. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014.
- McKay, George. *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Miles, Barry. *London Calling: A Countercultural History of London since 1945*. London: Atlantic, 2010.
- Miller, Leta E. "Cage, Cunningham, and Collaborators: The Odyssey of *Variations V*," *Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 545–67.
- Nyman, Michael. *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*. 2nd ed. Music in the 20th Century. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Perloff, Marjorie. *Poetry On & Off the Page: Essays for Emergent Occasions*. Avant-garde and Modernism Studies. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998.
- Piekut, Benjamin. "Actor-Networks in Music History: Clarifications and Critiques," *Twentieth-Century Music* 11 (2014): 191–215.
- . *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits*. California Studies in 20th-Century Music. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Pisaro, Kathryn Gleasman. "Music from Scratch: Cornelius Cardew, Experimental Music and the Scratch Orchestra in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s." PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2001.
- Prévost, Edwin. "AMM and the Practice of Self-Invention." In *No Sound Is Innocent*, 7–29. Matching Tye, Essex, UK: Copula, 1995.
- Pwyll ap Siôn. *The Music of Michael Nyman: Texts, Contexts and Intertexts*. Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.
- Rzewski, Frederic. "Casting Lines to Another Soul: Plan For Spacecraft." In *Nonsequitur: Writings & Lectures on Improvisation, Composition, and Interpretation*, 292–301. Edition Musiktexte 9. Cologne: MusikTexte, 2007.
- Stoever-Ackerman, Jennifer. "Splicing the Sonic Color-Line: Tony Schwartz Remixes Postwar *Nueva York*," *Social Text* 28 (2010): 59–85.
- Szwed, John F. *Space Is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra*. New York: Pantheon, 1997.
- Tilbury, John. *Cornelius Cardew: A Life Unfinished*. Matching Tye, Essex, UK: Copula, 2008.
- Wright, Seymour. "The Group Learning of an Original Creative Practice: 1960s Emergent-AMM," PhD diss., The Open University, 2013.

Discography

- Cage, John, with David Tudor. *Variations IV*, Everest 3132, 1966.
- Coleman, Ornette. *An Evening with Ornette Coleman*, Polydor 623 246/247, 1967.
- . *Town Hall 1962*, ESP-Disk 1006, [1965] 2008.
- Musica Elettronica Viva / AMM. *Live Electronic Music Improvised*, Mainstream MS/5002, 1970.
- Nico. *The Marble Index*, Elektra EKS-74029, 1968.
- Riley, Terry. *In C*, Columbia MS 7178, 1968.
- Spontaneous Music Ensemble, *The Source*, Tangent TNGS 107, 1971.
- Tudor, David, and John Cage. *Rainforest II / Mureau*, New World 80540-2, 2000.
- Various. *Avantgarde*, vol. 1. Deutsche Grammophon 104 988/93, 1968.
- The Velvet Underground. *White Light/White Heat*, Verve V6-5046, 1968.

Abstract

John Cage's brand of experimentalism underwent a transformation when it was imported into the UK in the 1960s. There, in contradiction to the American's well-known preferences, indeterminacy became twisted up with jazz-derived free improvisation, owing to discourse that stressed performer freedom and creativity while downplaying notions of non-intention and discipline. The authors of these commentaries created the discursive conditions for a mingling of avant-garde traditions, but the material conditions owed more to the efforts of Victor Schonfield, whose nonprofit organization, Music Now, acquired Arts Council subsidies on behalf of a stylistically heterogeneous avant-garde that included artists working with both improvisation and indeterminacy. Schonfield also invited important guests from overseas, including Ornette Coleman, Musica Elettronica Viva, the Sonic Arts Union, the Instant Composers Pool, Christian Wolff, Sun Ra, the Taj Mahal Travellers, and, in 1972, John Cage himself. In the greater ecology of experimentalism that Schonfield created, improvisation became a kind of contact zone where musicians came together from a number of directions, among them free jazz, score-based indeterminacy, text-based intuitive music, Fluxus-inspired instruction pieces, and even psychedelic rock freak-outs. Music Now produced over 80 concerts between 1968 and 1976, when the organization folded.

Keywords: experimental music, John Cage, Cornelius Cardew, Sun Ra, jazz

