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METAL MACHINE THEORY

*THE AMINE β RING

"If you tolerate each other, you will tolerate anything"

AN ELECTRONIC EMAIL CONVERSATION

Simon Yuill's contribution, a quote from Raoul Vaneigem seems to perfectly summarize the Evacuation of the Great Learning workshop at the Instal festival in Glasgow.

During the workshop, it proved impossible for the group to arrive at any consensus about what to do or not to do, so the last day it was decided that every proposal would be accepted.

But as someone subsequently pointed out, instead of collectively achieving something radical, we merely reproduced the paltry freedom of expression which capitalist neoliberalism accords to the individual subject, no matter how false this 'freedom' turns out to be.

It seems that capitalism has conditioned our subjectivity to the point where we are no longer willing to give up anything individually, even if this entails a bleak future for everybody.

Following what you said at the interview Against Aesthetics of Noise:

"Noise exacerbates the rift between knowing and feeling by splitting experience, forcing conception against sensation. Some recent philosophers have evinced an interest in subjectless experiences; I am rather more interested in experience-less subjects. Another name for this would be "necrocentrism" (a term coined by neurophilosopher Thomas Metzinger): the objectification of experience would generate self-less subjects that understand themselves to be no-one and no-where. This casts an interesting new light on the possibility of a "communist" subjectivity."

How might we initiate the process of desubjectification that is required in order to organize ourselves for a collective transformation beyond individual needs and desires?

Acknowledging that individual subjectivity is shaped and conditioned down to its innermost recesses by impersonal social structures would be a good start.

Unfortunately, it seems particularly difficult for artists, who have been encouraged to invest in their own individuality, to recognize this. Nothing is more emblematic of the chokehold of neoliberal ideology than the unquestioned conviction that individual self-expression remains a natural reservoir of creative innovation. The cultivation of individuality as a profitable personal resource is an efficient means of enforcing a reactionary conformism. Narcissistic or aesthetic self-cultivation can be usefully contrasted with the sorts of aberrant individuation generated through psychosocial pathologies. (One way of expressing this would be in terms of the theoretical contrast between socially prescribed subjectivation, which is personalizing, de-singularizing, and sociopathic; and socially proscribed subjectivization, which is depersonalizing, singularizing, and communist.) Alienation is a profoundly unfashionable theoretical trope, but it might be time to rehabilitate it. It was summarily dismissed in the wake of postmodernist critiques of authenticity. But alienation arguably has nothing to do with lost authenticity, whether at the individual or species level. It is better conceived as expressing the contradiction between actually existing social pathologies and the absent social ideals that they indicate even as they deny them. The alienated individual can be seen to embody the objective contradiction between social ideal and social pathology. But what is required in order to prevent this from lapsing into a sentimental "outsider" romanticism is the imperative to individuate through conscious depersonalization. What is necessary is to achieve an objective or cognitively enlightened, which is to say, impersonal self-consciousness about one's own pathology; i.e. detached insight into how the pathological nature of one's own personality indexes the objective discrepancy between what exists and what ought to be realized at the collective level. By achieving an objective perspective upon her own pathology, the antisocial individual becomes more social than her well-adjusted, properly integrated peers. This is how individual de-subjectivation becomes the condition for collective subjectivization: one relinquishes the pathological markers of one's psychosocial individuation the better to achieve that depersonalized state in which subjective agency coincides with collective capacity. Subjectivizing depersonalization is the precondition for collectivity. A collective is constituted by a group of individuals committing together to a principle, or set of principles. Only by consciously relinquishing what is pathological (i.e. conventionally social, and therefore anti-social) in one's personality does one become capable of such collective commitment. From this principle or principles, specific objectives can be derived, together with appropriate criteria for discriminating between those proposals that optimize the realization of the central objective and those that inhibit it. The determination of the goal ensures the identification of a method for resolving disagreements. Consensus on matters of principle provides the condition for resolving dissensus over questions of method. Of course, this presupposes a commitment to a certain conception of dialectical rationality, as well as to rational canons of theoretical and practical investigation. This will be too much for some: too "dogmatic", too "authoritarian". An apt response to such protests would be to point out that the alternatives to rationality have hardly proven effective. The revolutionary potential of rationality remains sadly underestimated: reason is routinely castigated as conservative or defamed as "totalitarian". But the transparently reactionary and ideological character of this alignment should be perfectly evident by now, and it might be worth re-considering once more the critical efficacy of pure reason both in theory and in practice.

*dextrorotatory components
synthesis of
sympathomimetic musics

**NOISE & CAPITALISM:
TOWARDS DESUBJECTIFICATION**

Salong, Munich 18-22 January 2011

The extent to which individualism is praised in today's society is a symptom of how capitalism has conditioned our subjectivity: it produces more and more brutally precarious conditions while it provide us with the “freedom” to express our creativity in places like youtube, myspace, facebook...In this regard, the artist is a paradigmatic subject in the sense that s/he is willing to give everything (time, energy, money) for the production and promotion of their work. Like a Human Company selling their own integrity as a commodity in exchange of reputation. As we know, reputation is a very good currency nowadays.

Can we through a collective praxis of noise and improvisation understand better how we are conditioned by capitalism? Can we produce something together beyond the framework of intellectual property and without authorship? Can we evade this reputation economy? During this week, we will discuss these issues while trying things out-whatever these things might be. Let's disregard aesthetic values for a moment and move together towards politics, while usurping the authority of those who feel entitled to in any given situation!

18 January

Our contemporary conditions:

Investing in ourselves/Education as business

Proposed text for discussion:

University Struggles at the End of the Edu-Deal by George Caffentzis

Proposed strategy for disinhibition:

Getting to know the building through improvisation while knowing about different straggles that are going on.

Cruelloculum:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/wallsandspace>

As a response to the implementation of the Bologna-process at the Royal Danish Art Academy, The Movement of November the 26th. roamed through the rooms and hallways of the art academy, using the old castle as material for collective improvisation and protest.

19 January

Building trust while taking risks:

Proposed text for discussion:

Going Fragile by Mattin

Proposed strategy for disinhibition:

Go to an intimate space in the building, or in the city and tell your deep insecurities.

The people listening then try to help each other as sincerely as possible.

20 January

Towards anomaly

Proposed text for discussion:

Genre is Obsolete by Ray Brassier

Proposed strategy for disinhibition:

Going Crazy: act in a space in the most strangest possible way, the opposite way that you would normally do in the given situation. Try to feel as uncomfortable as possible.

21 January

Towards desubjectification

Proposed texts for discussion:

Anonymous Script

Proposed performative strategy for disinhibition:

Non-Concert (see below)

Taken from:

http://www.metamute.org/content/university_struggles_at_the_end_of_the_edu_deal

University Struggles at the End of the Edu-Deal

By George Caffentzis

As students around the world start to take action against national governments' university spending cuts, George Caffentzis sees a plane of struggle developing; one which acts against the crooked deal of high cost education exchanged for life-long precarity

We should not ask for the university to be destroyed, nor for it to be preserved. We should not ask for anything. We should ask ourselves and each other to take control of these universities, collectively, so that education can begin.

- From a flyer found in the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts originally written in the University of California

Since the massive student revolt in France, in 2006, against the Contrat Première Embauché (CPE), and the 'anomalous wave' in Italy in 2008, student protest has mounted in almost every part of the world, suggesting a reprise of the heady days of 1968. It reached a crescendo in the Fall and Winter of 2009 when campus strikes and occupations proliferated from California to Austria, Germany, Croatia, Switzerland and later the UK. The website Tinyurl.com/squatted-universities counted 168 universities (mostly in Europe) where actions took place between 20 October and the end of December 2009. And the surge is far from over. On 4 March 2010, in the US, on the occasion of a nationwide day of action (the first since May 1970) called in defense of public education, one of the co-ordinating organisations listed 64 different campuses that saw some form of protest.¹ On the same day, the South African Students' Congress (SASCO) tried to close down nine universities calling for free university education. The protest at the University of Johannesburg proved to be the most contentious, with the police driving students away with water cannons from a burning barricade.



Image: Cover of *After the Fall: Communiques from Occupied California*, February 2010

At the root of the most recent mobilisations are the budget cuts that governments and academic institutions have implemented in the wake of the Wall Street meltdown and the tuition hikes that have followed from them; up to 32 percent in the University of California system, and similar increases in some British universities. In this light, the new student movement can be seen as the main organised response to the global financial crisis. Indeed, 'We won't pay for your crisis' - the slogan of striking Italian students - has become an international battle cry. But the economic crisis has exacerbated a general dissatisfaction that has deeper sources, stemming from the neoliberal reform of education and the restructuring of production that have taken place over the last three decades, which have affected every aspect of student life throughout the world.²

The End of the Edu-Deal

The most outstanding elements of this restructuring have been the corporatisation of the university systems and the commercialisation of education. 'For profit' universities are still a minority on the academic scene but the 'becoming business' of academe is well advanced especially in the US, where it dates back to the passing of the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, that enabled universities to apply for patents for 'discoveries' made in their labs that companies would have to pay to use. Since then, the restructuring of academe as a money-making venture has proceeded unabated. The opening of

university labs to private enterprise, the selling of knowledge on the world market (through online education and off-shore teaching), the precarisation of academic labour and introduction of constantly rising tuition fees forcing students to plunge ever further into debt, have become standard features of the US academic life, and with regional differences the same trends can now be registered worldwide.

In Europe, the struggle epitomising the new student movement has been against the 'Bologna Process', an EU project that institutes a European Higher Education Area, and promotes the circulation of labour within its territory through the homogenisation and standardisation of schooling programs and degrees. The Bologna Process unabashedly places the university at the service of business. It redefines education as the production of mobile and flexible workers, possessing the skills employers require; it centralises the creation of pedagogical standards, removes control from local actors, and devalues local knowledge and local concerns. Similar developments have been taking place in many university systems in Africa and Asia (like Taiwan, Singapore, Japan) that also are being 'Americanised' and standardised (for example, in Taiwan through the imposition of the Social Science Citation Index to evaluate professors) - so that global corporations can use Indian, Russian, South African or Brazilian, instead of US or EU 'knowledge workers', with the confidence that they are fit for the job.³

It is generally recognised that the commercialisation of the university system has partly been a response to the student struggles and social movements of the '60s and '70s, which marked the end of the education policy that had prevailed in the Keynesian era. As campus after campus, from Berkeley to Berlin, became the hotbed of an anti-authoritarian revolt, dispelling the Keynesian illusion that investment in college education would pay down the line in the form of an increase in the general productivity of work, the ideology of education as preparation to civic life and a public good had to be discarded.⁴

But the new neoliberal regime also represented the end of a class deal. With the elimination of stipends, allowances, and free tuition, the cost of 'education', i.e. the cost of preparing oneself for work, has been imposed squarely on the work-force, in what amounts to a massive wage-cut, that is particularly onerous considering that precarity has become the dominant work relation, and that, like any other commodity, the knowledge 'bought' is quickly devalued by technological innovation. It is also the end of the role of the state as mediator. Students in the corporatised university now confront capital directly, in the crowded classrooms where teachers can hardly match names on the rosters with faces, in the expansion of adjunct teaching and, above all, in the mounting student debt which, by turning students into indentured servants to the banks and/or state, acts as a disciplinary mechanism on student life, also casting a long shadow on their future.

Still, through the 1990s, student enrolment continued to grow across the world under the pressure of an economic restructuring making education a condition for employment. It became a mantra, during the last two decades, from New York to Paris to Nairobi, to claim that with the rise of the 'knowledge society' and information revolution, cost what it may, college education is a 'must' (World Bank 2002). Statistics seemed to confirm the wisdom of climbing the education ladder, pointing to an 83 percent differential in the US between the wages of college graduates and those of workers with high school degrees. But the increase in enrolment and indebtedness must also be read as a form of struggle, a rejection of the restrictions imposed by the subjection of education to the

logic of the market, a hidden form of appropriation, manifesting itself in time through the increase in the numbers of those defaulting on their loan repayments.

**SOLIDARITY WITH STUDENT
OCCUPATIONS WORLDWIDE**



**SABATOGUE ALL SYSTEMS
- OF SOCIAL CONTROL -**

Image: Anarchist student solidarity poster

There is no doubt, in this context, that the global financial crisis of 2008 targets this strategy of resistance, removing, through budget cutbacks, layoffs, and the massification of unemployment, the last remaining guarantees. Certainly the 'edu-deal', that promised higher wages and work satisfaction in exchange for workers and their families taking on the cost for higher education, is dissolving as well. In the crisis capital is reneging on this 'deal', certainly because of the proliferation of defaults and because capitalism today refuses any guarantees, such as the promise of high wages to future knowledge workers.

The university financial crisis (the tuition fee increases, budget cutbacks, furloughs and lay-offs) is directly aimed at eliminating the wage guarantee that formal higher education was supposed to bring and at taming the 'cognitariat'. As in the case of immigrant workers, the attack on the students does not signify that knowledge workers are not needed, but rather that they need to be further disciplined and proletarianised, through an attack on the power they have begun to claim partly because of their position in the process of accumulation.

Student rebellion is therefore deep-seated, with the prospect of debt slavery being compounded by a future of insecurity and a sense of alienation from an institution perceived to be mercenary and

bureaucratic that, into the bargain, produces a commodity subject to rapid devaluation.

Demands or Occupations?

The student movement, however, faces a political problem, most evident in the US and, to a lesser extent, in Europe. The movement has two souls. On the one side, it demands free university education, reviving the dream of publicly financed 'mass scholarship', ostensibly proposing to return to the model of the Keynesian era. On the other, it is in revolt against the university itself, calling for a mass exit from it or aiming to transform the campus into a base for alternative knowledge production that is accessible to those outside its 'walls'.⁵

This dichotomy, which some characterise as a return to the 'reform versus revolution' disputes of the past, has become most visible in the debate sparked off during the University of California strikes last year, over 'demands' versus 'occupations', which at times has taken an acrimonious tone, as these terms have become complex signifiers for hierarchies and identities, differential power relations, and consequences for risk taking.

The contrast is not purely ideological. It is rooted in the contradictions facing every antagonistic movement today. Economic restructuring has fragmented the workforce, deepened divisions and, not least, it has increased the effort and time required for daily reproduction. A student population holding two or three jobs is less prone to organise than its more affluent peers in the '60s.

At the same time there is a sense, among many, that there is nothing more to negotiate, that demands have become superfluous since, for the majority of students, acquiring a certificate is no guarantee for the future which promises simply more precarity and constant self-recycling. Many students realise that capitalism has nothing to offer this generation, that no 'new deal' is possible, even in the metropolitan areas of the world, where most wealth is accumulated. Though there is a widespread temptation to revive it, the Keynesian interest group politics of making demands and 'dealing' is long dead.

Thus the slogan 'occupy everything': occupying buildings being seen as a means of self-empowerment, the creation of spaces that students can control, a break in the flow of work and value through which the university expands its reach, and the production of a 'counter-power' prefigurative of the communalising relations students today want to construct.

It is hard to know how the 'demands/occupation' conflict within the student movement will be resolved. What is certain is that this is a major challenge the movement must overcome in order to increase its power and its capacity to connect with other struggles. This will be a necessary step if the movement is to gain the power to reclaim education from the hands of the academic authorities and the state. As a next step there is presently much discussion about creating 'knowledge commons', in the sense of creating forms of autonomous knowledge production, not finalised or conditioned by the market and open to those outside the campus walls.

Meanwhile, as *Edu-Notes* has recognised,

already the student movement is creating a common of its own in the very process of the struggle. At the speed of light, news of the strikes, rallies, and occupations, have circulated around the world prompting a global electronic tam-tam of exchanged communiqués, slogans, messages of solidarity and support, resulting in an exceptional volume of images, documents, stories.⁶

Yet, the main 'common' the movement will have to construct is the extension of its mobilisation to other workers in the crisis. Key to this construction will be the issue of the debt that is the arch 'anti-common', since it is the transformation of collective surplus that could be used for the liberation of workers into a tool of their enslavement. Abolition of the student debt can be the connective tissue between the movement and the others struggling against foreclosures in the US and the larger movement against sovereign debt internationally.

Acknowledgements

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Footnotes

1 See, <http://defendededucation.org>

2 Edu-Factory Collective, *Towards a Global Autonomous University*, Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2009.

3 See, Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis, Ousseina Alidou, *A Thousand Flowers: Social Struggles Against Structural Adjustment in African Universities*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000, Richard Pithouse, *Asinamali: University Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2006 and Arthur Hou-ming Huang, 'Science as Ideology: SSCI, TSSCI and the Evaluation System of Social Sciences in Taiwan', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Volume 10 2009, Number 2, pp. 282-291.

4 George Caffentzis, 'Throwing Away the Ladder: The Universities in the Crisis', *Zerowork I*, 1975, pp. 128-142.

5 *After the Fall: Communiqués from Occupied California*, 2010, Accessed at www.afterthefallcommuniques.info

Going Fragile
Mattin

Taken from Noise & Capitalism:
http://www.arteleku.net/audiolab/noise_capitalism.pdf

Of course it is not easy to get out of your own material, and it can be painful; there is an insecurity aspect to it. This actually is probably the most experimental level. When do you think real innovation and experimentation are happening? Probably when people are insecure, probably when people are in a situation very new to them and when they are a bit uncertain and afraid. That is where people have to push themselves. People are innovative when they are outside of their warm shit, outside of the familiar and comfortable... I don't know exactly what I want, but I do know exactly what I do not want.

Conversation with Radu Malfatti

Improvised music forces situations into play where musicians push each other into bringing different perspectives to their playing. Improvised music is not progressive in itself, but it invites constant experimentation. When players feel too secure about their approaches, the experimentation risks turning into Mannerism. What I would like to explore here are the moments in which players leave behind a safe zone and expose themselves in the face of the internalised structures of judgment that govern our appreciation of music. These I would call fragile moments.

During the summer of 2003 I had the opportunity to spend time in Vienna researching the political connotations of improvised music. Not that I found a direct relationship, but through conversations, going to concerts and playing with other musicians, I became aware of some of the potentials and limitations that improvisation has in terms of political agency within the space of music production. For this text, I draw from the conversations I had with the trombonist Radu Malfatti as part of my research. While Malfatti's roots are in the chaotic-sounding improvised free jazz of the 1970s, he is currently more focused on ultra quiet and sparse playing. His approach to performance runs against the stagnation that might occur in sustained improvisation. In his quest to avoid stagnation, Malfatti looks for those insecure situations that I mention above situations that can call into question the dominant structures of music appreciation.

How could you anticipate what you might achieve if you do not know what you will find on the way? To be open, receptive and exposed to the dangers of making improvised music, means exposing yourself to unwanted situations that could break the foundations of your own security. As a player you will bring yourself into situations that ask for total demand. No vision of what could happen is able to bring light to that precise moment. Once you are out, there is no way back; you cannot regret what you

have done. You must engage in questioning your security, see it as a constriction. You are aware and scared, as if you were in a dark corridor. Now you are starting to realise that what you thought of as walls existed only in your imagination.

While your senses alert you to danger, you are also going to use them to deal with it. Keep going forward toward what you do not know, to what is questioning your knowledge and your use of it. Keep pushing yourself, knowing that the other players will be pushing you, replacing traces of comfort. This is an unreliable moment, to which no stable definition can be applied. It is subject to all the particularities brought to this moment. The more sensitive you are to them, the more you can work with (or against) them. You are breaking away from previous restrictions that you have become attached to, creating a unique social space, a space that cannot be transported elsewhere. Now you are building different forms of collaboration, scrapping previous modes of generating relations.

Something is happening here, but what is it? It is hard to say, but certainly there is intensity to it. These moments are almost impossible to articulate; they refuse pigeon-holing, and evade easy representation.

We are forced to question the material and social conditions that constitute the improvised moment structures that usually validate improvisation as an established musical genre. Otherwise we risk fetishising 'the moment' and avoid its implications.

When we talk about stagnation and progression there is just one instrument to help us explain what we mean, and this is time, history.

Radu Malfatti

When Radu Malfatti talks about the breaks that some musicians have made from musical orthodoxy, he looks at the ways that they have dealt with these breaks. Some seek to consolidate or re-metabolise the fragile moments they have encountered; others simply return to the safety of their previous practices. Only very few manage to keep searching for fragility; it requires musicians to make multiple breaks from their own traditions. It's easier to develop coherence within one's practice: There is a fine line between being persistent in pursuing a particular line of research, and getting comfortable within one's methods.

When something new happens, people do not like it. It's as simple as that... There is nothing I can do about it.

Radu Malfatti

When something different and hard to place appears within the dichotomy of the new and the old of mainstream values, attention cannot easily be drawn to it.

While nobody might recognise the importance of what you have done, you need to keep your confidence. It is difficult to be alone in working toward something and yet not know where it will take you; something which threatens to destroy your artistic

trajectory, which you have worked so hard to build up. Of course when one uses music, not as a tool for achieving something else (recognition, status...) but in a more aggressively creative way, it is going to produce alienation. But what do you want to do as an improvised musician? Work toward the lowest common denominator, making music which more people can relate to?

Improvised music has the potential to disrupt previous modes of musical production, but it is up to the players to tear them apart in order to find a way in. Opening new fields of permissibility means to go fragile until we destroy the fears that hold us back.

We are not talking here about changing the labour conditions of a majority of people, but, being aware that culture, creativity and communication are becoming the tools of the 'factory without walls', we need to be suspicious of ways in which cultural practices can be exploited by capital. Because of this we must constantly question our motives, our modus operandi and its relation to the conditions that we are embedded in, to avoid recuperation by a system that is going to produce ideological walls for us. To be antagonistic to these conditions means danger and insecurity. To go through them will mean commitment and some of what Benjamin described as the 'Destructive Character':

The destructive character has the consciousness of historical man, whose deepest emotion is an insuperable mistrust of the course of things and a readiness at all times to recognize that everything can go wrong. Therefore the destructive character is reliability itself. The destructive character sees nothing permanent. But for this very reason he sees ways everywhere. Where others encounter walls or mountains, there, too, he sees a way. But because he sees a way everywhere, he has to clear things from it everywhere. Not always by brute force; sometimes by the most refined. No moment can know what the next will bring.

Walter Benjamin, 'The Destructive Character', 1931.

July 2005 London, Anti-Copyright

Genre is Obsolete*

Ray Brassier

Taken from Noise & Capitalism:

http://www.arteleku.net/audiolab/noise_capitalism.pdf

*An earlier version of this article was originally published in Multitudes, No. 28, Spring 2007

`Noise' has become the expedient moniker for a motley array of sonic practices academic, artistic, counter-cultural with little in common besides their perceived recalcitrance with respect to the conventions governing classical and popular musics. `Noise' not only designates the no-man's-land between electro-acoustic investigation, free improvisation, avant-garde experiment, and sound art; more interestingly, it refers to anomalous zones of interference between genres: between post-punk and free jazz; between musique concrète and folk; between stochastic composition and art brut. Yet in being used to categorise all forms of sonic experimentation that ostensibly defy musico-logical classification be they para-musical, anti-musical, or post-musical `noise' has become a generic label for anything deemed to subvert established genre. It is at once a specific sub-genre of musical vanguardism and a name for what refuses to be subsumed by genre. As a result, the functioning of the term `noise' oscillates between that of a proper name and that of a concept; it equivocates between nominal anomaly and conceptual interference. Far from being stymied by such paradox, the more adventurous practitioners of this pseudo-genre have harnessed and transformed this indeterminacy into an enabling condition for work which effectively realises `noise's' subversive pretensions by ruthlessly identifying and pulverising those generic tropes and gestures through which confrontation so quickly atrophies into convention. Two groups are exemplary in this regard: To Live and Shave in L.A., led by assiduous American iconoclast Tom Smith, whose dictum `genre is obsolete' provides the *modus operandi* for a body of work characterised by its fastidious dementia; and Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock, headed by the enigmatic Swiss deviant and `evil Kung-Fu troll'[1] Rudolf Eb.er, whose hallucinatory audiovisual concoctions amplify the long dimmed psychotic potencies of actionism. Significantly, both men disavow the label `noise' as a description of their work explicitly in Smith's case, implicitly in Eb.er's.[2] This is not coincidental; each recognises the debilitating stereotypy engendered by the failure to recognise the paradoxes attendant upon the existence of a genre predicated upon the negation of genre.

[1] See the interview with Smith online at <http://www.toliveandshaveinla.com/bio.htm>

[2] Smith's own description of Eb.er in an interview available at

<http://pragueindustrial.org/interviews/ohne>.

Eb.er is a qualified martial arts instructor.

Like the 'industrial' subculture of the late 1970s which spawned it, the emergence of 'noise' as a recognisable genre during the 1980s entailed a rapid accumulation of stock gestures, slackening the criteria for discriminating between innovation and cliché to the point where experiment threatened to become indistinguishable from platitude.[3] Fastening onto this intellectual slackness, avant-garde aesthetes who advertised their disdain for the perceived vulgarity of the industrial genre voiced a similar aversion toward the formulaic tendencies of its noisy progeny. But in flaunting its artistic credentials, experimental aestheticism ends up resorting to the self-conscious strategies of reflexive distancing which have long since become automatisms of conceptual art practice the knee-jerk reflexivity which academic commentary has consecrated as the privileged guarantor of sophistication. This is the art that 'raises questions' and 'interrogates' while reinforcing the norms of critical consumption. In this regard, noise's lucid anti-aestheticism and its affinity with rock's knowing unselfconsciousness are among its most invigorating aspects. Embracing the analeptic fury of noise's post-punk roots but refusing its coalescence into a catalogue of stock mannerisms, Smith and Eb.er have produced work that marries conceptual stringency and anti-aestheticist bile while rejecting sub-academic cliché as vehemently as hackneyed expressions of alienation. Each implicates delirious lucidity within libidinal derangement 'intellect and libido simultaneously tweaked' allowing analysis and indulgence to interpenetrate.[4]

The sound conjured by To Live and Shave in L.A. is unprecedented: where noise orthodoxy too often identifies sonic extremity with an uninterrupted continuum of distorted screeching, Shave fashion what are ostensibly discrete 'songs' into explosive twisters of writhing sound. On a song like '5 Seconds Off Your Ass', the bracing opener from 1995's demented Vedder, Vedder, Bedwetter [5] (whose 'oafish bluster' Smith has since partly disavowed), the music seethes forth in a relentless cacophonous blare that

[3] For an overview of industrial culture see the Industrial Culture Handbook, Re# 6/7, edited by V. Vale and A. Juno, San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1983. The best insight into the nascent noise scene of the late 1980s and early 1990s is provided by the magazine Bananafish, edited by Seymour Glass, which has only recently ceased publication with issue 18 (2006). An anthology of issues 1-4 was published by Tedium House Publication, San Francisco, in 1994.

[4] Vedder, Vedder, Bedwetter, Fifth Column Records, 1995

[5] <http://www.toliveandshaveinla.com/bio.htm>

seems to mimic the Gestus of noise. Yet barely discernible just beneath its smeared surfaces and saturated textures lies an intricately layered structure coupling scrambled speech, keening oscillator, and disfigured bass shards, intermittently punctuated by mangled pop hooks, absurdly disembodied metallic arpeggios and sporadic electronic roars, over which Smith spews out reams of splenetic invective. Where orthodox noise compresses information, obliterating detail in a torrential deluge, Shave constructs songs around an overwhelming plethora of sonic data, counterweighing noise's form-destroying entropy through a negentropic overload that destroys noise-as-genre and challenges the listener to engage with a surfeit of information. There is always too much rather than too little to hear at once; an excess which invites repeated listens. The aural fascination exerted by the songs is accentuated by Smith's remarkable libretti, featuring verbal conundrums whose allusiveness baffles and delights in equal measure. Typically cross-splicing scenarios from obscure 1970s pornography with Augustan rhetoric, Smith's ravings resist decipherment through a surplus rather than deficit of sense.[6] And just as Shave's sound usurps formlessness by incorporating an unformalizable surplus of sonic material, Smith's words embody a semantic hypertrophy which can only be transmitted by a vocal that mimes the senseless eructations of glossolalia. Refusing to yield to interpretation, his declamation cannot be separated from the sound within which it is nested. Yet it would be a mistake to confuse Shave's refusal to signify and their methodical subtractions from genre for a concession to postmodern polysemia and eclecticism. Far from the agreeable pastiche of a John Barth or an Alfred Schnittke, the proper analogue would be the total materialization of linguistic form exemplified in the 'written matter' of Pierre Guyotat or Iannis Xenakis' stochastic syntheses of musical structure and substance. Indeed, the only banner which Smith is willing to affix to Shave's work is that of what he calls the 'PRE' aesthetic. PRE is 'a negation of the errant supposition that spiffed-up or newly hatched movements supplant others fit for

[6] Smith: 'My libretti are not random, owe nothing to stochastic or aleatory operations, and in their specificity are rigidly fixed to character. My approach is strictly cinematic.' <http://www.toliveandshaveinla.com/bio.htm>

retirement [...] PRE? As in: all possibilities extant, even the disastrous ones.'[7] PRE could be understood as Smith's response to a quandary concerning musical innovation. The imperative to innovate engenders an antinomy for any given genre. Either one keeps repeating the form of innovation; in which case it becomes formulaic and retroactively negates its own novelty. Or one seeks constantly new types of innovation; in which case the challenge consists in identifying novel forms which will not merely reiterate the old. But one must assume an infinite, hence unactualisable set of forms in order not to repeat, and the limits of finite imagination invariably determine the exhaustion of possibility. It is never enough to keep multiplying forms of invention; one must also produce new genres within which to generate new forms. Noise becomes generic as the form of invention which is obliged to substitute the abstract negation of genre for the production of hitherto unknown genres.[8] Generic noise is condemned to reiterate its abstract negation of genre ad infinitum. The results are not necessarily uninteresting. But 'PRE' intimates an alternative paradigm. Since the totality of possibility is a synonym for God, whom we must renounce, the only available (uncompromisingly secular) totality is that of impossibles. If all possibilities are extant, this can only be a totality of impossibles, which harbours as yet unactualised and incommensurable genres. The imperative to actualise impossibles leads not to eclecticism but to an ascesis of perpetual invention which strives to ward off pastiche by forging previously unimaginable links between currently inexistent genres. It is the injunction to produce the conditions for the actualisation of impossibles that staves off regression into generic repetition. In *The Wigmaker in 18th Century Williamsburg* (Menlo Park, 2001), this imperative to actualisation results in a music of unparalleled structural complexity, where each song indexes a sound-world whose density defies abbreviation. Here at last dub, glam-rock, musique concrète and electro-acoustic composition are conjoined in a monstrous but exhilarating hybrid.

[7] <http://www.toliveandshaveinla.com/bio.htm>

[8] Interestingly enough, recent years have seen the emergence of sub-categories within the 'noise' genre: 'harsh'; 'quiet'; 'free'; 'ambient', etc. Noise seems to be in the process of subdividing much as metal did in the 1980s and 1990s ('thrash'; 'speed'; 'black'; 'glam', 'power'; 'doom', etc). Nevertheless, the proliferation of qualifying adjectives within an existing genre is not quite the same as the actualisation of previously inexistent genres. Whether these sub-categories will yield anything truly startling remains to be seen.

Eb.er squarely situates Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock under the aegis of actionism. Their performances are not concerts but rather 'psycho-physical tests and training', where both the testing and the training are directed toward the performer as much as the audience. The rationale is not shock and confrontation but rather discipline and concentration, yoked to an unswerving will to perplex. Eb.er and accomplice Dave Phillips slam their faces at accelerating pace into contact-miked plates of spaghetti. Eb.er pounds and gurgles at a piano pausing only to discharge a shotgun which the audience is relieved to learn is loaded with blanks. A woman with a tube inserted into her anus screams in misery as Eb.er blows into it to the strains of an elegiac string accompaniment. Eb.er struggles arduously to extract sounds from contact-miked fish lying dead upon a table. Three Japanese women are filmed imbibing colour-coded liquids which they then vomit into bowls in orchestrated sequence. Or less ostentatiously, but more perplexing still, Eb.er perches upon a stool sporting a woman's wig and chewing anxiously on an electric cable while a latex-masked Joke Lanz stands guard menacingly beside him, balancing what seems to be an antique wireless on his shoulder while the sound of buzzing flies issues around them. These experiments in contrived absurdity, of brief duration but invariably poised at the tipping point between comedic entertainment and intolerable provocation, have earned Eb.er the opprobrium of 'serious' experimental musicians, who are wont to dismiss them as sensation-mongering stunts. But the extraordinary lengths to which Eb.er is prepared to go in conceiving and executing these 'stunts', not to mention the inordinate difficulties he often generates for himself in doing so, immediately contradict the accusation of facileness. What is being ridiculed here is the facile mysticism of those who would sanctify musical experience more specifically, the experience of listening to 'experimental music', whether composed or improvised as a pure end in itself: this is the specious mystique of aesthetic experience as ethico-political edification. Far from being a mere pretext, the

auditory component of these actions is as important as their visual aspect and provides the raw material for R&G recordings. These are meticulously edited exercises in discontinuous variation which are constantly re-cycled for further performances. As with Shave, R&G's music is characterized by intricately structured sequences of discrete sonic events strung together in diverging series: sighs, gasps, burps, groans, retchings, barks, growls; dogs, roosters, accordions, yodels, strings, pianos, brass; shouts, roars, thuds, shrieks, and sawings; each series punctuated by precisely defined intervals of silence, which are in turn periodically shattered by crescendos of processed wails that morph into choruses of mournful ululation. The sound of gagging is followed by the sound of bludgeoned flesh and cracking bone; gentle acoustic rustlings are cross-stitched with violent blasts of synthesised blare. The perpetual oscillation between cartoon mischief and psychotic malevolence is at once comic and uncanny. Eb.er describes his editing procedure thus:

In Switzerland I used open reels and scalpels, almost surgical. Cutting, cutting, cutting, sewing back. I dig a hole and stay in there with all those blades, tapes, and scissors. I didn't want to mix things up, but to put the knife into the sound of what I did and recorded, inside and outside. What you hear on R&G is real. The action and its body. I just cut the body parts, sew them wrong and cut again in that timing, 15 years of R&G sounds get divided and divided, grow and grow. I grow my sounds 'biologically', like dividing cells. Cut and let grow. [9]

This surgical metastasis finds an echo in Eb.er's paintings: oneiric depictions of psychic abjection in which organic and inorganic forms are subjected to cancerous metamorphoses. A transsexual Mickey Mouse sporting disfigured genitalia sprawls in pornographic abandon. A Japanese schoolgirl with a fissured head and single prominent nipple gapes blankly while a diseased landscape yawns through the hole in her face. Some of these an-organic anomalies are redolent of the sexual dysmorphias

[9] From an interview with Drew Daniel, 'Aktion Time Vision', published in *The Wire* 227, January 2003, pp.21-25.

drawn by Hans Bellmer, but Eb.er's paintings are executed with a technical proficiency worthy of artists like Nigel Cooke. Are these contrived and consequently inauthentic tokens of derangement? Or genuinely psychotic but therefore stereotypical symptoms? Over-familiarity has rendered the iconography of Viennese actionism banal: blood, gore, and sexual transgression are now tawdry staples of entertainment. Ironically, even art brut looks formulaic to us now. But Eb.er's judicious leavening of the freakish with the cartoonish and his disquieting transpositions of psychic distress into infantile slapstick betray a suspicion of stereotype and a lucidity about the ineliminable complicity between wilfulness and compulsion, perversity and pathology. The embrace of such ambiguity is the voluntary risk undertaken by a man acutely aware of the paradoxes attendant upon his own *mot d'ordre*: 'art not crime'. In this regard, Eb.er's approach is the symptom of a tactical rather than psychiatric dilemma: How to produce art that confronts without sham; art that is unequivocal in its refusal to placate or appease? 'We do not care about any behaviours, standards or civilisation. I don't want new ones. Just none. Bye bye.' [10] Such an exemplary refusal is as likely to be chastised for its irresponsibility as to be patronized for its aberrant, pathological character. It abjures moral condemnations of social psychosis as well as pathetic revendications of victimhood. But perhaps a psychotic who is lucid about the degree to which his estrangement is socially manufactured is a more dangerous political animal than any engaged artist or authentic lunatic?

Debates about noise's subversive or 'critical' potency unfold in a cultural domain whose relationship to the capitalist economy is at once transparent and opaque. Socio-economic factors are obviously relevant here; but their role is easier to invoke than to understand precisely and in the absence of detailed socio-economic analyses,

[10] From an interview with Drew Daniel, 'Aktion Time Vision', published in *The Wire* 227, January 2003, pp.21-25.

the stakes of such debates continue to be largely played out in cultural terms. In this regard, the 'noise' genre is undoubtedly a cultural commodity, albeit of a particularly rarefied sort. But so is its theorization. And the familiar gestures that vitiate the radicality of the former are paralleled by the reactionary tropes which sap the critical potency of the latter. Much contemporary critical theory of a vaguely marxisant bent is compromised by conceptual anachronisms whose untruth in the current social context is every bit as politically debilitating as that of the reactionary cultural forms it purports to unmask. Just as 'noise' is neither more nor less inherently subversive than any other commodifiable musical genre, so the categories invoked in order to decipher its political potency cannot be construed as inherently 'critical' while they remain fatally freighted with neo-romantic clichés about the transformative power of aesthetic experience. The invocation of somatic and psychological factors in accounts of the (supposedly) viscerally liberating properties of 'noise' reiterates the privileging of subjective (or inter-subjective) experience in attempts to justify the edificatory virtues of making and listening to experimental music. But neither playing nor listening can continue to be privileged in this way as loci of political subjectivation. The myth of 'experience', whether subjectively or inter-subjectively construed, whether individual or collective, was consecrated by the culture of early bourgeois modernity and continues to loom large in cultural theory.[11] Yet its elevation by idealist philosophers who uphold the primacy of human subjectivity, understood in terms of the interdependency between individual and social consciousness, impedes our understanding of the ways in which the very nature of consciousness is currently being transformed by a culture in which technological operators function as intrinsically determining factors of social being. Technology is now an invasive component of agency. Neurotechnologies, including cognitive enhancers such as modafinil, brain fingerprinting, neural lie-detectors, and nascent brain-computer interfaces, are giving rise to phenotechnologies which will

[11] See for instance Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

eventually usher in the literal manufacturing of consciousness in a way that promises to redraw existing boundaries between personal and collective experience and recast not only extant categories of personal and collective identity, but also those of personal and collective agency. The commodification of experience is not a metaphor played out at the level of ideology and combatable with ideological means, but a concrete neurophysiological reality which can only be confronted with neurobiological resources.[12] Although still ensconced at the cultural rather than neurobiological level, the dissolution of genre prefigures the dissolution of the forms and structure of social existence. If the substantialization of 'experience' is an anachronistic gesture with as little contemporary critical salience as its 'aesthetic' complement, why not jettison it along with the latter and find other ways of articulating whatever critical and political potency music might retain? In this regard, the negation of generic categories exemplified by Shave and Runzelstirn bears a cognitive import which invites us to embrace the eradication of experience as an opportunity to re-fashion the relationship between the social, psychological, and neurobiological factors in the determination of culture. Since experience is a myth, what do we have to lose? To eradicate experience would be to begin to intervene in the sociological determination of neurobiology as well as in the neurobiological determination of culture. Here, the cognitive and cultural import of art cannot be separated from its formal and structural resources: the radicality of the latter must be concomitant with the radicality of the former. Shave and Runzelstirn not only mean something different than other experimental musics; they mean differently. Where noise orthodoxy substantialises its putative negation of genre into an easily digestible sonic stereotype, which simply furnishes a novel experience the hapless but nevertheless entertaining roar of feedback Shave and Runzelstirn construct the sound of generic anomaly a hiatus in what is recognizable as experience by fusing hitherto incommensurable sonic categories in a way that draws attention to the synthetic

[12] For a discussion of the scientific and philosophical ramification of these developments, see Thomas Metzinger, *The Ego Tunnel: The Science of the Mind and the Myth of the Self* (New York: Basic Books, forthcoming 2009). For a vivid fictional dramatization of this predicament, see Scott Bakker's *Neuropath* (Orion Books, 2008).

character of all experience: dub cut-up, free-glam, and electro-acoustic punk for Shave; cartoon musique concrète and slapstick art brut for Runzelstirn. Both groups deploy an analytical delirium which steadfastly refuses the inane clichés of subcultural 'transgression' on one hand, while obviating the stilted mannerisms of academic conceptualism on the other. Neither sounds like 'noise'; yet it is their refusal to substantialise the negation of musical genre that has led them to produce music which sounds like nothing else before it. The abstract negation of genre issues in the sterile orthodoxies of 'noise' as pseudonym for experimental vanguardism, and the result is either the stifling preciousness of officially sanctioned art music or (worse) the dreary machinations of a 'sound art' which merely accentuates and hypostatizes 'listening experience'. But by forcefully short-circuiting incommensurable genres, Shave and Runzelstirn engender the noise of generic anomaly. It is the noise that is not 'noise', the noise of the sui generis, that actualises the disorientating potencies long claimed for 'noise'. [13]

Anti-copyright

[13] Further information about both groups can be found on their respective websites:
<http://www.toliveandshaveinla.com/> and <http://www.artnotcrime.net/r+g/>

Anonymous Script

B. Please could you say what was frightening or violent about this?

Do you mean it was hard to relate to, or that there was something contained between us that concerned you, or that in relation to the context and what had come before?

C. I remember feeling that it seemed like it would be a direct provocation and sometimes that feels scary because of the potential for conflict. But at the same time this feels necessary and honest as a way to break the surface or projected expectations.

I thought quite a lot about what I was projecting onto the situation, and wanted to be conscious of this but also to directly propose, to seize the situation as potential.

B. The idea that we are speaking from our own experiences can be an attempt to challenge an objective viewpoint or a method for claiming an objective viewpoint, depending on what we chose to tell and the method we chose for telling. It does not replace objectivity, it adds to further possible understandings and the quality of experiences of situations.

We are increasing the amount of descriptions of situations that exist, whilst also sometimes speaking over or for others. We can chose to confirm that something happened, we can try to socialise, politicise, make strange, and de-normalise experiences. We are inclined towards different modes of presentation, dependant on what we want to see, what we want to show and how we want to show it.

C. I don't think there are things that we are avoiding, but there are things that we haven't said yet. But maybe we should also acknowledge the things that we automatically keep turning to. So it's ok to return and to repeat, to go back and work through it slowly ... this moment of speaking together and to take that as this performed situation that we're very deliberately stepping into.

A. Coming back to your questions around absence and distance in relation to anonymity. Taken as a strategy it has and is producing some different responses in relation to its purpose and effect. Initially it is important to recognise that it is a choice, but this should not allow it to be dropped as if it were something superficial. In practical terms it is seen as annoying, that it breaks with the conventions of artistic production and authorship to a certain extent. I don't think that remaining anonymous means that one gives up authorship, but I do think it helps to loosen the relations of power, and challenge expectations from both myself and the viewer of what I am able to share.

C. It makes me think about polyamoury and the challenge to have intimate relationships

with more than one person - that attempt to be non-hierarchical and non-exclusive. It takes a lot of untangling of existing norms.

B. I think it is different for different persons, at different times. Women have a particular historical struggle with naming and being recognised for their work, but I think this is why it is interesting to take away one's name and think about this struggle differently, not just as a question of visibility but a question about the basis on which we are individualising the production and sharing knowledge for accumulation of capital. I think it is interesting to not make things so easy.

A. It can also feel like you are eschewing responsibility and not taking a position, not coming as a coherent subject. I think it is funny to think that a name indicates a coherent subject or that we believe in it to this extent. In art practice it has a great value, since self-production and reflectivity is so much part of the work, but also in terms of how works are discussed and information circulated. This circulation of lists of names of artists and what this signifies.

C. I refuse to prove myself.

B. The public context is where we become subjects, dependent on where it is contextualised and interpreted.

C. I really came with the conviction that it is crucial to be able to speak and act from where you are situated, with those that you are with, in your time and over time, however you see your activities. And to act really specifically from there and to articulate this transversally on a daily basis, with both what you have in common and where you fall apart. Whilst recognising the weakness and hopelessness that life as a subject of capital and patriarchy engenders, and how the oscillation between the positive, negative and confused can create a situation of strength.

It is operating at different scales, or, rather, seeing all the different moments of subjugation as constitutively linked.

B. How do you trust your own stories?

A. In the process of consciousness raising, a person tells their story and how they experience the present, for example - revealing the complex positions that constitute any given situation and the social actors in it. This process allows the listener to hear multiple positions and transform the situation as an active discursive space that acknowledges multiple readings, and the possibility to express different things at different times.

What you say and the way you say it being determined by the possibility of a place in which to say something, and or engaging with the trouble of not being able to express something. Since it should be considered that not all participants would speak or express

personal stories as such.

C. I want our being seen to be near to each other to be generative, and to show an alignment with you, but not being in one place over another, not affecting people and things adversely but accepting that sometimes it does.

I want this image to give force and excitement to others.

I want it to look strange, to allow for a questioning of all previous norms, tastes, prejudice and attractions.

B. How could you ensure this, and how do you know what is not reassuring?

A. If you don't have anything to say, nor do you want to say something about yourself, why do you take up space and time?

C. I do not want to cohere myself

I still want to have an intersubjective exchange, but in the given conditions.

A. Where can we meet?

B. We want to interrogate the modernist subject?

A. The subject appears in the scene that is presented.

B. Katarina invited to embark on a project with her at this space Goloss, some time ago. She has this space for one year, and would like it to be a space for artists to experiment. I have wondered for some time what it feels like to start a space and I have started some temporary spaces, but nothing as substantial as this one. In my recent exchanges with Katarina we began to talk about how to invite others into this situation, about the context of opening a space in Copenhagen, and what has happened in the space so far. I have also been continuing conversations with others, and told them about this invitation, and talked about how to think about and organise this invitation with existing plans.

The Danish Arts council has provided her with some very basic core funding, that pays the rent and electricity bills. Other than that she has to fundraise.

A. I feel like I am giving evidence in a frame I don't understand.

B. Are representation and aesthetic conventions replacing the possibility for contact and communication with you?

C. I can say things because I am hidden

B. Who gets to be, to stay anonymous? who is made anonymous?

C. I want to understand why our friends and lovers have consistently forgotten to include sexuality and domestic labour in their analysis of capitalism.

But I do not subscribe to the logic of authorship and ownership that artistic production favours.

I have been thinking about the dialectic of desire, without resolution, with its parallel and non-intersecting tendencies of scarcity, privacy, consumption, frustration and passivity and on the other hand, possibility, the only possibility to go on or change.

B. Remove one kind of pleasure and replace with another?

C. I like this, the domestic as a private perverse place...where fantasies get destroyed the minute someone else enters. It makes me nervous, I am nervous, but it has been very productive to think about this situation the invitation to do something, it has produced a lot of desires, it has made me want to do things, to suggest things or try things. I want to acknowledge and socialize these desires, to see these desires as sensitive to a general concern, but still acknowledge the realm of private fantasy and projection.

B. No I do want to be touched by you, Yes I do want to be touched by you.

A. Could it be particular combination, a field of interests rather than belonging to one person. An exploration of a site of production rather than a plan.

B. Who knows what will happen on this street today? What happens when we don't have this to rely on.

C. You go crazy.

A. But you can trust your own stories.

C. At street level I feel more affected by what is happening on this street.

A. Is self-reflexivity a strategy intrinsic and defining the process of making presentations?

B. How do we activate publicness - a concrete voice?

How does what we intended to say change when we enter a conversation?

A. I think there's a way to keep the focus on addressing what concretely disables or enables the production of a critical and political space, and the immediate material and ideological conditions of production as that which is frequently disavowed or neglected, and also how that reflects the obstacles to the production of a political space in general, and what is it that makes it so.

C. I want to make a complicated image of images, from other times, but in this instance assert their relevance to this situation. I am thinking more than usual about how sexuality and desire is producing and presenting itself and how it is pushing me and overwhelming me.

A. I think it is hard to imagine that there are no more questions. But in this image the question is already answered.

B. I think it is important to reflect and test some of your ideas and not only ask questions.

A. I think the non-identity or anonymity is more connected to a person who is silent and who has never really asked any questions, and who feels that they can't for one reason or another. Perhaps they are afraid of the repercussions or they are protecting their privilege.

C. Exhaustion and scarcity of time is very present in my conversations with others, and I think it would be interesting to really try to examine this sensation, this feeling that there is never enough time for "oneself" and what one wants to talk about or ask. Why are we not making this time? There is a paradox in becoming more individualised but also not prioritising the things that one claims to want to do more.

A. Your awkward navigations to become, coupled with a constitutional failure to be, are what actually enable political thinking and language, rather than marking some shortcoming in your politicisation.

C. Yesterday I was frustrated by a note instead of talking.

A. I understood time, as with plans with people, but this other articulation I have heard before - about preparedness. Are you ready for the phone?

C. Something implies that the phone has an intimacy that challenges or shakes or in fact may be too present.

NON-CONCERT

Anonymous improvisation without instruments

*Concert: 1660s, “agreement, accord, harmony,” from Fr.concert (16c.), from It. concerto “concert, harmony,” from concertare “bring into agreement,” in L.**

If a concert is based on “agreement, accord, harmony,” then a non-concert is based on disagreement, discord, and noise. Non-idiomatic improvisation is supposed to treat all music as possible material for improvisation. But music is never just about music. In a non-concert we could use everything possible as material for improvisation: power relations, ideas, concepts, the context, history, architecture, our bodies, affects, desires, sex...

We don't need instruments that would mediate our relation to each other and reinforce ourselves as musicians. Whether we want it or not, we all are always already performing in some way or another. There is no neutral position or activity. The question is whether we are performing an established role (such as audience or performer) or something different altogether? Something that goes beyond individual or collective authorship.

In today's concentration camp of forced participation, where everybody in some way or other is producing some kind of value (economical, experiential, cultural...) to fall back on the notion of an abstract audience, which takes its distance or is simply the observer of an object, is no longer possible.

In whatever situation we are in, we are producing sounds however quiet these might be. Instead of judging these sounds aesthetically (which only reinforces the idea of individual taste), can we listen to these sounds or produce some new ones, in order to try to understand better what situation precisely we are living through and change it?

We can produce a different set of social relations accelerating the conflict of the individual versus the collective. Lets forget about music and musicians for the time being, and produce a social noise that cancels the fetishisation of abstract sounds. Lets move together towards the unwanted (musically, aesthetically, socially...).

If music is supposed to be organized sounds, then noise can be disorganized listening. Anything could happen if we make it happen but if the situation turns out sterile for you, blame yourself for it.

Everybody welcome!

*<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=concert&searchmode=none>