

Issue 9–10 / Spring—Summer 2008
Conversation about art

CAC INTERVIU



The clash of the codexes

To misquote a popular 1970s song by John Paul Young “Sound is in the air”. I’m not referring to the self-evident materiality of the statement but to the current fascination with the interconnectivity of art-and-music and the appearance of two recent books positioning sound art within the competing discourses of art and music – of which sound art has often been considered the bastard child (like performance is the bastard of art and theatre). Those books – Brandon La Belle’s *Background Noise. Perspectives on Sound Art* and Alan Licht’s *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories* (both 2007) – go some way to marking a space for a hermetic history and discourse of the medium. They form a troika with Douglas Khan’s *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (2001) that might establish a canon, spawn dedicated Sound Department’s, and an encompassing theoretical underpinning of the art form.

Not that development in the arts is dependent on the academe: when it comes to sound-and-music artists have been doing it for themselves. Art schools have been perfect havens for rockers since the 1960s – too much type has been spilled for me to make the obvious list. I’ll mention *Roxy Music* because of the new biography *Re-Make Re-Model: Becoming Roxy Music* by Michael Bracewell (2008) that nails Roxy’s art-fashion-music vamping and re-instills the band with something that smells like teen spirit not the *Burberry* cologne wafting off one of that venerable label’s favourite house models – Bryan Ferry.

Generally, looks are what kills in all forms of popular entertainment these days: so who can blame him? (When former punks such as REM’s Michael Stipe start wearing suits-and-ties we can cut them a break for “age appropriate dressing”). That’s why the kids need an Amy Winehouse on the block – as pop avatarism has always been about having someone to look down to.

Music has fulfilled that position for both art and films: and musicals have been the whipping boy of the lot. Particularly those musicals that have found their way from stage to screen (think of the dirt dished to Shirley Temple by Adorno in *Prisms*). It’s the lyrics that get in the way or that are put to iniquitous labour in the name of what film theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha calls “the opiate of cinema”. (There is a reason why Beethoven, Brahms, and Schubert turned to Martin Luther, Wilhelm Müller and Friedrich Schiller for their libretti). Because compositional music is non-representational and largely non-referential it can harbour all sorts of avant-garde desires and is difficult to instrumentalize. Music often remains, or at least is considered, the most radical art form under regime (and ex-

perimentation keeps its course). This is certainly the case in Soviet Lithuania where a number of composers – such as Osvaldas Balakauskas, Vytautas Barkauskas, and Onute Narbutaite – dedicated themselves to serialism, atonality, mathematical systems, and mechanism (visual artists remained in the thrall of party style). Composers themselves can be swayed, if their music can’t, and even Shostakovich was responsible for the popular operetta *Cheryomushki* (1958) about Moscow’s first Thaw Era dormitory district that became a hit musical film in 1963, shot in the suburb’s showcase apartments.

Musicals are also “in the air” with a string of hits, such as *Chicago*, *Dream Girls*, and *Hairspray*, returning to the screen. And three big budget rock-umentaries are coming to a theatre near you; Anton Corbijn’s *Control*, Todd Haynes’ *I’m Not There*, and Martin Scorsese’s *Shine a Light*. Despite rhetorical defense from the directors (particularly Scorsese as his is a concert pic with the ’Stones), the music is hand maiden to the moving image; reiterating pop music’s capitulation to the video – on MTV it is now further demeaned by reality shows that make up the majority of that network’s programming. In fact, pop music culture has founded a new economy of debasement based on the very public descent of Britney and Amy *sans* Bach’s *St Matthew’s Passion*.

This issue of INTERVIU is rather more nostalgic and is dedicated to an art/music/sound synthesis *avec* sound track (we have produced an accompanying CD of new electronic music from the region). And the CD is FREE! I mention this because distribution is now the keyword of writing about music – criticism is elided. And while we have a text about distribution and artists’ rights it is one among many that introduce a broad range of artists and writers working at the audio-visual nexus.

Simon Rees

Nº 1

**The green leaves of spring:
a heady brew of Fluxus, music, and politics**

Skaidra Trilupaitytė talks with Gintaras Sodeika

p. 04

Nº 2

**Modalities of the visual and the audial
in the work of Vladimir Tarasov**

Alexander Borovsky talks with Vladimir Tarasov

p. 08

Nº 3

**Music for the installation–
The Red Wagon (excerpt)**

by Ilya Kabakov

p. 12

Nº 4

**The joy is not mentioned:
Cats pyjamas playing bingo with you**

Aaron Schuster talks with
Eglė Budvytytė, Goda Budvytytė and Ieva Misevičiūtė

p. 13

Nº 5

**A title as a sound
inside one’s mind**

Tautvydas Bajarkevičius talks to
Gintaras Didžiapetris

p. 17

—

**Ear-witnessing:
the devil and Mr. Gould**

by Paul Foss

p. 19

Nº 6

**Local sound and
public space**

Julija Fomina talks with Ignas Krunglevičius

p. 23

Nº 7

**Art strike
2008**

Ripper chats with Dr. Flame

p. 26

Nº 8

Slave to the rhythm

Mark Feary and Simon Maidment talk with
Danius Kesminas

p. 31

Book review

**New musicology:
a long-delayed explosion**

by Yuri Dobriakov

p. 35

**Artist’s project
CD compilation of sound art
from eastern Europe**

by Arturas Bumšteinas

p. 39

The green leaves of spring: a heady brew of Fluxus, music, and politics

Skaidra Trilupaitytė talks
with Gintaras Sodeika

Skaidra Trilupaitytė talks with composer, and senior cultural politician, Gintaras Sodeika about the role of Fluxus in the period of Lithuanian national revival, and on the link between local avant-garde art and music practices and representative politics.

SKAIDRA TRILUPAITYTĖ

In the late 1980s, you were one of the main participants in the early Lithuanian avant-garde: a member of “*Žalias lapas*” (*Green Leaf*) group, as well as the founder and curator of happening festivals in Anykščiai, North East Lithuania. Some musicologists mention the Fluxus character of your creative work and the fact that you prefer Jonas Mekas’ cinematographic principles. So, was your intense cooperation with artists from other spheres of art spontaneous? For instance, Gediminas Urbonas has confessed that it was his encounter with sound artists (the “*Geležinis vilkas*” (Iron Wolf) installation) that inspired him – who was, actually, a student of sculpture – develop collaborative initiatives of new art. How did the members of the group find each other?

GINTARAS SODEIKA

At the times of national revival, there were various parallel processes going on both in Anykščiai and Nida, West Lithuania. Then, we used to call the annual music festival at Anykščiai AN – a coded title, adding a relevant date. Meanwhile, in 1990, they started the festival at Nida, called NI. So, one of those years we held our festival in Anykščiai, but at the same time – just one day earlier – the *Green Leaf* group used exactly the same place for their



Gintaras Sodeika *Train Action*, Anykščiai, 1989
photograph collection of Gintaras Sodeika Archive



Gintaras Sodeika *Train Action*, Anykščiai, 1989
photograph collection of Gintaras Sodeika Archive

own action. Finally, when in 1990 the *Green Leaf* had their festival in Nida, we came there with a group of musicians to hold our action NI-90, and the two events overlapped. Even though their graphic artists were not part of our festival, nobody cared about formalities then. We just wanted to get in contact and establish communication with the audience – the viewers and listeners – which went on quite well.

In my opinion, the segregation between various kinds of art nowadays has increased, which I think is very paradoxical. On one hand, the interdisciplinary arts seem to be growing more and more active and interactive forms of art keep spreading. But on the other hand, there is hardly any communication between professionals of different art spheres: there are but a few exceptions.

This makes me sad, for if today we ask musicians about what is going on in the visual arts, most probably, they would not know what to answer.

ST Perhaps eventually, when the avant-garde became more professional, it could not avoid a kind of “professional inferiority complex”? For instance, I remember

how the graphic artists would smile at seeing the video forms that young composers used in their works at contemporary music festivals. For if we look from the visual arts position, the impression was that their visual means of expression rather were naive than radical. At the same time, though, composers could smile at the use of sound in the works of graphic artists...

GS To tell you the truth, I have become a little more natural and simple when it comes to evaluating how artists from other spheres express themselves in the field of sound. For instance, when Valdas Ozarinskas is telling me how he made his own soundtracks for his artwork, I am much more lenient about it than before: I am not ironic. Because the things that the artist makes up for him/herself reflect the particularities of his/her working process and feelings, which are authentic.



Gintaras Sodeika *Train Action*, Anykščiai, 1989
photograph collection of Gintaras Sodeika Archive

ST When did you first hear about Fluxus? What was the role of Vytautas Landsbergis?

GS The first bits of information on Fluxus came around in 1986. It was at the “*Jauna muzika*” (*Young Music*) festival of young composers in Druskininkai. However, I cannot remember who first told me about it. At those times, all the young educated people would gather in Druskininkai, including the beginners in politics, literature, music and philosophy. There, we would listen to experimental music and have a lot of intense discussions. As early as in 1986, at our discussions one could hear bold opinions on the system and all kinds of critical thoughts regarding Soviet musicologists.

Vytautas Landsbergis would participate in the discussions as a sarcastic and sharp-tongued music analyst with a shade of politics. Meanwhile, we were just youngsters: the last year students who looked for ways of speaking in more alternative music language, ways of attracting the

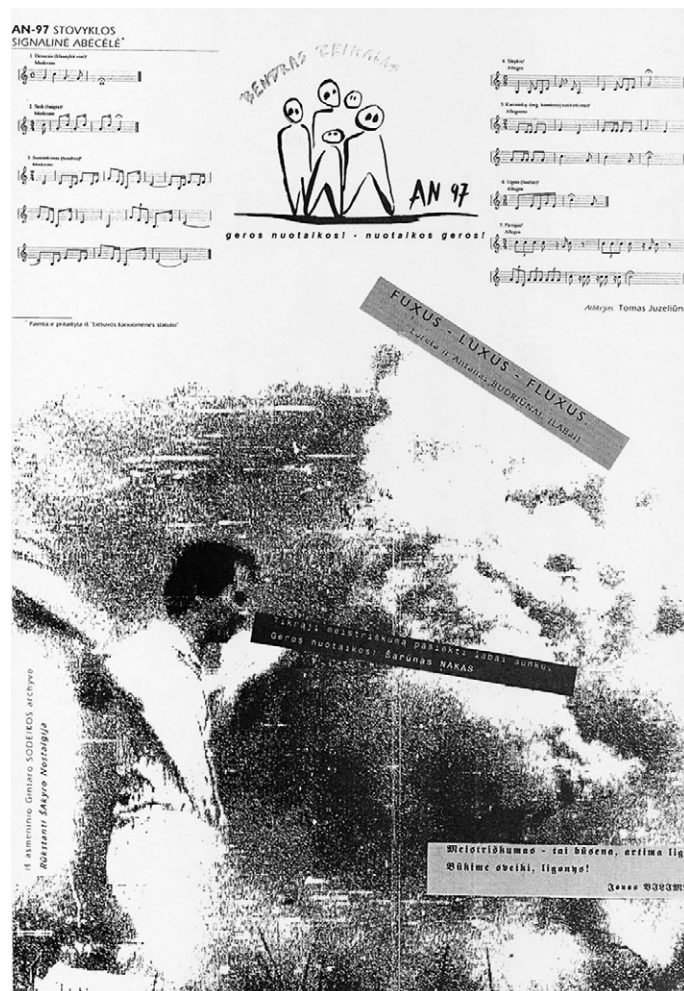
audience or being cultural resistance. Then, we did not even know that Landsbergis had performed his actions at Vilnius Pedagogical University as early as in 1966. In 1987, I had an idea of organizing a totally different and separate Fluxus-directed event. So, it was the dawn of Anykščiai festivals...

True, just around 1982 I happened to get audio records of some of Mačiūnas' actions; for instance, one of those was the process of destroying a piano. We perceived it as a very strange piece of music, for then, we knew nothing about Fluxus, or about the fact that those sounds were something much more than just music. Landsbergis would come to see us at the first festival in Anykščiai: he was our professor, so it was not difficult to talk him into coming. So, one of those nights we heard his spontaneous long story about Mačiūnas, Mekas, Nam June Paik and others. Then we also heard much more than before on the personality and the character of George Mačiūnas, including the fact that for many years, Landsbergis got parcels from him. But then, Landsbergis would take out those weird little things – all kinds of unattractive boxes with pieces of paper – call them rubbish and throw them away, shaking his head in disagreement. Still, later he started collecting some of the things from the parcels, and I think he also kept the letters. After hearing this story from Landsbergis, we identified ourselves very quickly. At that time, our Fluxus looked very spontaneous and original to us, but when we found out about Fluxus movement in America, we got a kind of approval of doing a right thing. Doing something sincere and true.

ST It was not a surprise that there was a great deal of romanticism about this movement in the 1980s–1990s in Lithuania. For it is only today that we can learn something more on the authentic non-Western kind of Fluxus that existed on this side of the Iron Curtain. So how do you see all of it now, from the time perspective?

GS Before we knew nothing about Fluxus in the West, we thought that the movement was born out of ourselves, it was born in Lithuania. So I only learned about Fluxus in other East European countries from the *Fluxus East* exhibition at the CAC at the end of last year. Only then did I understand how many things were going on in Poland or Hungary... I wish we knew it before, perhaps we could have communicated with them somehow. It is true that our own early Fluxus was very romanticist and even naive – all that confidence that we were very original. Today, I am fascinated with our early movement exactly because of its nice provincialism that is where its importance lies.

ST But why did you choose Anykščiai? What were you doing there?



detail from the promotional flyer for the
“Second Happenings Festival,” Anykščiai, 1997
photograph collection of Gintaras Sodeika Archive

GS It was me who chose the location. My grandparents come from Anykščiai, so I set myself an aim to discover something more in that small town. I knew the surroundings well: nearby, there was a quartz sand open pit – a very suitable place for happenings. So we set up our basic camp close to the Šventoji River. From there, we would begin our marches to the town of Anykščiai where we performed some public actions. For instance, in 1988 we made a speechless procession carrying the three-coloured Lithuanian flags. Our procession came to the town restaurant, where we had dinner and then came back to our basic camp. We did all of it without speaking to each other, not a word was spoken from outside either. People were not used to seeing the Lithuanian flag openly displayed, so our action made a strong impression on the people in the town. One of us, whose nickname was Dzūkas (*Vygantas Poškus, a graduate of Čiurlionis Art School – ST*) participated in the procession wearing a horse head made of papier-mache on his head, and a corresponding suit. When we came out of the restaurant, we saw a militia car: the militiaman detained Dzūkas for a few days, with the whole horse head he had on. So I could go on for ages telling you about those actions: there were lots of them. For instance, the AN 89 festival hosted the longest piece of music ever played in the history of Lithuania, perhaps even in European history. The piece went on for 84 hours, in shifts, according to the accurate score that I had written: during the pauses, one could lie down and sleep for a while. The piece included making sounds, playing music, going on foot, swimming down the river, walking in the forest, running, sitting in the middle of a highway at night, and so on.

ST Many of your colleagues, as in the sphere of music as in visual arts, were interested in things that went beyond the limits of the system, as well as in the non-traditional forms of presenting works. But I wonder what was your own relation to the system as such? For instance, with the Composers Union? I'm intrigued, because in the world of graphic arts, there was also a period of consolidation at the times of national revival. But later, a deep split occurred, which led to an opposition to the Artists Union when many independent groups were forming intensely...

GS The family of composers is much smaller, so it had no contrapositions of that kind. Moreover, the very first meeting of Sąjūdis, the movement for national independence of Lithuania, took place at the Composers Union. But even before that, the Composers Union was quite a progressive organization, even when their heads were members of the Communist party. We, the young composers, belonged to the Youth section of the Composers

Union. At those times, the head of the Union was Julius Andrejevas: a sincere and democratic person, who was very hospitable to our movement. As I can remember, in 1988 the Union's head office even sponsored us with 300 roubles for holding our festival.

ST There is a lot of written material on the involvement of artists and intellectuals in the political processes of the national revival years. An illustrative example is Vytautas Landsbergis, who has often acknowledged the links between his own political activities and the things that George Mačiūnas was doing. Can you interpret your own political activities by applying the principles of your early creative work? I mean, what do you think about the (sometimes nearly direct) identification of artistic and political activities, when some famous artist suddenly goes into politics?

GS I guess in this aspect, it is too early to discuss the way that Vaclav Havel or Vytautas Landsbergis went into politics. Unless someone is really interested in their own authentic experience from the inside. Here, the advantage is that if an artist enters politics, the doors back to the art world always keep open for him/her. There is no such danger for a politician. For instance, when I opened the *Green Leaf* exhibition in 1990, I delivered a speech, mentioning that the basis of our state is Fluxus. For it is the only state in the world that has a representative of Fluxus movement at its wheel. The Druskininkai festival was a place where you could speak up boldly, not afraid that someone would tell the authorities, but none of the participants of our actions later joined the Sąjūdis or went into national politics. Despite that, we can surely speak of Fluxus in our politics, because Landsbergis is truly a person springing from Fluxus. I still consider myself to be a representative of Fluxus, for my philosophy of life is also based on Fluxus. I could tell you a lot about applying those principles in my life. I even dare to think that in many cases, Fluxus kept me from making mistakes, both as a politician and a personality.

Skaidra Trilupaitytė is an art critic and art historian researching art life of the Revival period and post-soviet Lithuania.



Vladimir Tarasov *Water Music* (installation view) 1996
photograph courtesy the CAC

Nº 2

Modalities of the visual and the audial in the work of Vladimir Tarasov

Alexander Borovsky talks with
Vladimir Tarasov

Renowned jazz percussionist and Vilnius resident, Vladimir Tarasov is best known for his stick-work with one of the USSR's most famous jazz groups – the Chekasin, Ganelin, and Tarasov Trio.

Through his immersion in the Moscow and St. Petersburg avant-garde scenes he became friends with artist Ilya Kabakov and began to produce the sound elements within Kabakov's multi-media installations. This, in turn, lead him to making art in his own right – a journey he discusses here with his friend and often time curatorial collaborator Alexander Borovsky.

ALEXANDER BOROVSKY

Volodya, it always seemed to me that your visual art practice uses two sources. The first is percussion as such, or jazz communication that you give an openly visual and picturesque character. The second is an impulse that you got after communication with Moscow-based non-conformists. Is that true? Can you add anything to it?

VLADIMIR TARASOV

There is no doubt that sound is a starting point in my visual art practice. To be more precise, it is the sound of percussion, the percussion instruments, for their sound-

ing is the closest to the nature of the sound. It makes us listen attentively and turn our attention to what has been near us since the dawn of time.

The second source, as you have rightly mentioned, is my communication with non-conformists, not just from Moscow, but from Saint-Petersburg too. They all used to attend the concerts of our Trio, where we had a really complete exchange of creative ideas. My living in the artistic studios in Moscow, Leningrad (today Saint-Petersburg) and Vilnius was gradually pushing me towards my engrossment in installations, video and photography.

AB What was the role of Ilya Kabakov? You worked with him a lot as an author of the sounding and musical component of his installations. What was exactly the experience you gained from that fellowship?

VT It was exactly Ilya Kabakov who involved me into the installation art. Our first collaborative piece of work was born from a merge of his *Red Wagon* installation and my solo percussion programme “Atto 3 Drumtheatre” dedicated to the people who died in the Stalinist work camps. It was first presented at Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf in 1991 and is now a part of permanent exposition at

Wiesbaden Museum in Germany. Later, we came up with a series of collaborative works, and I can say working with Kabakov gave me a proper understanding of the real substance of installation. Especially where it comes to estimating the effect it has on the audience and making the viewer a co-participant of the process. It turned out to be easier than I thought, because all jazz is based on that. It's a condition that the form organizes.

AB What was the role of Yuri Sobolev?

VT Yuri Sobolev played one of the main roles in the formation of Soviet artistic avant-garde. In the middle 1960s, he somehow managed to employ himself as the head artist in “Znanye-sila” (Knowledge is Power), a popular science magazine published in Moscow. So he would give jobs to the artists, including Kabakov, by ordering illustrations for scientific articles. The guys had no money at all, so it really helped them to earn for a living in that fearsome socialist realism system.

But the point is that Sobolev was an excellent artist, who united around himself all the Moscow non-conformists in the very start of their movement. He spoke several languages perfectly, so he would translate Western books on art and let the artists read them. Moreover, he was also great on jazz and had a marvellous collection of jazz music records. He would attend all the jazz festivals.

I met him and we became very close friends at our first performance, where I played duet with Slava Ganilin at a festival in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). Sobolev helped us a lot: he would have a professional hear and analysis of our programmes, then recommend us to point out one or another musician and listen to him.

Another very important thing is that Yuri was a good friend of Estonian artist Ülo Sooster, who was also a prominent figure in the formation of the USSR underground art movement. Sobolev would often come to Estonia and Latvia, and of course, he'd visit me in Lithuania. He would bring in a germ of freedom and explained to the young artists that there was a completely another world of art behind the Iron Curtain, very different from the knowledge they got in the Soviet art academies.

Yuri and me made several collaborative productions together: a theatre performance and some movies. Communication with Yuri was not just about enjoying his erudition, but a good school for me and all the circle of friends.

AB Let's come back to your musical practice. It occurred to me that in your recent installations, you have changed the task: earlier, you looked for a visual picture for sound-making, but now you are interested in how the image is pregnant with sound. It's not about how an acoustic row overlaps the visual row, it's something

different. The instrument is certainly born to be producing sounds, but you seem to focus on a kind of time gap, a drama of disagreements and breaks. Someone is producing a sound out of an instrument, but the instrument is convulsing, it's tongue-tied, as if it wants something else. Is it true what I feel?

VT Here we are. You have just given things their names: “musical practice... video installations...”. Certainly, initially I enjoyed, and I still enjoy inventing and constructing some mechanic installations, based on the laws of physics and the correlation between the sound and the image of an instrument or a situation. The appearance of time gap was completely thoughtfully designed in my first video installation *Inside Out*. What I wanted was to bring together the sound of my drums and the visual side of the sound. Especially the one called “touch” that is usually invisible to the audience. That is the source of what you call “pregnancy with sound”. Then, I brought together my musical practice and installation. So for me, the sound and the image are identical. It's like in jazz: swing is not about being behind or ahead, but about being together ideally. The sound is visible for me. And the image, I can hear the image.

AB Working with water. *Music on Water* at Salzau Residence, *An Incident at Museum*. *Water Music*, then our Russian museum project *Close to Not* (in cooperation with Sarah Flohr). For all of them, you make compositions of aleatoric kind. Who do you feel you are: an artist close to environmental art? Or are you more into the Zen mind set, popular in the Far East: a pantheistic principle, an unexceptional position of the artist in the world, and the absence of centre in this position?

VT I certainly feel closest to the meditateness. Certainly I choose pantheism. Actually, all the music is based on them. It might be a kind of Zen, too. A capability to meditate with music is the highest peak for every musician. And I guess in art, there are no unexceptional positions of the artist. It's just that his position does not immediately stand out or is immediately understandable for the audience. Especially in that disco-type arts world today.

In one hands, dripping water is a torture, in the other it's high music. It all depends on our inner tuning. And of course, on the Creator... the listener or the viewer as such is the highest caste of the instruments the artist plays. But as you know, it often happens that the artist becomes an instrument or a medium for certain ideas. *A Love Supreme* by John Coltrane is an excellent example for understanding this phenomenon.

Water is the greatest symphony for me. In the *Water Music* installation it is the main performer. In *Music on*



Vladimir Tarasov *Inside Out* (performance still) 2006
photograph courtesy the artist

Water, the main performer is the wind playing on the instruments I have invented, and transmitting their sounds on the water. The extraordinary objects by Sarah Flohr have demanded from me music that would match their visual sounding. Like in the case of *Music on Water*, here I took into account the acoustic mirror of the lake beside the Russian Museum.

AB In any case, I am impressed by your merciful attitude to the voices of nature: it's non-interference, agreement, and humbleness. However, in the real environmental situation you are far from dying, like the theatre director dies in the actor. In *New York, New York* you are actively increasing the sound expansion by working with mechanical and industrial noises. But I still think your hobby horse is transforming a sound aggression to metaphysical plane. So that in *Nocturne for Paper* the irritating mechanical buzzing of fans, the rustling of the writing paper turn into flutter of etherial wings or an angelic dance. Am I right by calling your attitude as anti-Naumanian, i.e. anti-psychedelic (in the aggressive manner of the early “screaming” Nauman)?

VT The fact that my position is different from, and contrary to early Nauman, is true. However, it doesn't mean that something is better or worse. Each artist has his/her own way. The point is to find that way. True is also the fact that I don't join psychedelic or aggressive positions. For me, the mechanical sound of the fans is a touch of string orchestra, as an accompaniment for sheets of paper floating on high notes. That is why the installation is called *Nocturne for the Paper*.

However, *New York, New York* is a social piece of work, with some influence from our working with Kabakov. A confrontation between society and an immigrant who is trying to fit into a system of values that she/he doesn't know.

AB An object as a ready-made is a familiar matter. But what about sound as a ready-made? Do you consider the interferences between those notions in your poetics? Are there, actually, any form-making and sense-making relations that are significant to you?

VT It is very rarely that I use sound as a ready-made. I use it mainly when the installation has to render a state of time or a state of the past. Especially the past. Nothing is worse than an imitation of historical time. Working with original material is always better. However, another thing is what form you give to it. For me, the form is of great importance. Mostly as for musician and composer. The same is about John Cage, Brian Eno, Vladimir Martynov and everyone who came to the visual art from music. What I mean is that the form exists on the subconscious level. This is inevitable in the composer's way of thinking. Before that, I would put sense-making relations. Like the form, they rather belong to the technical side of the artwork carriage. But in the first place I put something you've called Zen. It's rather a trance condition, like in good music. However, if you don't know the second and the third place, nothing will work. Having an idea is not enough. You have to be educated enough in order to know how to realize it. In this sense, installation has come very close to music. It's not just aesthetic pleasure from the artwork you have seen, but also a feeling of participation. Just like at a good concert, when everyone, including the performers, forgets the time and enter a state of music magic that has filled the hall completely.

AB You have a beautiful house in Vilnius, but you're always packed and ready to go. However, since the times of *Bells for St Kazimir* and Christmas Crown you seem to articulate something like residence registration, which is not meant for a contemporary artist. In other words, what is the role of Lithuania in your creative work? I mean, in the formative sense, not in the housekeeping...

VT I certainly don't have any residence registration as such. Today, I reside and feel like home in any place where I have an opportunity to realize my ideas. As a jazz musician and an artist. In this sense, Lithuania is not an exception...

Alexander Borovsky is Curator of Contemporary Art at the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg and is a longtime friend and collaborator with the artist.

Music for the installation – *The Red Wagon*

excerpt from: Ilya Kabakov *Der Rote Waggon*,
Museum Wiesbaden, Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nürnberg



Ilya Kabakov *The Red Wagon* (installation view) 1994
photograph courtesy Museum Wiesbaden

When [*The Red Wagon*¹] was assembled the day before the opening of the exhibit, it became apparent that it didn't "work". The viewer was supposed to pass through the train-car and stop. This was so beautifully conceived and described in the proposal, but catastrophically, that didn't happen. The viewer ascended onto the platform, entered the train-car, but then he clearly did not intend to remain inside to look at the illuminated [utopian landscape depicting a city of the future], and most importantly, to sit down on the bench and WAIT. Without this delay, without this stop, the installation had no meaning.

Still not understanding the main, structural reason for my failure, I suspected the poor choice of music, consisting of songs performed by Misha Gulko. He wanted to invoke attacks of émigré nostalgia for Russia in a Brooklyn restaurant. Here this music did not rouse any such reminiscences, but turned everything into a sort of outlandish, bogus farce [...]

I sat inside the train-car continuously, I increased and decreased the lights under the "painting," I turned the sound up and down, and didn't know what to do next. The installation was failing completely, and the solution just wouldn't come to me.

As a matter of record I would like to definitively and boldly attest to the mystical (I am not afraid of the word)

role played by my old friend and great musician Volodya Tarasov. There have been a few such difficult situations when his presence totally saved the day and served as a powerful catalyst, putting everything in its place.

Volodya had a cassette of his musical work "Drum-theatre," which he probably brought along by coincidence. This included a cycle of Soviet songs of the 1930s and 1940s recorded from wheezing, scratchy old records. Remarkably, all of these songs of happiness, love and joy that had sounded so artificial and offensive against the background of the surrounding horrible reality, now sound entirely genuine, holding a bewitching power and fascination. It is impossible to understand this enigma.

But that wasn't all. Volodya pensively sat inside the train-car for a while and then unexpectedly told me to close and lock the front door of the car through which viewers could enter. Why he said this, how this idea came to him, I did not ask, nor could he later explain it to me. (I had the chance to be convinced of his inexplicable ability to enter almost instantaneously into the main conceptions of his artist friends, but that is a separate topic.)

This suggestion put everything in its place. The installation began to work like a well-oiled mechanism, creating the impression embedded in its conception [...] The viewer was forced to move on farther to the edge of the car. Having turned the corner, he discovered the back wall of the car, another door, and a staircase. Sounds were emanating from this open door, and the laws of curiosity compelled the viewer to ascend and look in to see what was going on.

Inside it was almost dark; to the left of the entrance was a long illuminated painting the size of the entire wall. This entire space was filled with the sounds of old, sentimental, soulfully warm melodies. Now the viewer sits down on the bench, sits for a long time, and in some sort of strange oblivion, gets up with difficulty to exit [...] Lofty dreams, hopes and love. Autumn 1991

1. During Soviet times, train-cars were fitted as mobile propaganda centres where the local population would attend "morale-building" indoctrination sessions.



Eglė Budvytė, Goda Budvytė and Ieva Misevičiūtė
The joy is not mentioned (performance still) 2007
photograph Rasa Juškevičiūtė

The joy is not mentioned: Cats pyjamas playing bingo with you

Aaron Schuster talks with
Eglė Budvytė, Goda Budvytė
and Ieva Misevičiūtė

During the second weekend of September 2007 spontaneous dance floors hijacked the streets of Vilnius. Remixing the idea of the situationist *dérive* with eighties street-dance culture, the artistic threesome of Eglė Budvytė, Goda Budvytė and Ieva Misevičiūtė led shifting bands of nighttime strollers and other passersby around the Lithuanian capital to the tunes of 1920s Lithuanian classics, old school electro hip-hop, and Bollywood disco. Broadcast on a special radio program, the eclectic soundtrack also contained sporadic dance instructions that were freely interpreted by the crowd.

With almost no prior advertising or organized structure, the dance events were driven by a paradoxical logic of spontaneity and chance.

This participatory exhibition continued with the opening of a radio studio in the Contemporary Art Centre's exhibition hall. The first radio program was recorded live during the opening of the show and transmitted the next day by "Uzupio Radijas" (94.9 FM). Recording equipment and a special computer program installed in the studio allowed visitors make their own recordings and have them broadcast on the weekends. Visitors' contributions included a mix of poetry recitals, mobile phone melodies, interviews, children laughing, and a priest giving a lecture about patriotism.

An experimental catalogue rounded out the three-part project, which instead of providing straightforward commentary or documentation contained an extensive collection of images and textual inserts suggesting how to read, use or misuse it.

AARON SCHUSTER

Who among you is the worst dancer?

IEVA MISEVIČIŪTĖ

All of us are 'the worst' dancers. We constantly practice not to get any better.

AS A possible motto for the project might even be "Against perfection."

IM Isn't there a kind of perfection in imperfection? It's true that we weren't interested in graceful or skillful dancing, or making a flawless radio program, or creating something that you could look at from a distance and say "This is beautiful." The process was messy and chaotic and unpredictable.

GODA BUDVYTYTĖ

The problem is that if you dance too well people will not dance with you, if you make radio program that is too organized people will not want to make their own recordings, if you sing too beautifully nobody will join you.

AS Contrary to first impressions, I don't think this project is about dance per se. It seems to be concern more the possibilities and implicit rules of acting in public space, as well as group dynamics. The projects moves between different components and strategies: DIY aesthetics (the self-made radio programs), an ethos of sixties happenings, situationist experiments in remapping urban geography, dada absurdity...

EGLĖ BUDVYTYTĖ

Yes indeed. The project also moves between the production of inter-human relations and relations between people and city spaces. The project is a celebration of the imagination. With the help of radio it projects a sound track and its temporary performers into the physical

space of the city. It plays with the ideas of collective creativity and the disappearance of the author into the audience. The drifting dance floors and the whole atmosphere of the piece were created by those who joined in or tuned into the frequency.

IM I think we were interested in remapping or rethinking boundaries in a broad sense, not only the rules of behavior in public space, but also individual ones, as well as the boundaries between different social groups. Our strategy was not to break through these barriers, but to create situations that would facilitate accidental encounters. There is a similarity to the idea of smuggling introduced by Irit Rogoff – situations that sidle along established barriers and at times create the opportunity to move to the other side.

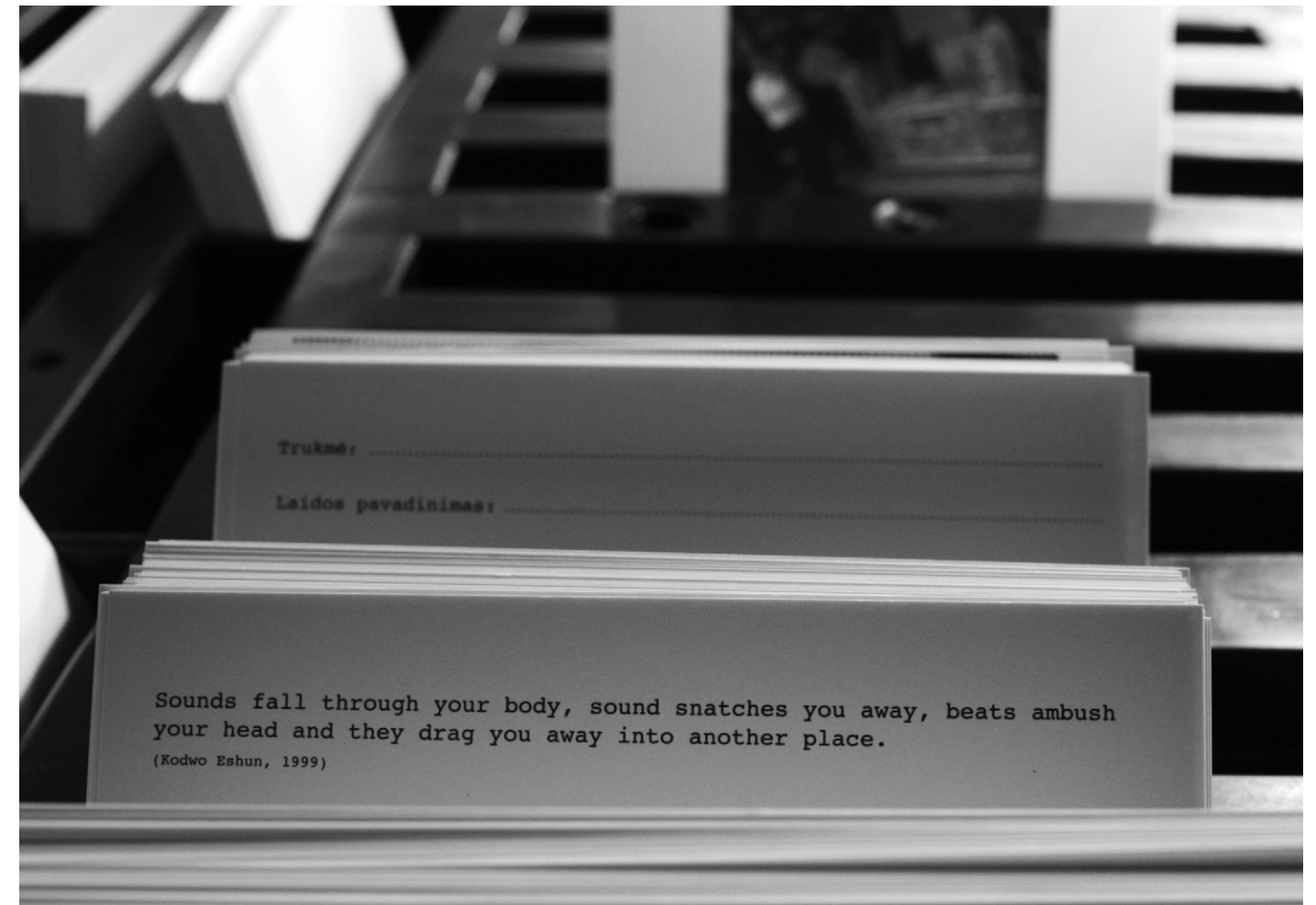
AS What were some of your favorite moments in the project?

EB There were a few beautiful moments when passing cars tuned into the program. A jeep filled with men dressed in black suits turned the radio on and broadcast the soundtrack with instructions and fictitious news further. The dancing sometimes took place along the architectural lines of the city: bike racks and benches were used to stretch legs, pavements and stairs to form the moving lines of dancing bodies. There was another surreal moment when 50 or more people were spinning in a circle for some unknown reason near the trolley bus station. It looked like the film set for a movie about some festive cult.

GB I would have loved to see what was happening in places where we were absent, since the radio frequency covered a large part of Vilnius. I like to think that people were doing stretching exercises and gazing through their windows at home as instructed in the radio program.

AS I remember a brilliant episode during one of the pre-event nights, when a policeman came to tell us to turn the music down, then ended up showing off pictures he had on his gsm of his classic 1980s boom box (he was quite proud of it). The boom box took on an almost iconic significance for this project. There was even a 'boom box battle in the radio ring' as part of one the radio programs. What's the fascination with this quintessential 1980s prop?

IM In the first part of the project there are many references to 1980s street culture, and walking around Vilnius with a boom box might seem to be an expression of nostalgia for a history that Vilnius never had. What really interested us, though, was not this missing past but activating new possibilities in the present. The boom box was also very handy technically, as a way to play music in the city. "The radio ring with boomboxers" was



Eglė Budvytytė, Goda Budvytytė and Ieva Misevičiūtė
The joy is not mentioned (installation view) 2007
photograph Eglė Budvytytė

Eglė Budvytytė, Goda Budvytytė and Ieva Misevičiūtė
The joy is not mentioned 2007
photograph Rasa Juškevičiūtė

performed at the end of our live recording session in the CAC radio studio. The idea was that two or more boom-boxers (a person with a boom box) would compete with each other using their boom boxes in any way possible, resulting in a friendly jam, or just incoherent noise.

EB It was interesting to see what kind of new meanings the boom box could generate in the context of Vilnius. In a way the boom box became a potential tool of inclusion, a tool for generating temporary micro communities in public spaces that appeared during the radio broadcast and were gone afterwards.

AS The musical mix was really inspired. Is there one song in particular that set the mood?

EB I would rather say it was the mix of unmixable songs that created the mood: starting with very emotional and cheesy disco tracks like *Borriquito* by Charo & Sal-soul Orchestra and then New York by Grandmaster Flash. It was interesting to hear a piece like *Friendly World* by Andy Kaufman played on a boom box and car speakers. It had a double and quite a dubious effect. The song is super ironic but on the other hand it had that odd performative quality of generating exactly what it described.

AS One of my favorite parts of the project was the dance instructions, which ranged from the soothing and hypnotic to the humorous and highly improbable. The whole exercise seemed like a loving parody of Soviet-era group gymnastics.

IM We never heard Soviet group gymnastics on the radio. We did look for these recordings in the archives of the Lithuanian National Radio, but unfortunately they are lost. I wish we could have used them just as they were. I think that radio dance instructions is a brilliant idea. It is wonderful combination of radio as an acoustic media and dance as physical activity – there is a big gap between what you hear and how you perform it, and this gap that must be filled in with the imagination. And in the case of our project it turned out to be a group imagination. The most important thing was not the instructions themselves but how the participants actually moved in reaction to them.

GB You could even say that the point was the misuse and misinterpretation of the dance directions. Many of the instructions were so convoluted that they were practically impossible to follow. At the same time they were delivered in a serious, authoritative voice. Yet the source of this authority remained rather obscure.

AS I didn't get to see the radio installation at CAC. What went on there?

EB At the radio studio you could listen to prerecorded radio programs, record your own programs, or browse through the index cards we made with textual excerpts

linkup up conceptually to the project. Radio station Užupis lent us some airtime so part of the exhibition's content was broadcast on their frequency during the weekends.

At the opening of the exhibition we hosted a collective recording session, which was aired the next day by Užupis. It was an attempt to multiply and disperse the authoritarian mono channel of the radio voice. The recording resulted in an organic mix of overlapping songs, conversations, rehearsals, and various noises. We included lots of marginal sounds and information which usually doesn't play on air. At the end of the evening a few street kids appeared from somewhere and sang a wicked contribution to the program. It was interesting to slip this kind of program into the schedule of a normal radio station.

IM The CAC installation was neither completely left open to visitors, nor was it completed by us. It was like a notebook that could be written in, read or re-read. I also prefer the idea of a radio studio to a radio station. The studio worked as a loop, whose length depended on the number of recordings entering database; when the database reached its capacity some files (recorded radio programs) had to leave the loop. Our radio studio didn't have its own frequency, so it depended on other stations for broadcasting. We had to infiltrate the airwaves with our program. At the beginning we wanted to broadcast on three different frequencies: two radio stations and a frequency that would block out all others within a 500 meter radius around CAC.

AS One last thing I wonder about: where did the names “The Joy is Not Mentioned” and “Cats pyjamas playing bingo with you” come from?

IM While we were working on the project we were changing the title almost every week, simply because our conceptual framework as well as parts of the project's content were continuously changing. I think in total we had five or even more titles.

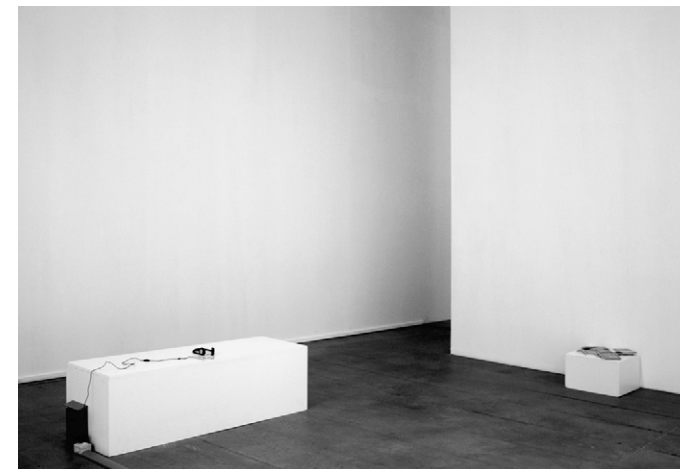
The only part of the title that never changed was “playing bingo with you,” and that's the phrase that I like the most. Bingo is for me very much what our project is about. Although it is generally considered a game of chance, if you want to win at bingo you should not surrender to chance. Professional bingo players always know when they are going to win.

Aaron Schuster is a philosopher and writer based in Brussels. He is the co-author of the libretto for *Cellar Door: An Opera in Almost One Act*, and is currently writing books on the history of levitation and the trouble with pleasure.

N° 5

A title as a sound in one's mind

Tautvydas Bajarkevičius talks to Gintaras Didžiapetris



Gintaras Didžiapetris *Conceptas* (installation view) 2007
photograph courtesy Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin

TAUTVYDAS BAJARKEVIČIUS

Since the current issue of CAC Interviu focuses on the use of sound in contemporary art, I'd like to ask you: how much and in what ways is *Konceptas* significant for your work? I mean the production where you offer a version of Benas Rupeika's radio show *Kaip žmonės gyvena* (*How People Live*) made up at the Konceptas village, in headphones, including three large photos of Konceptas, and also the *Untitled* piece where you document a trip down the Neris¹. Can one spot a reflective fusion of sound art and conceptual art traditions?

GINTARAS DIDŽIAPETRIS

The use of sound came almost accidentally, for the most part. Though now, when I plan a new piece and think about sound again, I can remember myself and my cousin recording conversations and music when we were kids.

On my trips to Konceptas, I was looking for a missing component that I heard occasionally on the radio. Benas Rupeika's radio programs surprised me with their simplicity and visibility – each word built up the image of its own meaning that belonged to the speaker: that was the way I saw the Konceptas village. However, I perceived the real geographical location in a much wider context.

I was not asking for something extraordinary, so Benas agreed upon recording at Konceptas, while he also put fragments of the interviews into his own programs. It was very amusing: *creative act* was encoded in the sounds, but they didn't turn to anything else and remained real memories of real people reacting to the changes in surroundings.

I am not really concerned whether it is sound art or conceptual art, even though, from the linguistic point of view, *Konceptas* (*Concept*) is closer to the latter, because it is language that creates objects. I need to mention the *Art by Telephone* exhibition (1969) for which the participants were asked to describe their pieces entirely on the telephone. Therefore, the recording housed the exhibition.

TB I've just remembered the www.radiogallery.org whose key idea is holding exhibitions of contemporary art conveyed by sound media. In 1874, Mussorgsky, the Russian composer, wrote a suite of 10 pieces for the piano, where the listeners were attending an imaginary art gallery. It looks like the relation between imaginary visibility, audibility, the contexts that rise from them and the meaning that they create, is also quite relevant for you.

GD I think that context offers the potential directions to our imagination. If I observe the situation from a distance, it is easy to see – I can imagine not just the same things as Mussorgsky or the listeners of his suites, but the suite itself, which I have not heard yet. When Raimundas Malašauskas invited me to his Radio Dinner² I understood that when you want to keep the imaginary where there is only sound, the sound might as well be absent.

TB In both *Konceptas* and *Untitled*, you present the sound record and give aesthetic shape to its visual context. So what you do is make a certain meaning gap – here, the sound turns into a documentary artefact and a reference to a visual metaphor as well. Does the sound, in this case, become the means of subjective disassociation, along with being the means of documentation?

GD I would rather think about the possibilities that productions and their techniques can offer. Both in Konceptas and in the process of field-recording for the LP, I was contemplating on the places as well as institutional space. Instead of creating an illusion of photography being a window to the world, my intention was to show that it is rather the price that we pay, in order to symbolically

experience it. My intention was to make the listener feel him or herself listening. The record reproduces the sound, but it also makes the needle of the record-player move towards the other side of the disc, in the same way the ferry-boat moves when the river is pushing it. So *Untitled* is rather a sculpture or a film for one's imagination than sound art. I don't know if I could dissociate myself from the places that I experienced directly. Documentary, as a form, emphasises the possibility of going to the real place and perceiving the weirdness of artistic work (to me, the photos on the record cover look both documentary and quite funny).

TB Field recording often refuses to interfere, therefore rendering the acoustic landscape in the shape that it was recorded, inviting attentive listening. In your case, the sound keeps its authenticity, but here it looks like the record is more significant as a (visual) artefact of acoustic experience than a soundtrack meant for attentive listening and pure acoustic pleasure. How much is the story or narrative important here?

GD The people in *Konceptas* is story-tellers. The things that we are going to hear next refer to them, as well as on Benas Rupeika. Their short stories establish connections between people and geography, while the connections are full of time and distances. It is only with the help of our mind and imagination that we can cover these distances. For me, it is the most exciting aspect.

In *Untitled*, the narrative is just one of the many elements in the structure. First, I was thinking about a film piece, but then rejected the idea, but maintained the logics of movie production. I believe it is possible to describe this piece with keywords used in cinema. It was not randomly that I found a sound operator working for cinema, so it became similar to making a mini-movie. However, the film never appeared, or to be more accurate, it keeps going on every summer day near Čiobiškis in Southeast Lithuania.

TB There is original acoustic reports – interviews as well as sound documentation from your trips – that, together with the cinematographic effect you've just mentioned, give your production a temporal dimension. How much – and in which aspects – is it important for your works?

GD I have shaped my recent exhibition in such a way that it could run both in 2008 and 30 years ago. Because of the period architecture of the space and the objects that are used, the exhibition looks like it could have been there, say, in 1972. However, the 'now', from which one can view the exhibition, is a matter of personal choice.

TB The vinyl LP that you chose to present your soundtrack on, as well as the Sputnik 'brand' slide projector, are analogue technologies: they even look luxurious in this

Gintaras Didžiapetris *Production Still: Side B 2007*
photograph courtesy the artist



age of visual and audio reproduction that is mobile and mutable. What do analogue technologies mean to you?

GD Different engineering solutions symbolise certain periods of time, but the fact that we can also use these technologies today proves them to be 'present'. For me, analogue doesn't look anachronistic; rather they embody my opinion that new technologies aren't the only representatives of our contemporary moment. For if we hold the first i-Pod in our hands, we can feel the past, as well as the temporality of the progressive thought. Tacita Dean has said: "It annoys me when people say 'you're using obsolete tech-nology, you're a fetishist'... Film is a medium of time. You're dealing with time made manifest, and that's really important"³. I'd like to add that each kind of technology is not just a specific context, but a device meant to experience the future possibilities that were once developed in the past. But it depends on our perceptions whether we see those possibilities. Meanwhile, our perception also changed along with technology. It is not necessary that our mind returns to the past if we come back to (or stay by) the vinyl record-player: we can see it and try to perceive it today. I think you agree that each night, the starry sky demonstrates us the complex structure of the world – in relation to both space and time.

1. The second largest river in Lithuania.
2. One of the Radio Gallery exhibitions.
3. *ARTWORLD* magazine Issue 1, October / November 2007.

Gintaras Didžiapetris is an artist living and working in Vilnius.

Tautvydas Bajarkevičius is an art critic.

Ear-witnessing: the devil and Mr. Gould

Paul Foss

[...] all theory is useless if it cannot
be heard when you play.
Daniel Barenboim

According to Walter Benjamin, "everything said from the angle of a true collector is whimsical". Once the caprice is seized upon, however arbitrarily, it proceeds toward total comprehensiveness, often leaving taste and even individual preference to the side. True collectors are scavengers of everything the world has risked and lost, fating them to accumulation *in extremis*. Paradoxically, people collect because everyday life limits choice and variety, whether by default or through superabundance, scattering constancy to the four winds. Collecting is one of the chief ways to combat this modern form of rootlessness, allowing us to stay put while seemingly ranging far and wide.

If extravagance and breadth seem the twin benchmarks of collecting, then the opposite of this would be something like dispersal and exorcism. James Joyce already clues us in to this other "udder" in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), where the wife of Humpty Earwicker is charged with gathering up and putting back together again all the fragments of history her husband's sleeping – unconscious continually "breaks open," like so many "reconstructions of the nocturnal life". In the sphere of recordings, themselves a kind of collective listening pursued as if in a private dream, there occurs a similar process: the grasping listener sifts through the sounds of what it means to be "dead to the world," which it is her sworn duty to gather up and patch together, batten down on the unresolved stresses of the surrounding lunar rapture that "rare and sudden piercing of the gruesome and perpetual general day-night" (Nietzsche). A collection of old recordings, whose music the collector thinks he alone hears or "earwigs," reanimates those moments of forbidden silence which accompany life's irrepressible noise.

"We could not have conquered Germany," said Adolf Hitler, "without the loudspeaker," meaning everything from public address systems to radio broadcasts. Added

to this technological assault on the public ear was Goebbels' new propaganda tool, the wire recorder, enabling the Führer's voice to boom out of moving trucks. In the classical sphere, this ideology of *Gebrauchsmusik* even extended to all those live symphonic recordings made in Germany immediately before and during WWII, which today are justly famous and highly sought after by music collectors, mainly for their subterranean frisson. Broadcasts of certifiably "German" conductors like Clemens Krauss, Hans Knappertsbusch, Karl Böhm, Oswald Kabasta, Siegmund von Hausegger, and of course Wilhelm Furtwängler, not only offer a direct pipeline to the totalitarian soundscape of Nazi Germany, but underscore the manipulative nature of the recordings' mechanics and the listener's own responses to them, unconsciously channeling Brecht's "alienation effect" at a distance. Even uttering these very classical names tends to usher in Plato's argument from *The Republic* that "any alteration in the modes of music is always followed by alteration in the most fundamental laws of the state" – except that here new political trends clearly preceded the musical trends, or at least were contiguous with them.

For us time-travelling "ear-witnesses," the German fascination has more to do with engaging in a kind of technological eavesdropping, principally concerning how all those broadcasts – mostly state affairs beamed to national and foreign cultural centres alike – were rigorously orchestrated, and the related question of how much this was due to the rapid development of magnetic-tape sound recording in Germany after 1933, leading to a host of political and acoustic applications. Of course, the Danish engineer Valdemar Poulsen first invented the magnetic wire recorder back in 1899, but it took German electronics giants AEG and BASF to take the new technology to the next level, inventing the ring-shaped tape head and high-frequency AC-biasing in the process. It is to the addition of these latter, mostly inaudible signals that the wartime recordings owe their particular fidelity – and susceptibility – to surrounding events. Yet the reverse train of events is equally likely. For if, as Evan Eisenberg concludes in *The Recording Angel* (1987),

“[a record] is the world scratched by man in a form that may survive him,” it is just as possible to hear in those nocturnal strains from the past the noonday echoes of right now.

This idea of recordings as so many “scratchings in the world” (or, in magnetic terms, electronic disturbances in musical space-time) reaches into all areas of phonography, ranging from *American Idol* with its self-fulfilling recording deals, through the recent spike in classical sales on iTunes, to the virtual disappearance of whole records into discrete downloadable “songs.” Taking Benjamin’s lead, Eisenberg makes the point that unlike printmaking, which “reproduces an art object, proliferating it in space,” phonography “reproduces an art *event*, proliferating it in time.” This argument has certain repercussions for the acoustical ear, among them being that “there is no original musical event that a record records or reproduces. Instead, each playing of a given record is an instance of something timeless. The original musical event never occurred; it exists, if it exists anywhere, outside history. In short, it is *myth*...” This is exactly why the classical music collector behaves like the storybook time traveller who boldly seeks out timelessness or spatial invisibility in a world ruled everywhere by regimented, relentlessly forward-driven events. Or as Adorno says in “On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music” (1953), “Music gazes at its listener with empty eyes, and the more deeply one immerses oneself in it, the more incomprehensible its ultimate purpose becomes ... the only person who can solve the riddle of music is the one who plays it correctly, as something whole.”

The Canadian pianist Glenn Gould was one of the more intriguing electro-acoustical Argonauts. Hearing him finger through the labyrinthine passages opened up by interpretation as a form of substitute performance, we gain considerable insight into that strange musical “enigma” which, in Adorno’s rendition, “apes the listener by seducing him into hypostasizing, as being, what is in itself an act, a becoming, and, as human becoming, a behaviour.” Whatever the explanation, Gould still remains notable among record aficionados for his peculiar way of turning piano playing into an exercise in gestural behaviour. How easily acts and events get turned around for the ivory tinkler. Someone who in the same breath could produce radio plays ventriloquising a whole Soviet-style critique of the symphony, with all the workers standing by, and yet in the liner notes for his 1965–73 recordings of Mozart’s piano sonatas admits that only the very early compositions are any good, heaping scorn on the late piano concerti, is clearly at odds with his own musical traditions. Even the act of resorting to solitary record-

ing sessions to escape the volatility of public performance (over which Mozart most of all would have scratched his head in dismay) is a grand artistic failure of sorts, unworthy of so addressing the universal muse of timeless music. Today, despite the numerous CD and online releases to his name, Gould’s idiosyncratic recordings of the classical repertoire – including his 1962 torpedoing of Brahms’s First Piano Concerto with Leonard Bernstein presiding, and the pianist’s obsession with Petula Clark’s “Downtown” – tend to come across as self-indulgent. His 1967 recording of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata N° 29, for instance, sounds like he threw all the hammers and wires out with the klavier. And it would be a waste of time downloading his 1963–69 version of *The Well-Tempered Clavier Book II*, which sounds almost funereal compared to Tatiana Nikolayeva’s unrivalled 1984 recording. Somewhat in the mould of Orpheus himself, that mythic “father of songs” and ever-lamenting orphan of darkness, Gould has now become the mystery-priest of novices who don’t usually care for the classics.

The cornerstone of Gould’s reputation rests on his performance of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*, yet even here we are torn over whether to side with the first and most famous 1955 version or the 1981 recording released just weeks before he died of a stroke at age 50. In this as in other challenges concerning Gouldmania, one wouldn’t go so far as to say – as John Cage once shouted from the stage about Beethoven – “Gould was wrong!” On the surface, these are simply two very different readings at opposite ends of the pianist’s career, one no less authoritative or disadvantaged than the other. And it is certainly counterintuitive to argue that the later performance brings into question the inestimable value of the earlier, thus fating both to perdition. On the other hand, people generally refuse to take a stand for fear of offending the Muses, of being struck blind – like that other legendary singer Thamyris – for challenging the two Goldbergs to a singing contest, especially since Bach would be the clear loser.

Thamyris is an interesting case, insofar as Pliny the Elder also claimed that he was the first to play a solo instrument – the cithara – with no voice accompaniment. Gould, of course, wailed like a banshee when he played. He was taught the piano seated on his mother’s lap, a certain rehearsal of loss and mourning later transferred to the little rickety stool his father made for him, which was to become the only bridle that could egg him on in public until it literally fell apart. But by then the son had long since retreated inside the recording studio. None of these details have been lost on the principal hagiographers of one of the few pianists in the 20th century to top the popular music charts. To his defense, Gould’s

vocalising reputedly goes hand-in-glove with his refusal to embrace classical notions of redemption and *ex cathedra* fulfilment. Most apologists agree that even his surgical keyboard action is aimed at combating cultural white noise, borrowing ideas from the European avant-garde in default of obscuring imminent technological disaster in the years following WWII.

This surmise can be readily applied to Gould’s glacial playing of the Brahms concerto, which is arbitrarily linked to the composer’s original (and controversial) metronome markings. Others, including most performers of the piece, are not so easily swayed. And it’s not even because the Gould performance is so *adagio molto* as to come apart at the seams, making one want to leap into the Rhine like Robert Schumann, the concerto’s principal muse. It’s more that these markings provided a convenient excuse to hamstring an old warhorse of the concert hall. It’s a joke at the listener’s expense, together with forcing the flummoxed Bernstein to bend to his will. Only Klemperer’s ill-fated 1968 recording of Mahler’s Seventh Symphony comes even close to this elephantine school of musicking. (Admittedly, Klemperer’s bipolar mood swings were hardly his fault.)

These erratic, *erogonic* fluctuations in tempo and musical line naturally follow through on certain *erogenous* consequences. The *Bibliotheca* of Pseudo-Apollodorus points out that Thamyris was also the first man in the ancient world to have openly loved another male. In Gould’s case, his sexuality will always remain a mystery to us, though we do know that he turned Bernstein down flat (Peter Ostwald’s recent biography suggests that he was merely a closet heterosexual). Regardless, it is tempting to interpret his intractable playing as a return to the scene of the original crime committed between his mother’s thighs, as something at once delirious and forbidden. Perhaps the three primeval Muses – *Aoidē* (“song” or “voice”), *Meletē* (“practice” or “occasion”), and *Mnēmē* (“memory”) – could no longer function for Gould as benign maternal goddesses but had instead become like harpies, those snatching winged death-spirits from which he remained forever in flight.

Certainly, the great divagation between Gould’s two Goldbergs often seems strained in ways that do not always seem particularly interpretative or even jazzy. A comparison between, say, Daniel Barenboim’s 2004 *Well-Tempered Clavier Book I* and Gould’s *Book II* lays bare a similar problem. Echoing throughout Barenboim’s account are numerous spiritual and technological battles recorded in the bare notes themselves, without ever once losing grasp of the revolutionary nature of Bach’s first collection of fully worked keyboard pieces in all 24 keys

(notwithstanding such earlier pantonal compositions as J.C.F. Fischer’s *Ariadne musica neo-organoedum* and F. Suppig’s *Fantasia* from *Labyrinthus Musicus*). Gould’s Bach, by contrast, completely ignores or sidesteps the advent of modern tonality in the late 17th century in pointless deconstruction of everything it has meanwhile come to represent in music. This anti-humanist approach is rather like what happens in the early Pierre Boulez, such as his 1950s total-serialist *Le Marteau sans maître* (*Hammer Without a Master*) – except that here the soprano voice is provided a cappella by the Dionysian Gould himself.

It might happen to prick up your ears from a purely avant-garde perspective, but it still doesn’t add anything new to our understanding of Bach’s lessons in well-temperament as a technological, namely reproducible, way forward in musicking (and which incidentally was itself eventually supplanted by the modern system of true equal temperament, which is also what makes playing *Das wohltemperierte Klavier* on the piano such an ironic exercise to begin with). Barenboim immediately gets it, striking just the right tone of unequal and near-equal modulations, of construable versus purely mechanical soundscapes – ensuring, as he says, that Bach’s masterwork not only comes across as “the sum of everything that has preceded it, but also points the way ahead.” Bach is indeed the Shakespeare of musical notation, insofar as both were situated at the crossroads of great technological upheavals. Gould, for his part, derails the whole history of musical temperament to the tune of the hearing-impaired. It would make more sense if he had played Bach’s preludes and fugues on a real clavichord, or at least on one of Cage’s “prepared pianos.” Cage mysteriously gets Bach right, even if at the expense of Beethoven.

In the long run, the musicological and interpretive disconnect that Gould’s piano playing continues to instil in modern listeners only highlights the fact that the history of music is one long series of temperamental train wrecks. Thomas Mann was right on cue when he asked Adorno to stand in for the Adrian Leverkühn character in *Doktor Faustus* (1947), which has forever branded its reluctant muse an “*apocalyptic aesthete*.” According to Hanns Eisler’s “Notes on *Dr. Faustus*” (1953), “Great art, as the Devil maintains, can now only be produced, in this declining society, through complete isolation, loneliness, through complete heartlessness.” The above comparison between Gould and Barenboim (or Nikolayeva) is quite revealing in terms of Mann’s treatment of the Faustian wager that is all musicking, because in the last analysis Gould was better at reading or “sounding” the musical landscape than indeed listening for its lapses,

which necessarily entails some loss of voice or right to be heard. If hearing is a type of regression, in your head or between the lines, then the act of listening might be akin to something like *falling through to the other side* of written or tonal language, and so is fundamentally related to silence. The curlicue loops that Bach handwrote on the title page of the first book of his *Well-Tempered Clavier* are in themselves more instructional of the musical maelstrom that well-temperament tried to put to rest than tuning instructions per se (as some have assumed).

This kind of tonic/acoustic distinction is likewise illuminated for us by Cage’s 19-hour-long performance of Satie’s *Vexations*, which in a way is a very literal interpretation of the French composer’s enigmatic instructions appended at the top of his original three-line score: “In order to play this motif 840 times consecutively to oneself, it will be useful to prepare oneself beforehand, and in utter silence, by grave immobilities.” In 1963 at the Pocket Theatre in New York, Cage duly conned everyone he knew and even the odd ring-in to help him finally realise Satie’s dream-music of immobilized repetition. Others also listened in to Cage’s performance, like Andy Warhol, who the following year went on to make his eight-hour-long film of the Empire State Building. And in 1965, American minimalist composer Steve Reich also experimented with accidental, free-floating temperament in *It’s Gonna Rain*, made by running two slightly uneven sound tapes of three words from a preacher’s sermon about Noah and the Flood. The prophetic words soon begin to splinter into shifting sound blocks, eventually breaking apart and dissolving into completely new arrangements of word-sounds. Gould used this same phasing device in his “contrapuntal” radio broadcasts, so we pretty much know what technological lengths he was capable of when the performance involved only listening. When playing the Goldbergs, however, he unconsciously tries to rescue the voice from the musical underworld, but like Orpheus turns round at the last minute. In fact, Bach can only be exorcised at the keyboard, when pitted against, as his title says, “those already skilled in this study,” not from inside the soundscape of the times. And even if it’s still not so easy to restage Satie’s monumental *Vexations* (though a 1983 Alan Marks recording manages a restrained 40 repetitions at 70 minutes), one can still catch a sense of his enharmonic equivalents while listening to those final two words silently repeating themselves on your lips – “*immobilités sérieuses*,” modern music’s Faustian bedtime story.



portrait of Glenn Gould
collection of the author

Daniel Barenboim,
“I was reared on Bach,” www.danielbarenboim.com

Evan Eisenberg,
The Recording Angel:
Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa, 2nd ed.
(Yale UP, 2005).

Theodor W. Adorno, “On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music” (1953), in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert & tr. Susan H. Gillespie (California UP, 2002).

Peter F. Ostwald, Glenn Gould: *The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1997).

Alex Ross, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2007).

Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2000).

Paul Foss, who lives and works in Los Angeles, is the publisher of *Art & Text* and *artUS*. This essay is dedicated to David Carrier.



Snorre Hvamen and Ignas Krunglevičius
You Are Not Here (installation view) 2007
photograph courtesy the artists

Nº 6

Local sound and public space

Julija Fomina talks
to Ignas Krunglevičius

JULIJA FOMINA

I’d like to do this interview in a verbal form, not in written, especially because we are going to talk about audio books. Even though you are living in Norway and we could talk in Skype, we would need to write down our conversation anyway, for printing it in a magazine. I wonder how should I say: “I have read an audio book” or “I have heard an audio book”? And what would the book proper become in each case?

IGNAS KRUNGLEVIČIUS

I think “I’ve heard the book” fits better. An audio book is quite a specific experience: something in between listening to music and just reading. Reading, as such, is a way of receiving information, when we sort of decode it. If someone else reads out the text instead of us, then the book turns into thoughts read out loud. In each case – whether on paper or in a digital medium – the crucial thing for us is information, even though the ways we receive it are different.

JF The peculiarity of the experience the books give makes them encourage multitasking: you can simultaneously listen to the text being read and drive, talk to your

friends or cook. In this case, how does the listener's conscious divide the content of the audio book, as a media message?

IK While thinking about the answer, I went over to my studio on my skateboard. Multitasking is possible as well as in music listening, but the plot of the audio book requires greater concentration than wallpaper music. Unless there are books where the text is aimed exactly at making a background. For instance, a book meant for cults or an advertisement, could easily play in the background while the listener is busy in the kitchen or painting a picture.

JF What do you mean by books meant for cults? Are these audio books meant for particular esoteric practices – for instance, on meditation – or the works of authors from the golden fund of the 20th century?

IK Actually I mean esoteric practices, but if we replay a cult book of some golden fund for many times, it could become a cult. I should make an experiment and check this possibility.

JF Let us talk about the collaborative project you and Snorre Hvamen have carried out and will show in Vilnius side-by-side with the *ARS VIVA* exhibition focused on sound. As far as I know, you are going to present a book installed on a bench. Each passer-by (or listener) will be able to plug in the headphones and listen to the text of the book. How did you have the idea of making an audio book in this area: inside a bench in Vilnius, at an exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre?

IK Last year, Telemark art centre organized *TEMPO Skien* exhibition in Skien (Norway). They invited the artists to expose their artworks at the city park. So we suggested installing MP3 record-players into the objects in the park: a waste bin, an electricity transformer box, a meadow and a bench. For each record-player, we wrote a site-specific soundtrack. So later, we had the idea of installing mobile sound galleries inside various objects in the city.

The bench, I guess, is the most powerful symbol of public space that is vanishing gradually. In this case, local sound is just as important.

JF Many of your projects are related to the topic of public space: you and Siri Harr Steinvik shot *Parus* (The Sail), a movie on the present life of a cinema house in Sovetsk (Russia). Recently, you have participated in the *Poslinkis* (Slip) digital art project in Vilnius, where advertisement screens showed works of art at public places all over the city. The text you are going to put inside a bench next to the Contemporary Art Centre is *Bloga knyga* (*Bad Book*) by Kristupas Sabolius, young Lithuanian intellectual. To be more exact, the soundtrack that you have

produced particularly for the exhibition. I wonder in what ways is the text of the book related to the Vilnius public space?

IK In Sovetsk, we organised a movie festival, trying to revive the closed-down cinema house for three days. During the festival, our relations with the local audience, as well as with the space as such, grew quite complicated and multilayered. So later, we made the process a documentary film you have mentioned. A city park, or an advertisement stand, have a totally different passage of time, and different rules of rendering context than the white cube of the exhibition halls or concert halls. That is why I was looking for a local narrative to put inside the Vilnius city bench – a story that would easily resonate with local audience. I discovered the book by Kristupas Sabolius by pure chance, and it fit perfectly into our project. Here, I am interested in the relation between the audience, the bench as a local space icon, and the local sound – *Bad Book* by Sabolius.

JF There have been very few art projects in Lithuania that integrate themselves into the city fabric and change the whole notion of the public space. I know that the *Pro-Test Laboratory* by Nomedas and Gediminas Urbonas', aiming to save the *Lietuva (Lithuania)* cinema house, has made a great impression on you. Even in Norway you are wearing a scarf that the fans of the cinema house have made specially for the project. Are you interested in the civil aspect of those projects, as an artist – in the real changes we can achieve by this artistic initiative? Or are you more fascinated with learning the rules of the game in public spaces and then applying them, as a kind of creative analysis?

IK I am mostly interested in these projects because they generate discussion. I see the Pro-test Laboratory not as a piece of art, but as an expression of civil responsibility, which is very important for me. I have just seen a programme on provocative art on Swedish TV (KOBRA, SVT). The programme told about several Russian artists in Moscow who organised an exhibition criticising the Russian Orthodox church participating in politics. Then the authorities accused them of mocking at God and gave them to public lynching.

The situation in Lithuania is very similar to that: if only art would criticize the Draconic activities of *Vilniaus Prekyba* retail operator, or the fanatic intolerance that the Catholic church feels to homosexuals, very strange things would start happening. Looking from this position, any kind of art that provokes a discussion in Lithuania is avant-garde. For art is a free space where everyone can express something that becomes dangerous or impossible in other contexts. Even if we eliminate social critics

from those projects, the very protest against art isolation and turning it into a trademark, I guess, would remain.

JF You have been a student of the Music Academy of Norway, but you also have produced documentaries and video movies, as well as participated in various video art projects. How did your interest in video arts begin?

IK It was roughly at the same time when I started to study music. However, in the case of visual arts it was a little slower, even though I started to experiment as soon as I got a technical possibility. I am very much fascinated with all kinds of art that is organised in time. Especially in the common principles of composition and the differences between them that you can easily convert from one discipline to other. Lately, I have started to work in a topical manner: the whole idea of the work dictates which media (or a group of them). I should choose to realise it. So the technical and conceptual knowledge of various branches of art gives me greater freedom in realizing my art projects.

JF During the conversation, you have mentioned experiment several times. What meaning do you give it in your creative work?

IK Experiment is one of the steps in the creative process. It is an excellent educative way of checking abstract ideas in practice. It's a transitional phase of the whole process: when the idea emerges, there is an experiment to prove the idea, and when you get the result, you correct the mistakes and crystallise the final product (or not). The experiment is as meaningful as the idea or the result of the work.

JF You have mentioned working with topics. What topics have you been dealing with mostly? You're living in Norway, but still observing Lithuanian political and cultural life very closely. Does your nationality influence your choice of topics for artworks?

IK I do not give much importance to my nationality when I choose my subject. But my Lithuanian origin allows a closer look and deeper understanding of what is going on in Lithuania. When looking from the outside, I estimate it in a different way. For instance, I notice some critical points that I would not otherwise see so clearly if I still lived in Vilnius. Perhaps because I have something to compare it with. The people that surround me in Oslo are politically active, so it influences me: I have been concerned more and more with what is going on in Lithuania. However, I am not interested in political art directly. I am much more concerned with the dynamics of politics as such, the power structures, the Darwinism of micro- and macroeconomics, the control over a person and masses, the various forms of this control, as well as self-destruction and self-realization of the person. These topics are

significant for me and I manifest them in one or another way in my works.

JF Let us come back to the music. Various contemporary art projects have been using sound not just as an integral part of the artwork, but as a media that changes the usual format of the exhibition. For instance: in 2005, the students of *De Appel* curatorial programme implemented a project called *Radiodays* (www.radiodays.org). There, instead of the curated exhibition, they established a temporary radio station that transmitted discussions, interviews, artistic projects and dance lessons. And this year, Palais De Tokyo centre in Paris opened *Cellar Door* exhibition by artist Loris Greaud, and there was an opera written specially for this exhibition. It functioned as the score of the opera, or as its structural axis. So is a sound project for Vilnius rather a site-specific installation at public space, or a certain way of re-thinking the whole practice of exposing artworks, when the artwork may be found and experienced by chance? What is the place of the sound in this project, in general?

IK Along with the objects you've just mentioned, I'd like to speak about the mobile audio mini-gallery network project that my colleague Snorre Hvamen has been realizing in Oslo. It consists of specially programmed MP3 record-players installed in city objects: a wall, a pole or a bench we have already talked about. So the listener plugs in his/her headphones into the window pane of a kiosk to listen to a piece of music that the artist or composer have written. A specially invited group of artists is writing soundtracks for those galleries, whose opening is coming this autumn. In the future, we plan to work and experiment more with alternative sound art distribution networks, as well as with exposition practice. Still, our installation for the Contemporary Art Centre exhibition is going to be more site-specific. Along with the bench, we are planning to install a series of MP3 players into various spaces of the CAC. The players will form a network adapted for the exhibition space, a sort of comment to it. In Vilnius, we will be creating the things you will hear in the players – *local sound* that will be a part of message carriers.

Ignas Krunglevičius is a composer and artist living and working in Oslo. Julija Fomina is a curator at the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius.

Art strike 2008



Ripper chats with Dr. Flame

When preparing a sound/music issue it was natural to invite the Chicks On Speed (COS) to be involved – they made a large-scale exhibition titled *Shoe Fuck!* at the CAC in 2007. As deadline for the magazine was looming COS was watching a list-serve drama unfold about artists' rights to get paid proper fees for institutional exhibitions. It's the sort of issue that fuelled the 2007–2008 screen writers' strike in the United States; and has been percolating within the music industry since the inception of digital download technology. Now its visual artists' turn – they have to eat, too!

Simon Rees

don't pass this around (it's private) but i got this from the curator (Ripper) who asked me to be in the video screening, and was at least pleased to know that she relayed her views (and by default, i assume mine) with her boss spungie at The Zoo Museum (ZM).

since i discussed this issue with ya'll incessantly today, i thought i'd pass along. more soon, am trying to figure out best way to deal with this "no pay for work" situation that we've been dealt... open eternally to suggestions, ideas and most importantly, opportunities, to confront the matter

X Randy

Randy

i totally agree with you about a fee for screening your work, but i am not sure it will be possible in this case. i just sent an email to Spungie expressing my thoughts about this. i actually had many conversations with sofia hernandez about artist's fees when i was at art in general... and she always said "artists work, and they have to be paid for their work." i couldn't agree more. as we both know things are so imbalanced in the financial network of the art world. believe me; i can still barely pay my bills!

and seeing all the extravagance of the fairs last weekend makes me sick. looking forward to hearing from you in the morning...

Ripper

Chicks On Speed *Art Rules* with Douglas Gordon
(performance still) 2007
photograph courtesy the artists



Chicks on Speed *I love Art* (detail) 2002
photograph courtesy the artists

lots to look over! thank you, Dr. Flame!

one thing that Eve said is that she does not want to give to art auctions anymore because a lot of “Benefits” are used to raise money for institutions that then do not pay the artists that work for them (ZM is a good example), nor necessarily exhibit their work. And let alone the great art that rich folks then get “on-the-cheap” without thinking for a second about how to actually also support the artists directly. the artist can ask for part of the auction fee, and maybe we need to start doing this to squeeze the institutions but it would have to be an overall agreement btw many artists to demand this because there has to be a noticeable, purposeful “squeezing”; plus the institutions will also sometimes be punishing and not invite the artists back for auction who request payment.

i think we should try & organize something around this, as an all-out art-strike is somewhat impossible but: it’s not that unreasonable to see if we can get at least a big group of artists to refuse to give to auctions via a form response or letter until this issue is on the table in the commercial NYC/LA art community

i think we need to call joint meeting about these issues in NYC (ZM? Chelsea?) & LA locations

i think we should definitely physically protest or organize others in the gallery to speak against galleries that actually outright rip artists off (i.e. S Gallery) (Oliver Zybok, rattenen germany)

please list more-instead of enabling them to continue unreasonable policies and stealing money from, and completely disrespecting, artists

That’s my thoughts for now, until i view the links...

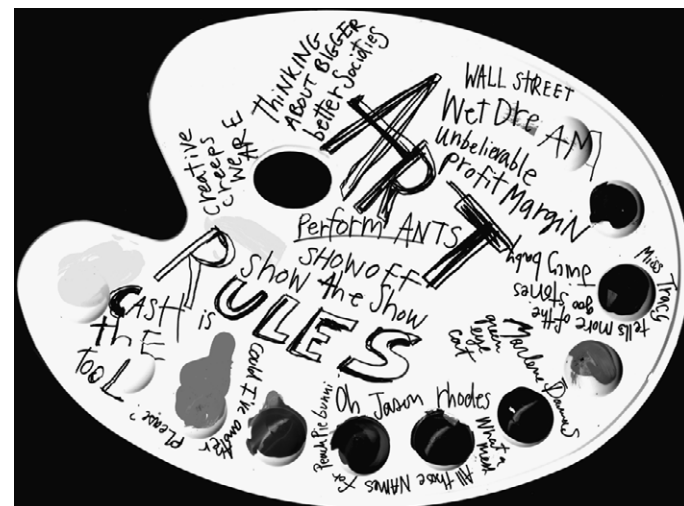
Randy

Dr. FLAME REPLY:

i think this would require booth protest and getting something legal in motion... The real issue is that there are no laws that govern any aspect of the art world’s monetary exchanges (galleries, museums, art fairs, artist... etc.). You’ve got an entirely unregulated industry, that doesn’t fall into any of the normal labor or exchange of goods categories that typically protect the ‘worker’.

Museums will need to be legally defined as employers, and artists as employees... i believe!? And even then... i think a specific set of laws would need to be passed like the ones noted for the ‘apparel industry’ that apply to the nebulous functioning of the art world.

www.oag.state.ny.us/labor/employer.html
(crap.)



Chicks On Speed *Palette* 2007
photograph courtesy the artists

“Independent contractors are not protected by the labor law and are not entitled to state enforcement of their claims for payment. Although there is extensive case law on the subject of what constitutes an employer-employee relationship, the issue is not always clear and determinations on similar facts and circumstances may differ among the various bodies which are called upon to make such determinations.”

seems this stems from a legal laps in protecting the rights of artists due to the fact that only in the last 50 years (way too long) have we been considered to have any economic value. oookay?

www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws_home/622130/description#description

Wondering if we can talk to someone at the VLA?

www.vlany.org/aboutus/index.php

Also the EU is a great example to fallow. Legally speaking. Just found this site.

www.culturalpolicies.net/web/denmark.php?aid=244
as mystified as you.

x.

Dr. Flame



Chicks On Speed *Shoe Fuck!* (installation view) 2007
photograph courtesy the artists, and the CAC, Vilnius

in light of all that is going on... i have been thinking it would be really great to start an online forum for artists to discuss these issues. and to collect a lot of legal resource information that most artists don’t know about. has this been done for the US? is there a need for this?

ART + CAPITAL.org

since i’m such a web person i know how to do it – where people can log in and blog etc... really simple, not fancy. what do you think?

x w

DR.FLAME REPLIES:

Please do. These ramblings should probably be public. How about just a blog, since it’s free and easy to use and set up. Unless you’re feeling more ambitious? lets seriously write-up, collectively, an ‘artists bill of rights’.

Dr. Flame

randy wrote:

yes! yes bill o rights for Artists Against Greedy Exploiters! and bill of wrongs for Greedy Exploiters!

as for auctions, yes all of that is true, but it’s much more complicated b/c the auctions (for art institutions, not social causes) are used to also “give artists exposure” in the same way the no-fee exhibitions are, and then the same policies continue after they’ve raised their money, which they couldn’t do without the cooperation of artists. Everything we can do to call attention to the problem is useful, esp. if it calls attention to the actual way the funds are raised and then questions what these institutions are doing with the money. i don’t want to put the institutions out of business but the problem is extreme in the larger, wealthier institutions (i.e. MOMA, PS1 and ZM have all told me on different occasions working with them that they “have no money”), so they need to be called out.

i think it would be rad’ to be at the next ZM or MOMA gala – in protest of their policy to not pay artists – to call attention to the issue not only with the museum staff but with the donors as well (richard flood has said explicitly that artists get exposure at the ZM and do not need to get paid) And you know none of us have problems getting into galas!

Yerba Buena is a great example of the opposite, they’re successful at exhibiting AND supporting artists, so there’s really no excuse beyond artists being involuntarily repatriated to a pre-capitalist state by the businesses and institutions that choose to do so. Yes, i could have bought a week’s worth of groceries with a \$50–75 screening fee. This may seem, to someone like Richard Flood, like a ridiculous amount of money to be upset over but that’s because the folks running these places are completely disjointed from our economic reality. As Vag said on Sat., there’s gonna be a revolt and it’s coming soon!

And to clarify, we need to distinguish btw expense money and fees. They’re treated as the same thing in the US art institutions and they’re not, as we know. I’ve only been provided with expense money – if anything – by the institutions I’ve worked with in the US, never a fee. When I’ve worked overseas, fees and expenses, like in all business, are treated separately.

Randy

Ok. The art auction thing is an issue. But my feeling is you choose to do those because you support a cause. i personally, have basically stopped with art institutions (or i limit it to one a year) and give to auctions for social causes i care about like SLRP or ‘low-income housing for women in the Bronx’... etc.

i agree artists should not have to be the people who support the institutions that support them. You can just say no, i can’t i’m sorry. Or create a do-able limit, like one auction a year, and tell other requests you’ve given what you can this year, how about next year?... Rather than asking for a fee. Something polite but that if everyone follows it may create a bit of a choke on the institutions. And this manipulative relation between auction and value of artist within the institutions.

And there is already legal advocacy in motion (or passed) for getting the benefits of a tax write off for the amount sold for/value of the work.

www.vlany.org/advocacy/legislative.php

—

VLA supports federal legislation creating an Artists Fair Market Value Tax Deduction.

March 26, 2004 – VLA supports the Artist-Museum Partnership Act, which would allow artists to take a fair market value deduction for donating their self-created works to museum, libraries or other charitable institutions. VLA wrote letters to Senator Clinton, Senator Schumer, and Representative Maloney urging them to support this important piece of legislation.

See actual law passed:

www.thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c109:2:./temp~c109zuzYlw:e137209:

—

i believe the bigger issue is that a million/billion dollar institution like the Zoo Museum can’t come up with even a totally inadequate fee of \$75 for screening works. At least something is being done about auctions but beyond that institutions are not legally bound to provide ARTIST WITH FEES for there work!

That’s totally nuts in my book.

When do we meet?

Let’s draft a letter of artist rights and get everyone in the universe to sign it.

We’ll ‘conference call skype’ with LA.

My pad next Wednesday

Randy

—

DR.FLAME :

Ok. Randy, you and i can write up an official invite tonight when i see you.

Wed april 9th, 8pm.

at a.k.’s pad: 24 prince st.

TO DO:

–Plan actions and come up with fabulous slogans, titles, t-shirts and posters.

–Discuss list grievances that should be core to the bill of rights.

–have legal tutorial including Matti? i can contact her.

(like does anyone actually know how making a petition actually works...

Does a list of names just get sent to your senator and that’s it ? And could we get the VLA behind it?)

boring details, i know.

Who can be secretary (I can’t spell)?

sincerely dr. Flame

the meetings happened, the whole of the dead, decomposed art world rolled over in it’s grave. The zombie was burnt & the ashes were mashed together into a pulp, a beautiful crusty baby that was nursed by the boob monster, fed jean baudrillard & danced about by merce Cunningham. The action as art filled all people’s lives. the museums collapsed like old churches, the remains are still visited by busloads of tourists who are told of a dark time when art was enslaved by speculators & money laundering inside traders who mystified, contorted & controlled the advancement of culture.

The Chicks on Speed (COS) founded by Alex Murray-Leslie and Melissa Logan in Munich, 1997, is an all-female performance group especially well-known for their cross-genre “DIY” performances. The group has expanded in number and scope making art, music, fashion, and launching a record label for female recording artists, and collaborating with Douglas Gordon on a set of performance actions known as *Art Rules*. COS now includes (Alex Murray-Leslie and Melissa Logan), Anat Ben-David, Kathi Glas, A.L. Steiner, and Adi Nachman.

Nº 8

Slave to the rhythm

Mark Feary and Simon Maidment
talk to Danius Kesminas

Danius Kesminas is an Australian-Lithuanian artist who regularly uses musical forms as a process for engaging his concerns, including the visual arts industry, critiquing its reverence, seriousness and earnestness. To this end, the musicality within Kesminas’ practice is a tactic for collaboration into uncharted territories, rather than an endpoint in itself. His practice, often intentionally provocative, gives rise to discussion around authorship and cultural mythologies.

We held an informal discussion with Kesminas at West Space (4 April 2008), a contemporary art organisation in Melbourne we are both involved with, to tease out some of his strategies. Among the projects we discussed was *Slave Pianos*, a group consisting of two contemporary artists (of which Kesminas is one) and two composers/musicians, who create ambitious events combining installation, music and performance. Their subject matter is usually art figures and movements in recent (20th Century) art history. Kesminas also initiated an art project and band in Yogyakarta with seven Indonesian musicians in 2006. Their name Punkasila references both the cultural movement of Punk, and *Pancasila*, the official philosophical doctrine of the Indonesian state, as espoused by President Soekarno in 1945. This art-performance-installation-band is a high energy, anarchic hybrid that manifests in a unique blend of traditional Indonesian crafts, homemade military band outfits, machine gun guitars, and post-disaster rock with lyrics that give voice to the cacophony of acronyms constituting the Indonesian body politic. Kesminas is also a founder of the art/music group The Histrionics, which melds the musicality of a banal pub-rock covers band with refashioned lyrics critiquing the cannons of 20th century art history.

Mark Feary and Simon Maidment, 2008

SIMON MAIDMENT

By way of introduction to your practice Danius, I’d like to begin with the provocations and interventions that you’ve undertaken, often with artists or the art world as their focus or subject. It seems to me these provocations have evolved a good deal, and are taking a particular form recently in the international collaborations you’ve initiated

in Indonesia, China and Cambodia. To give some context for that development though, perhaps you’d like to start by giving us an example of a local intervention that you’ve done here in Australia.

DANIUS KESMINAS

Well, one of those was the whole Domenico de Clario episode. (de Clario is a Melbourne-based contemporary artist) It was about 1998 when Maudie Palmer curated an exhibition called ‘Remanence’ at the old Magistrates’ Court, with Dom, Marina Ambramovic, Daniel Buren, Cai Guo-Qiang, Dennis Oppenheim, Imants Tillers and others for the Melbourne Festival. Dom’s show was a grand piano and accoutrements in one of the courtrooms with tiered seating, and he would perform between 12 noon – 7pm, daily for two weeks. Well, Michael Stevenson (a New Zealand born artist, also a member of Slave Pianos) and I, we were onto it, we thought let’s secretly record it, and make pirate copies, bootleg it! It was so easy to do, because guess what, Dom’s blindfolded! He can’t see anything! We were on shifts, I’m on one day and Michael’s on the next day. A big part of Dom’s practice is endurance, but get this, he’s not there at 12... I’m there at 12, Michael’s there at 12, there’s no Dom! Well he walks in with his café latte about 1:30, and I’m having to [*jumps under table*] get down hiding under the seats! [*laughs*] Anyway, we recorded seven different days onto cassette and packaged it as *Domenico de Clario: Live at the Former Magistrates’ Court*, and made an elaborately produced box set, like we’ve done with *Slave Pianos*, and we made it available for sale at Readings Book Store in Carlton! And we put this ridiculous price on, like \$100, so you know no one’s going to buy it, but it’s on display! Anyway, I just let it go, went overseas to do some project, and the next thing you know, my old man’s ringing up, saying, “Danius, there’s a letter here from a solicitor”. So I’m being sued...

MARK FEARY

And you can’t read it because it was written by a blindfolded solicitor.

DK It was a shock, because you’d expect someone to call and say ‘What are you doing dickhead? Knock it off’. The letter demanded the return of the tapes and an order to sign a statutory declaration. So I drafted a response using references from *Peripheral Vision* by Charles Green (Australian art theorist and critic), which has a large section on de Clario. I took the text, substituted my name for Dom, and just twisted it a little bit, to explain what I was

doing - because that's partly what Dom's about, appropriational strategies – and I sent it to his lawyer, saying actually, what I'm doing is an artwork! But I didn't say where I'd derived the text.

MF And then you got another letter, from Charles Green's solicitor...

DK *[laughs]* Well, I was saying, I'm just doing what Dom does. It's ridiculous, if you actually apply that stuff, and test it, he wants to sue you... Anyway, they demanded the return of the master tapes, and I really didn't want to, but I had to do something. So I unscrewed the casings of the cassettes, took out the magnetic tape – seriously, there was miles of tape - and just shoved it into a padded bag, just the tape, all tangled and completely unusable, and kept the cases... because that's my property, I'll keep the casings and you can have the tape. Can you imagine the lawyers opening this package? They'd be going 'what the fuck is this? Oh Dom, this must be yours!' Didn't hear a peep...

MF Have you seen Dom again?

DK Yeah, there's a postscript to the story, because later he moved to Western Australia, heading up one of the art schools there. And we did a gig there, The Histrionics, at PICA (the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art), and he was in the audience... And he was friendly, he obviously thought, 'oh shit, maybe I should... just be... your friend?!'

MF Thinking 'that way this will never happen to me again'!

DK And I'm thinking, good, whatever, I'm your friend too, it's not about being your enemy! I don't know, all that world is just so stupidly wound up.

MF Precious?

DK Yeah, precious in a way, and that's exactly what The Histrionics are particularly allergic to, preciousness, to pretentiousness, to all that kind of posturing. That's why I love going to Indo (Indonesia – where Kesminas formed a band called Punksila in Yogyakarta), you know because... well there just isn't any of that. Pure economics prevent, preclude, any of that indulgence, and the stakes are a great deal higher, the very notion of making art is pretty fucking profound. It's not some privileged indulgence. You go over there and all my little Dom de Clarío stunts, all my Histrionics gags, well, they don't mean anything. They don't! You just feel like a dickhead, it's a kind of crisis, you've got to rethink everything. And in the end all my work is about engagement, it's about communication. Well, when you go over there, it just doesn't hold water, to them it's meaningless.

SM Because it has been a trend with both The Histrionics and *Slave Pianos* that you use those music forms,

whether it's rock or the composed orchestral, operatic works, as a foil to interrogate art and art history...

DK I'm glad you both appreciate the connection between those projects, because many people are completely confused by the fact that they're utilising different musical genres, so they think they're not related, but they are and obviously so. The Histrionics is often misunderstood as being a negative project. There is an element of parody there, but there's a great deal which is homage, bloody oath! How else could you be so obsessed about doing all this stuff! *[waves at the Slave Pianos transcriptions and Histrionics lyric sheets with their pages of footnotes]*

MF Well, that's what we were discussing this morning, how not just with The Histrionics, but with the other projects as well, there's that homage, while at the same time there's an attempt to kind of break down the influence that work has over you...

DK Yeah, it's not about killing the father, but it's not about being an orphan either! *[laughs]* That seems self-evident... you know what it is? It's 'value adding'... *[laughs]*

SM And you've turned your attention to a whole range of artists through the *Slave Pianos* project, tell us more about that undertaking.

DK The whole *Slave Pianos* thing started in establishing a vast, but always expanding, archive of visual artists' sound works. There's always been this trajectory with artists making music. Some of this material is really obscure, I mean, basically it all is, a lot of it is on vinyl and cassette, so finding this stuff can be difficult, you've really got to dig deep, forensically. Except we're not really fans, we don't listen to it recreationally! *[laughs]* That's for sure, it's not for recreational purposes! So we take this sound, or noise, or even just the audio track of a video piece, and we transcribe it as musical notation, and prepare it for an automated piano performance.

SM So anyone can 'learn to be the artist', become the artist through the learning the sheet music, like all those guitar magazines!

DK Exactly.

SM Tell us about what's involved in the transcription of a piece.

DK The process was devised by the two musicians in *Slave Pianos*, Neil Kelly and Rohan Drape. Rohan's written a computer program to import any sound source and generate musical notation. He then tweaks it to make it musically coherent. It's just notes, but he'll shape it while listening back to the original. So it's always faithful to the source.

Why the piano? Number one, it's a play on Peter Tyn-dall's *Slave Guitars*. And the piano, because there's a vast



Rohan Drape, Danius Kesminas, Neil Kelly, and Michael Stevenson
Slave Pianos: Two Lives in Flux (performance still) 2004
National Drama Theatre, Vilnius
photograph courtesy the artists

history of artists using the piano right back through the century. I mean the violin is a far older instrument, and the guitar probably is too, but the piano, is like a crucible of... seriousness.

MF It's such a class-based symbol of refinement, rather than the guitar, which is associated far more with a rebellion against those kinds of systems.

DK That's the point, what we are doing with *Slave Pianos* is playing with the avant-garde, and returning it to the conservatorium. It's a supremely radical gesture, right, but couched in this really kind of conservative academic process. That's what really disturbs some artists.

SM How did Punksila come about?

DK Well, I got an Asialink (Australian cultural funding organisation) four month studio residency in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. By the way, there's no actual studio! *[laughs]* And our notion of contemporary art doesn't really exist! There's a lot of activity there, fucking hell, it's flourishing! But it's not about the art world, it's the opposite to the preciousness we were talking about before. And these guys are doing stuff in a way that's not about

ambition, or career, it's just pure. I've never seen anything like it, I was blown away. For the first few weeks, I was just soaking up the depth of the culture, the people, the food, all that. And I wanted to respond, to make something, to do something. But every stupid idea I'd come up with, I'd just look out the window and go well *[snorts]* I'm just a fool, I give up, because look at that, that's just amazing. Like I say, it was sort of a crisis, it wasn't that I was depressed, I was inspired but it was just a questioning of well, all my tricks are meaningless here? So I had this translator guy, and he would take me out every night to see bands, because there's a really vibrant music scene over there. I was thinking 'how good are these guys! Imagine what you could do with them!'. Also I didn't know anything about Indonesia, pretty much still don't, but I was reading a book by Damien Kingsbury, *The Politics of Indonesia*, really intensively, and checking this other stuff out in parallel. As I'm reading I'm constantly referring back to the index, because every page is just imbedded with acronyms, and it's like 400 odd pages. And by the time I'd gotten to page 399, I've gone 'eureka!' –



Punkasila base camp at the Indonesian Art Institute (ISI), post-earthquake, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, October 2006
Image: Edwin “Dolly” Roseno

acronyms, a project about acronyms. Well, how do I do that? Then I thought about these artist guys playing in bands... Basically I just approached the dudes and said hey, let’s form a band, and I handpicked everyone, I said I want Hahan from that band, I want Rudy Atjeh from that band, I want Iyok from that group, Janu from that band. It was like an Indonesian super group! It was all friendly, they all knew one another, and support each other, and their default setting, like mine, is just to say ‘yes – we’ll do that, I’m into that’. I’m like twenty years older than them, and I’m white, non-muslim and the co-lead singer – that’s hilarious! [*laughs*] And then I said, look, this is the concept - acronym wars! And they’re going ‘well, that’s a good concept, whatever that is... What’s the music?’ Ah, that’s a good point... So we went into the studio, and I just stole a bunch of stuff to first get it going, I pulled out a Black Sabbath riff, a Lobby Lloyd riff, which is like [*sarcastically*] ‘I’m educating them in Oz Rock’ [*laughs*]. And they’re going ‘What?’ but once they cracked the code, they were like ‘we can write this’ and off they went, it was great. And so then I was like – let’s make batik (traditional Indonesian screenprinting) camouflage costumes, let’s make machine gun guitars! Well, when they got the idea, they went crazy on it!

SM Tell us a little bit about the reaction to this project.

DK Well when Asialink found out of what we were doing, they wrote me a letter saying, ‘you’re outta here!’. Not quite, but they were concerned. Then Geoff Thompson, who’s an Australian journalist based in Jakarta working for the Foreign Correspondent program on ABC Television, also got wind of it. Because we did cause quite a stir... I’m making it out to be a bed of roses, but in actual fact, we could not get the CD pressed in Indonesia, no

way. All the song titles are Indonesian acronyms, and they’re all military, political, bureaucratic and cultural institutions. Well the pressing plants have just gone ‘ooh we don’t want to know anything about this!’ I’m saying ‘no, no, no, wait, you don’t understand’. Nope, they wouldn’t do it, I could not get it pressed in Indonesia. I guess what I’m trying to say is that it is real currency, it is still kind of volatile. And even on the Foreign Correspondent TV dispatch on Punkasila, Wimo, the keyboard player, says ‘if we play this music in the wrong place, at the wrong time, to the wrong people, we would be killed... but you know... we don’t do that!’.

MF Did it feel like that though?

DK No, no, because I trusted the boys and they know the limits. I’m there encouraging and provoking them, and whatever, but never to the extent where I put these guys under any pressure or danger.

SM It strikes me that both Punkasila and The Happy Endings (a Shanghai based all-girl noise band formed by Kesminas), gives voice to these concerns that the people in these places can’t themselves be seen to give voice to...

DK Yes! I take the heat and suddenly they’re empowered, because right now in Indonesia it’s a post-reformasi [post-reformation], post-Soeharto environment, and there is a new moment of optimism. But the military is still very influential – you don’t want to get involved with them. When we started playing gigs, people thought it was hilarious, they’d call out to me, ‘bule!’ which means ‘handsome person’ but it can also mean ‘foreign fuckwit’. [*laughs*] My assistant once labelled me ‘manic white trash lost in the third world with a bunch of ideas’.

Muzika kaip kultūros tekstas: naujosios muzikologijos antologija. (Music as Social Text: An Anthology of New Musicology)
Sudarytoja / Compiled by Rūta Goštautienė. Vilnius: Apostrofa, 2007. 479 p. ISBN 978-9955-605-28-7

I have mixed feelings about this collection of Lithuanian translations of contemporary musicology texts. Not so much about the content, though, but rather about the very fact that the publication of this book is quite symbolic in the context of today’s Lithuanian culture – yet not in the sense of symbolising the beginning of change, or even a pretext for the latter.

It is another aspect I find symbolic. The majority of the texts comprising the anthology were originally written in the last decade of the 20th century, while the most recent ones date back to 2000, and there is even one from 1972 (a classical essay by Roland Barthes) that was never published in Lithuanian before. I believe these texts to have been fairly provocative, groundbreaking and norm-challenging in their times, but today they are, to put it mildly, yesterday’s news that have already been incorporated in the usual discourse. However, it is only now that they appear in Lithuanian, intended to be a revolutionary message for local musicologists (and general readership).

The problem is not in the dates. One can publish older texts at any time: in any case, they retain enough space for rethinking and reinterpretation, or will at least be valuable as historical documents. The problem is that for many people writing about music in Lithuania the anthology is likely to be not even today’s, but rather tomorrow’s news in a newspaper they don’t subscribe to.

During the presentation of the anthology at the Vilnius Book Fair, composer Šarūnas Nakas claimed that, from now on, one could divide the intellectuals in Lithuania into those who had read the book and those who had not. I would be even more demanding: today, one could divide the intellectuals in Lithuania into those who had already been familiar with the keynote premises in the book and those for whom this way of writing about music is still the biggest sensation.

I understand that there are some objective reasons behind the fact that the para-

Book review

New musicology: a long-delayed explosion

by Yuri Dobriakov

digm shifts this book discusses and institutes never became the dominating reality of Lithuanian musicology (on the other hand, in some cases purely subjective factors – defensive isolation or lack of motivation, information search and language skills – can be effectively disguised as objective ones). Even so, the book prompts another important question: how does one “update” a closed and inert community of musicologists – by allowing it to naturally evolve to a “proper” state or by forcing the process radically with an “ideological explosion”?

The latter position reminds me of the logic of cultural colonialism. Moreover, it is not difficult to foresee the failure of such an enterprise. At the same time, the former does not guarantee that, while a “backward” community keeps evolving in its own way, something it has to catch up with will not make a decade’s leap forward again. Then it is likely that the aforementioned community will meet the new message “broadcasted” from “over there” with hostility or indifference again. Why is, for example, postmodernism such an issue in Lithuania, unreservedly idealised by some and demonised by others? The answer probably lies in the fact that it never became a complete reality in Lithuanian practice.

So it may be that new musicology – which is, again, practically absent in Lithuania – will be instinctively rejected by many. Let’s imagine, however, it happens otherwise. What message does the discussed anthology send to a reader who is new to all this, yet open-minded? What is the practical implication of this message for such a reader?

The texts included in the anthology convey practically the same thing that a non-musicologist (i.e. a person who experiences or explores music having no formal Lithuanian musicological education) has been suspecting for a while already, but never found a confirmation in the texts of local professional musicologists. The message is this: the meaning of the musical experience is not to be found in the structure of music, the score or even the audible sound; the phenomenal nature of music and its effect on the listener do not lie in the music itself as a hermetic structure, but rather beyond it; the formalist brand of analysis, seeking to scrutinise a musical piece in an “objective” scientific way, is unable to express or explain the ephemeral, ambiguous

experience of listening that exists beyond the text.

This does not mean that one is absolutely incapable of saying something about music. The texts in the anthology demonstrate that it is possible to discuss music drawing on such diverse current disciplines as Lacan’s psychoanalysis (Slavoj Žižek’s text), postcolonial studies (Steven Feld’s text), feminism and gender studies (Richard Lepert), and phenomenology (Roland Barthes’ essay), among other. Which means that a new musicologist must have considerable knowledge of different fields of human experience, since new musicology is in many ways akin to “dancing about architecture”. It’s hard to say how many of those we can have in Lithuania.

I’d like to finish with some (rather critical) comments on the content of the book itself. The texts in the anthology are far from being 100% up-to-date, so one may notice that discussions of the newest music are absent. Besides, it seems that music as such does not limit itself to academic, popular or non-Western music – today there are so many forms and styles that do not fit into any of these three conservative categories. On the other hand, the purpose of this anthology is probably not so much to reveal the methods of interpreting the newest music, but rather to demonstrate that one can hear even the perfectly familiar music in totally different ways, by using it as a platform for making valuable insights into contemporary reality. It remains to be seen how Lithuanian musicology is going to react. The main thing is to resist the temptation to use it as merely a fancy quotation book and rather take it as an impulse for exploring new ways of speaking about music on one’s own. Otherwise the anthology may have zero effect on its Lithuanian readers’ thinking.

Yuri Dobriakov studied culture management and culture policy, he writes about new music, contemporary art, urbanism and psycho-geography for Lithuanian and international press.

CAC / Café Talks

The Contemporary Art Centre is pleased to announce the 2008 re-launch of its international lecture program the CAC Café Talks. Shifting to the second Wednesday of each month, the CAC Café Talks are a social forum for the discussion of topical international issues in culture, economics, and politics impacting upon the production, exhibition, and reception of contemporary art. Presenting a range of cultural producers – from artists to architects, filmmakers to dance-club theorists – in a social setting, the Café Talks are the perfect chance to sit with a drink and discuss the expanded field of contemporary culture that current art operates in.

March:

ELISABETTA FABRIZI
The Blue Sky Between Cinema
and the White Cube: establishing
a space for the contemporary
moving image at the BFI

This talk is presented in association with the exhibition DECODER: selected works from the 3rd Contour Video Biennale (Mechelen, BE, 2007). Fabrizi will address relationships between legacies of experimental film and artist's video and the specificities of exhibiting screen-based art works in the context of the British Film Institutes new exhibition venue. The talk is a timely intervention in local media debate and art world discussion as a new moving image centre based on the collection and archive of renowned Lithuanian expatriate filmmaker Jonas Mekas recently opened in Vilnius. And a feasibility study about developing the Mekas centre into a large-scale institution – as a partnership between Lithuanian agencies, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the Russian State Hermitage Museum – is currently underway.

Elisabetta Fabrizi is Head of Exhibitions at the British Film Institute, which launched a new exhibitions centre in 2007. Fabrizi studied Art History and Film at the University of Bologna, Italy graduating with distinction in 1998 with a dissertation on the influence of the visual arts on Sergei Paradjanov's film work. While at university she worked on several exhibitions

and film projects and was an arts journalist. In 1998 she moved to London where she went on to complete a Masters degree in Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art, continuing to explore the relationship between art and film. Before joining the BFI she held curatorial positions at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and Milton Keynes Gallery.

April:

DIETMAR ELGER
Gerhard Richter: The Art of Painting

This talk is presented in association with the first exhibition of the work by the renowned German artist Gerhard Richter to be held in Lithuania – at the CAC. Richter belongs to a troika of German artists (with Blinky Palermo and Sigmar Polke) who blazed a trail in post-war German art and ensured that painting was central to discourses of conceptualism and experimentation; in the face of the explosion of time-based and spatial art forms. Richter has never considered himself a 'pure' painter and has been a restless in his experimentation with the medium and is well known for his paintings based on photographs and his photography. In his own words Richter has "(no) intentions, no system, no style, no particular case or message." And he understands the act of painting as "a search for the reality of today: What I saw as my big weakness, namely the inability to 'create a picture', is not in fact an incapability, but rather an instinctive striving for a more modern truth." The application of this truth is to be discussed here and is on show in the exhibition of 27 works selected by Richter himself.

Dietmar Elger (PhD Hamburg) is the Director of the Gerhard Richter Archive at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. He is co-editor, with Hans Ulrich Obrist, of the recently released Gerhard Richter: Writing 1961 to 2007 (Cologne: Walther Koenig, 2007). Earlier, Elger worked as the editor of the Gerhard Richter catalogue raisonné as well as the artist's book *Gerhard Richter: Florence* (Hatje Cantz, 2001).

As the Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Sprengel Museum Hannover, Elger curated exhibitions of Andy Warhol, Donald Judd, Richard Tuttle, Louise Lawler, Allan McCollum, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres and edited the Gonzalez-Torres catalogue raisonné.

The CAC Cafe Talks are presented in partnership with:

SMC KAVINĖ

Elisabetta Fabrizi's visit has been supported by the British Council.



Dietmar Elger's visit has been supported by:



if a Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e. V.

Meeting in the Info Lab Discuss invites all to talk about contemporary art. The format is informal, just turn up and join in the discussion. The topics will range from issues arising from the exhibitions at the CAC, to articles featured in magazines available in the Info Lab, or conversations lead by visiting artists or curators.

April:

with MANRAY HSU
(4A) CODE SHARE:
4 continents, 10 biennales, 20 artists

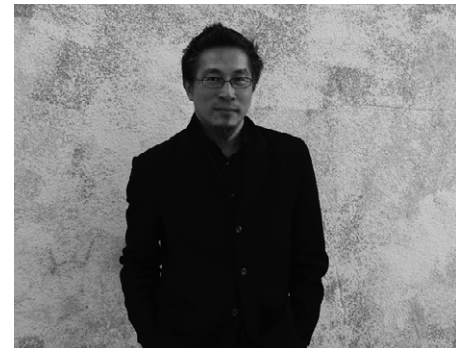
The CAC is pleased to announce the visit – and talk – by the first curator associated with the preparation of the major exhibition Code Share – opening in January as part of the Vilnius '09 European Capital of Culture. Manray Hsu is co-artistic director (with Vasif Kortun) of the 6th Taipei Biennale and will discuss the forthcoming biennale in the context of contemporary Taiwanese art and developments in art made in Asia.

Code Share refers to the sharing by airline companies of passenger lists, flight services, and resources – based upon partnership agreements. The passengers from one company are booked onto aircraft belonging to a partner company on routes where competing flights aren't cost effective; in a model of post-Fordist efficiency. Airlines were in the advance-guard of global corporatization and conglomeration; as carriers merged, resource-sharing contracts were struck, and major carriers consolidated the supply chain.

The Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius – borrowing strategies from the tourist industry – will establish partnerships with Biennale's of Contemporary Art in Africa, America, Asia, Australia (and Europe) to select two participating artists from each Biennale, in consultation with the Biennale curators and directors, and invite them to Vilnius to produce new large-scale work for the Code Share exhibition: making Vilnius a global hub or terminus for the production of global art.

CAC / Discuss

Manray Hsu is an independent curator and art critic based in Taipei and Berlin. His major exhibitions include the 2000 Taipei Biennial: *The Sky Is the Limit* (co-curated with Jerome Sans); *The Good Place: An International Cityscape Intervention* (2001, co-curated with Hongjohn Lin, Taichung City, Taiwan); *How Big Is the World?* (2002, OK Centre for Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria; 2003 Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts); *Wayward Economy* (2005, co-curated with Maren Richter, Taipei); *Wronged Attitudes* (2006, co-curated with Maren Richter); *2006 Liverpool Biennial* (co-consulted/curated with Gerardo Mosquera); *Cracks on the Highway* (2007, MAC Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro). Manray served as a jury member for the 49th Venice Biennale and a jury member of the Unesco Prize for the 7th Istanbul Biennial in 2001. He is working on the 2008 Taipei Biennial with Vasif Kortun.



For more information on the Taipei Biennale: www.taipeibiennial.org
info@taipeibiennial.org

Manray Hsu's visit has been supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania in partnership with Vilnius '09 European Capital of Culture.

The next CAC Discuss will be on the topic of Stanislaw Lem's famous sci-fi novel *Solaris*.

Contemporary Art Centre 2008

08/02 – 16/03**Decoder.****Selected works from
the 3rd Contour Biennial
for Video Art
(Mechelen, Belgium).**Curator: Nav Haq.
Organiser: Contour Mechelen vzw &
CAC, Vilnius**21/02 – 16/03****Short Introduction
to Gutenberg
Galaxy: Artist Book
Exhibition.**

Curator: Valentinas Klimašauskas

04/04 – 11/05**Gerhard Richter: Survey.**Organiser: Institute for Foreign
Cultural Relations ifa**04/04 – 11/05****Now Art Now Future.
The 2nd International
Biennial of Graphic Art.**Curators: Ignas Kazakevičius and
Jūratė Rekevičiūtė.
Organisers: Now Art Now Future and
Klaipėda Cultural Communication Centre**11/04 – 18/05****Žilvinas Landzbergas:
Wine of Hearts.**From the young artists' exhibition
series Yellow Line**25/04 – 03/05****Festival “Young Music”.**Organiser: Lithuanian
Composers' Union**30/05 – 03/08****Artūras Raila:
Power of the Earth
2005–2007****06/06 – 03/08****Ars Viva 07/08 Sound.**Participants: Nico Dockx,
Florian Hecker,
Marcellus L., Astrid Nippoldt**06/06 – 03/08****Sound installations by
Lithuanian artists.**Vladimiras Tarasovas,
Ignas Krunglevičius**13/06 – 03/08****Arūnas Gudaitis.**From the young artists' exhibition
series Yellow Line**From 14/06****Info Lounge.**Designers: Anouk Vogel,
Bart Guldemon, Johan Selbing**12/09 – 22/10****Lithuanian Art'08
Photography.**Curators: Julija Fomina,
Valentinas Klimašauskas,
Valdas Ozarinskas**19/09 – 22/10****Fritz Balhaus: zero_g_cube.**Curator: Gabriele Horn.
Organisers: KunstWerke Berlin
and CAC**24/10 – 06/11****World Music Days.**Organisers: Vilniaus festivaliai and
Lithuanian Composers' Union**14/11/2008 – 04/01/2009****You Are My Mirror
France – Lituanie.**Curators: Simon Rees, Eva Gonzalez-
Sancho, Beatrice Josse and Helene
Guenin.
Organisers: CAC and FRAC –
Grand Est**21/11/2008 – 04/01/2009****Exhibition from the series
Hansabank Art Award**

Artist's project

**CD compilation of sound art from eastern Europe
by Arturas Bumšteinas**

UN/TYPICAL is a collection of electronic and electro-acoustic music by experimental composers/performers who live, work, or are in some way connected with Eastern Europe. We invited contributions from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia, also from Finland, Sweden, the UK, Israel, and the US. Each contributor produced compositions of about 5 minutes that are un/typical of their output. In this way the compilation tests the limits of contemporary experimental music from the aforementioned region[s].

UN can also be read as the moniker of the United Nations. I wonder at the nature of the cause – whether for it or against – under which the composers have been united?

01. Spectre of Muzak (4:13)
by Anton Nikkilä (*Finnland*)
& Alexei Borisov (*Russia*)
www.nbresearchdigest.com**02. Tinohi** (4:44)
by Vytautas V. Jurgutis (*Lithuania*)
www.myspace.com/jurgutis**03. Scan Local Detected** (4:31)
by Antanas Jasenka (*Lithuania*)
www.exerpm.tk**04. When the Drummer
is Smoking** (5:41)
by Gys & Gintas K
Gytis Skudžinskas aka Gys (*Lithuania*)
www.kitafotografija.lt
Gintas Kraptavičius aka Gintas K
(*Lithuania*)
www.gintask.dar.lt**05. The Place Below End** (2:39)
by Critikal (*International*)
www.myspace.com/critikally
Andrey Kiritchenko (*Ukraine*)
www.nexsound.org/akir/
Dmytro Fedorenko aka Kotra (*Ukraine*)
www.kotra.org.ua
Tobias Astrom aka Militantfields (*Sweden*)
www.militantfields.com
Jeff Surak aka Violet (*USA*)
www.zeromoon.com/violet**06. Symphonie Diagonale by
Viking Eggeling** (6:04)
by Twentytwentyone (*International*)
www.myspace.com/laptopquartet
Arturas Bumšteinas (*Lithuania/Poland*)
www.bumstein.com/art/
Lina Lapelytė (*Great Britain*)
www.myspace.com/lapelyte
Antanas Dombrovskij (*Lithuania*)
antanas.dombrovskij@gmail.com
Vilius Šiaulys aka Lys (*Lithuania*)
www.myspace.com/lysvilius**07. c + -** (5:56)
by Phonos ek Mechanes (*Poland*)
Cezary Duchnowski
www.duchnowski.com
Paweł Hendrich
www.hendrich.pl
Sławomir Kupeczak
www.kupczak.com.pl**08. am/fm** (6:00)
by Orlandas Narušis (*Lithuania*)
orlandasn@gmail.com**09. Live in Paris/Les Voûtes
(fragment)** (5:39)
by Lukasz Szałankiewicz aka Zenial
(*Poland*)
www.zenial.audiotong.net/**10. Cold** (5:31)
by Seventeen Migs of Spring (*Israel*)
www.zvukoprocessor.com
k-76
Gurfa
B-74
Stephan Friedman**11. DAS EIS: Room #2 / 1** (3:28)
by Voldemars Johansons (*Latvia*)
www.aerotorrents.com**12. Mirażas** (5:16)
by Vilius Šiaulys aka Lys (*Lithuania*)
www.myspace.com/lysvilius**13. Repulse** (4:35)
by Vladislav Buben (*Belarus*)
www.buben-info.narod.ru**14. Old feat. New** (5:11)
by Anna Zaradny (*Poland*)
www.musicagenera.net**15. Yellow Star** (0:58)
by Jeff Surak aka Violet (*USA*)
www.zeromoon.com/violet/**16. Phantom Platform** (3:24)
by Andres Lõo (*Estonia*)
www.myspace.com/andreslooming

Colophon

CAC Interviu

Issue 9–10 / Spring–Summer 2008

Editors

Linara Dovydaitytė, Simon Rees

Design

Goda Budvytytė, Margaret Warzecha

Translation

Aleksandra Fomina, Julija Fomina, Ūla Tornau

Printer

Spindulys

© Contemporary Art Centre,
the artists and writers, Vilnius, 2008

No part of this publication may
be reproduced without prior permission of
the publisher compatible with fair practice.

ISSN 1822 - 2064

Edition: 1300

Produced four times per year by
the Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius

The views expressed in INTERVIU are not
necessarily those of the publisher or editors.

Publisher:

Contemporary Art Centre
Vokiečių 2, LT-01130 Vilnius, Lithuania
T: +370-5-262 3476
F: +370-5-262 3954
E: interviu@cac.lt
www.cac.lt

Cover image: *Chicks On Speed Art Rules*
with Douglas Gordon (performance still) 2007
photograph courtesy the artists

