

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2

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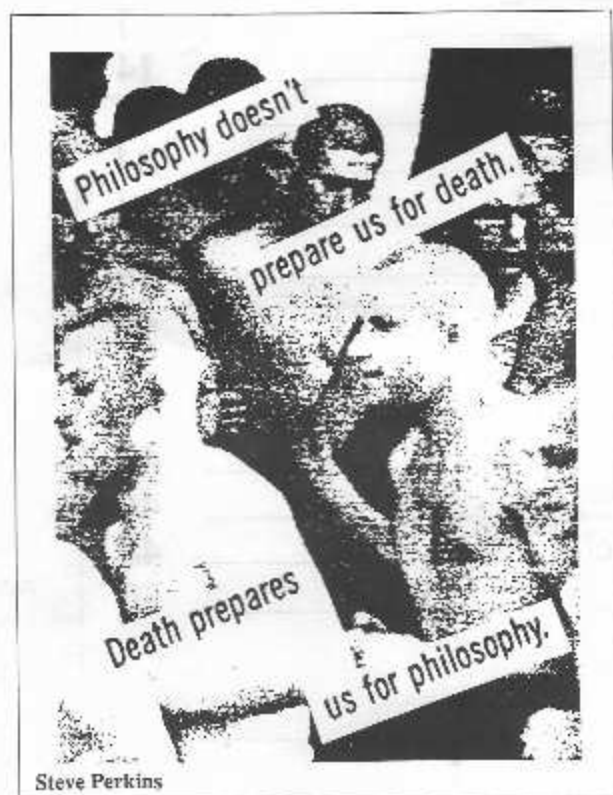
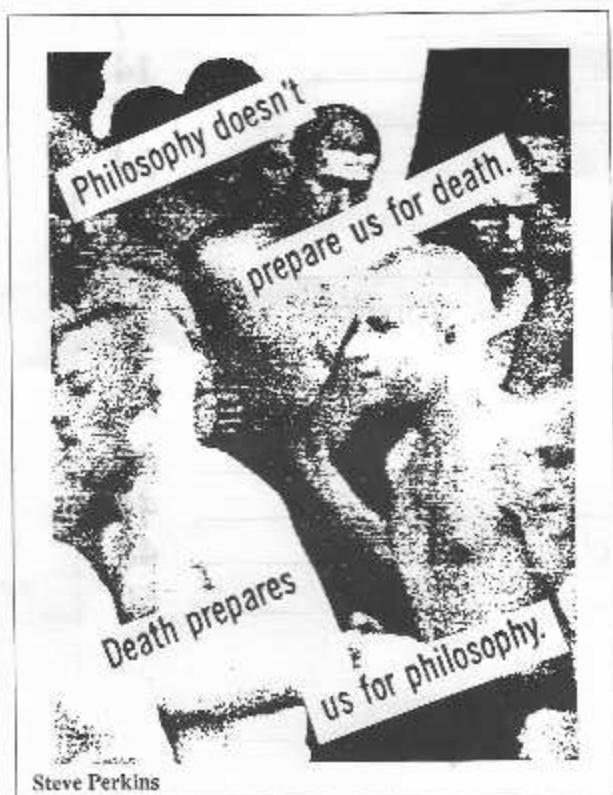
The Sleeve Images

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Back - F. Duivier

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Images

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Even with so-called open minded individuals it is easy for them to dismiss work that does not fit their preconceptions. **We want our expectations to be satisfied.** Although claiming insight, we continue to worship stars, creating a mock-popular culture, cancelling out any hope of fresh ideas. We imprison ourselves in a room that we call 'new' - it becomes a haven, and a substitution, a safe place where thinking is not mandatory. Every movement (or generation thereof) has its peaks and valleys - and history closes in, capturing only bits and elements. The irony is that only the surface is scratched, acknowledging the most apparent and 'popular'. With obscure and difficult music/art the circles of communication are small, growth is limited past a certain point - otherwise extremely collectible.

I N T R O D U C T I O N



WE WANT OUR EXPECTATIONS TO BE SATISFIED

We attempted with Unsound to create a positive force, trying to uncover particular aspects of contemporary culture. We decided to stop publishing, partially because of our own negativity toward 'la scene', and how it is an inbred pretension. We began Unsound because of our frustration with the lack of a support system, you create your own 'la scene'. One thousand and one years later the final issue of Unsound appears - too long in waiting, slightly dated in information and style, but out nonetheless. We did not just want to fold - fold away in a grave with all the other dead mags. This is the last, not due to financial constraints or to the lack of information to delve into, to reveal but for reasons of change evolution of thought and reason. We do not wish to preserve the past.

To discuss the basic intentions once again: Unsound was established as a venue for artists, groups and organisations, working within areas where promotional/exposure outlets were limited, or as in most cases, non-existent. Many times we subtly combined diverse cross-sections within thematic guidelines. **'Dry' is an inappropriate term to describe Unsound**, there has been blatant humour through-out. Instead of 'shaping' the selected features, they were straight forward, usually allowing the artists to have 'say' over their presentation. Although few of the features were extensive in length, they were designed to capture elements, to intrigue the reader.



Phlegm Pets

Unsound has been catagorized most often as a music magazine/a leading 'industrial' (cheese ?) magazine. We documented groups, artists and organisations who merged many different mediums. If one was to look back at how the features were formated, one would notice each utilized numerous modes of presentation. If we were to be introspective, which we are not willing to do at this time, we'd recognize the naive mistakes, the predictions, polite gestures, innocent jargonism, etc., as well as all of the 'acheivements' that were put forth - intentional or not. We have tried to aide in generating a support system, producing an interesting magazine that filled a gap. At a certain point we need to get something out of the system, which at this point has mostly given us headaches. Finding ourselves wanting to be acknowledged for 'a personal achievement' is natural, **but that's not how the cookie crumbles**

U N S O U N D



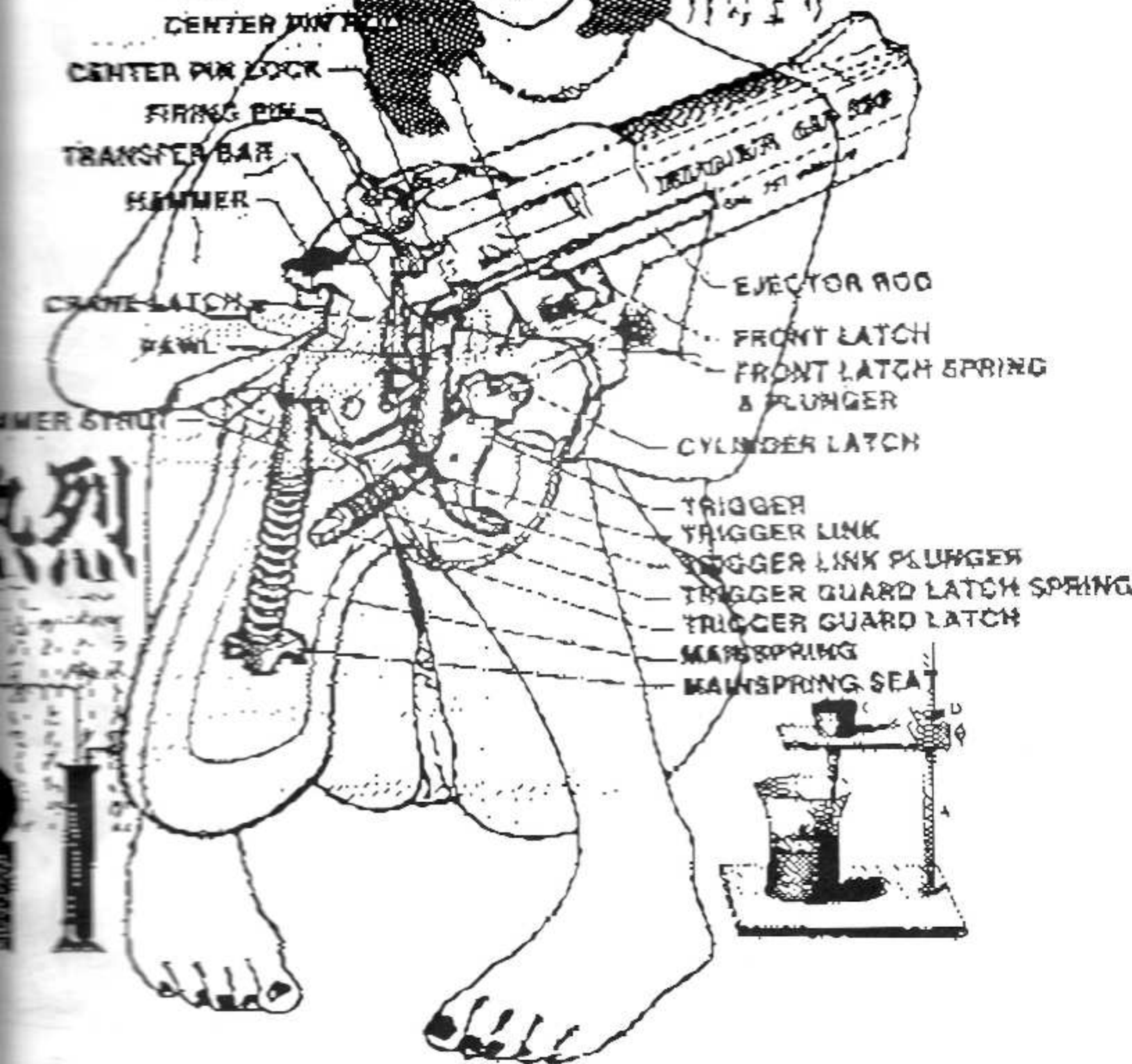


定期購読料(送料含む)

1ヶ月 3,000円

3ヶ月 6,000円

1月号より



FAUSTFILM: AN OPERA

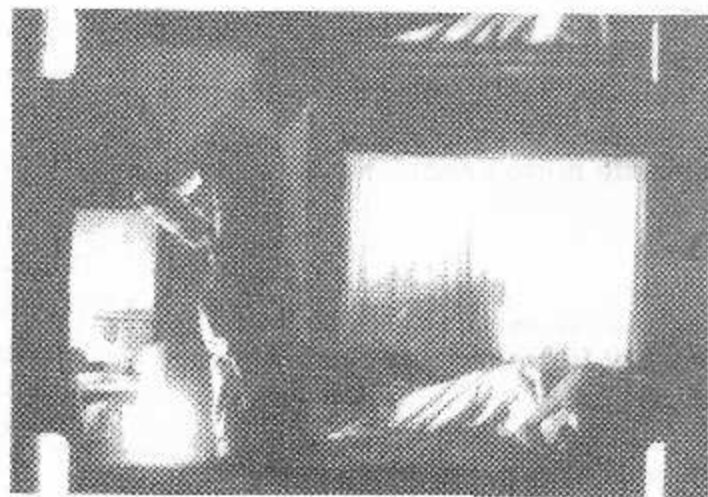
A FILM BY STAN BRAKHAGE AND RICK CORRIGAN

BY M.S. MASON

Stan Brakhage has returned to the psychodrama. *Faustfilm: An Opera* is a contemporary envisionment of the legend as told by Goethe of the old man who sold his soul to the devil. Brakhage makes his Faust a young man wishing to be old - so tedious is the problem of achievement, and so difficult the problem of relationship. The young Faust longs for someone with whom he can commune and determines to share his woes with the next male visitor and thereby accept him as a friend. Is that friend to be Mephistopheles? In German, Brakhage notes in the film, 'Faust' means 'fist'. Is this film, then, Brakhage's metaphorical fist held up to the face of eternity, shaking angrily at his own spiritual dissatisfactions? Because Brakhage is the essential artist of the personal. His own life and investigations are the raw material for each of his works.

In voice-over narration Brakhage reads the story he wrote in a pinched, pained, nasal voice so different from the deep, resonant, and powerful voice we know from his personal appearances and lectures. This voice is speaking to us from the shadows. And though there is a current of grim acceptance running through the film (embodied in the voice-over narration), the rebellious spirit of the film (embodied at certain points by the particular use of light) marks the mental turmoil of its maker. Here, then, is a new statement of the ancient and Christian anguish of man estranged from God and man.

The opera is composed of a visual libretto and the score by Rick Corrigan and is precisely cued to the image, so that the effect is very much like grand opera. Because the music is so very far from the operatic tradition, being electronic in score, the viewer must bring a new intensity to his listening. The image does not seduce one away from the music, and yet each subsequent viewing of the film reveals more and more in the score as well. Both image and soundtrack are equally important, and the ideas are inextricably intertwined.



Gretchen

photos: Amy Miller

Faustfilm is a contemporary horror story about alienation, the emptiness of sexual love, and the horrifying isolation of sex. The sufficient cause for that terrifying isolation is the 'sin' of acedia - a medieval term for estrangement from God and man. *Faustfilm* describes mental hell on earth. It's not about the usual horrors of nature and human will - no tornadoes or murders or treacheries at all - but the very quality and texture of estrangement from normal human relatedness and divine goodness. It is a place of shadows.

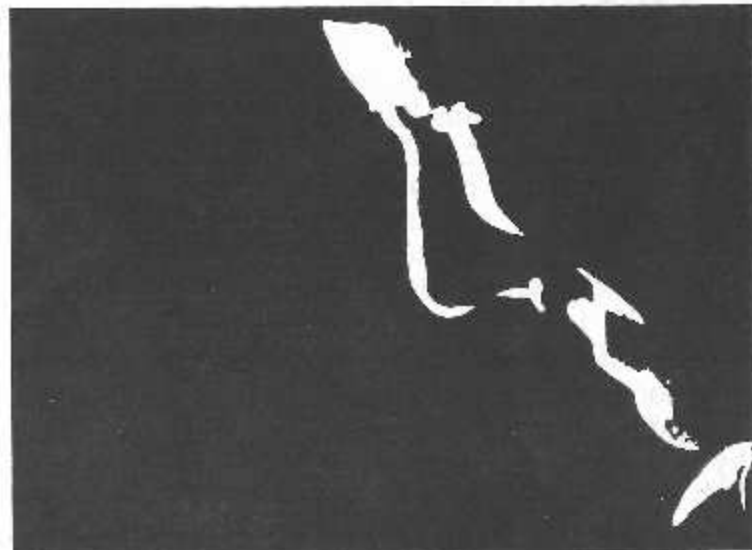
This is a Brakhage film and therefore light is of primary importance. But this is a different light than seen in his films before - this light being blue-white, icy heat, the correct color for the fires of hell. The inferno terrestre of Brakhage's creation is not so much filled with light, as defined by it. Its shadows are so dense they rule over the light, which nevertheless draws the eye magnetically. Black forms seem to penetrate the light. We are made to see these forms, particularly the face of Faust, as surfaces for the reflection of light.

This cavernous hell is a place wherein the solitary figure of modern Faust winds down within himself. Sex is isolation and terrible - loveless and cool, the Helen of Faust's dreams, the Gretchen of his daily living - his no more substance than a shade. Her beautiful body, seen in a diaphanous gown before an 'up-right wind blown bed' in an elegant, graceful dance has only a spectral reality. No volume to her at all. Faust dreams of her on this bed and it is a strange, deathly image. We get no sense of the pleasure of sex. There is no actual love-making, which would, in fact, have seemed oddly inappropriate to the story. Instead, we see Faust masturbate as he dreams of Gretchen. Faustfilm would not be described as a dream film, though dreams and reality entwine within the context of the story. Yet the fact of Faust's life is dreamlike, riddled by memory. It is self-mockery or calculated irony when Brakhage tells us, 'Faust drank alone ... to encourage a religiosity of memory - to engender some mammalian wonder of absolute flesh ...,' since the flesh is so strangely absent?

The project really began in 1957 when Brakhage wrote a poem/screenplay called Faustfilm, never completed (the text of that poem can be found in 'Metaphors on Vision'). But the eloquent language of the final film is new. The form is unique. There is no line of chronology to follow. The female companion who sits upon Faust's bed near the end of the film, at first blowing bubbles, and at last, breaking those Faust blows himself (along with the nude male 'friend' Mephistopheles) are as mythic as they are human. The last scene epitomizes the hopelessness and sorrow of human relationships - its fabulous and inherently sinful (self-interested, loveless, cruel) quality.

It's an odd work of art indeed that deals with sin today. And this particular sin is so pervasive in the culture, while the idea of sin is so completely misunderstood or relegated to the Christian fanatics, that Brakhage leaps forward once again - though his tale is anciently based, illuminating the very texture of the times.

I believe there is a new spirit in art appearing, a rejection of absurdity and a new searching for 'truth and beauty.' Stan Brakhage has always insisted that the artist is a 'litmus' for the race - doubt is an element of faith. Through doubt we make the necessary pilgrimage toward reality. It is only the certainty of chaos and the absurd that ends the pursuit of truth. The answer to the sin of despair and the fear of mortality is always creative action. So, even as he investigates the sins of the mind, wallows in despair, and articulates the terrible aloneness of mortality as absolute in sex as in death, he is also affirming life, and beating back despair, and communing with us all - in the very act of making this film.



Faust



Andy Miller

FAUSTFILM : AN OPERA

THE CAST:

Faust Joel Haertling
Gretchen Gretchen Le Maistre
Faust's friend Phillip Hathaway
Servant Paul Lundahl

text excerpts

Young Faust - living in the house of his father ... moves through its architecture in the sparks of his own thoughts.

Young Faust - whose life is books ... whose alchemy is music - considers himself, wishes there was a soul with whom he could commune.

Young Faust - divorced and raising his child in the home of his father - is himself suffering from what the Medieval people called 'acedia' ... estrangement a from the ways of God and men - regarded by them as the deadliest sin inasmuch as all other sins come from it.

Faust - which, by the way, means 'fist' - has determined to tell the next acquaintance who visits him all his woes ... and thereby accept him as a friend.

(next will come the woes, briefly stated by Joel: and this - plus some reference to the light, as it warms up, should comprise all the spoken text of the first 10 minutes or so ...)

(text spoken over light warming up)

Faust had workmen to tend the light whereby he found his way thru the house of his father - and occasionally warmed his hands ... cooked meals for himself and his son; but the light, and all its peripheral sparks, had a life of its own - of which Faust allowed himself to know only the electrically subservant continuities.

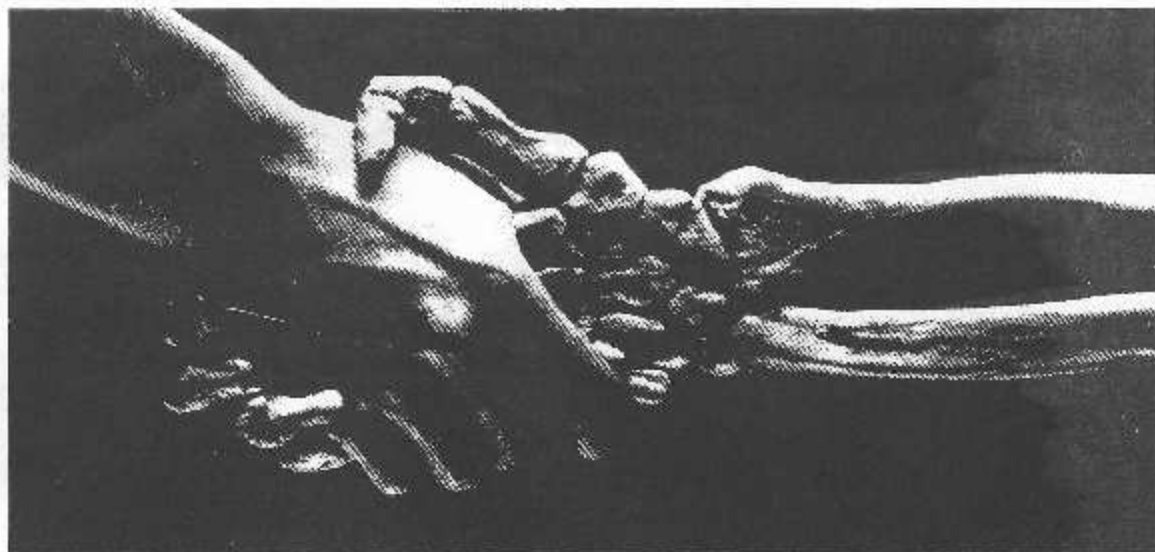
(text for drunk scene)

Faust drank alone ... in order to remember the chronological entirety of his being - the unique undivided ability of his aloneness ... not with any sense of hauteur but rather to prompt his solitude with laughter - to encourage a religiosity of memory - to engender some mammalian wonder of absolute flesh ... etcetera ...

(text after Gretchen's first appearance)

Faust envisions women from a variety of brief street glimpses, which he also re-imagines - sees each individual Her as always on an upright windblown bed ... as if she were preparing-to-be enclosed in a winding sheet - seized this image with the fervour of one about-to-be condemned.

BLACKHOUSE



ANOTHER KIND OF BEAUTY FOR THE TRINITY BY JAMIE LEE RAKE

'We are not out to save the world - we don't have the power - we are not out to change people's minds - we are out to open minds. We are not out to create lies, we are out to destroy them. We are not a pop group - we are ourselves ... We are Blackhouse.'

Formed in 1983 with Ivo Cutler, Sterling Cross and Roger Farrell.

Played a few gigs in Salt Lake City in 1983/84. Audience reaction: open hostility. All power cut. Violent reactions. Blackhouse are targeted by Neo-Nazi hardcore youth and Christians alike for violations of various moral codes.

Blackhouse goes underground. A more subliminal attack is designed. Blackhouse concentrates on recording - their sound develops quite rapidly, and a demo tape is sent to independent cassette label Ladd-Frith. Pro-Life is released on the L-F label in 1984. Pro-Life is quickly received and admired by all standards of critical acclaim, and Blackhouse are recognized as the first Industrial Christian group.

Blackhouse realize the enormous potential of operating through the recorded medium (as opposed to the live medium), and decide to concentrate full force on developing and expanding their sound.

For reasons the band refuses to discuss, Roger Farrell is no longer involved in the bands affairs. The split rumored to be a friendly one, and Roger Farrell still communicates with the group, but is no longer an active member.

Ivo and Sterling decide that too much of an emphasis on band members and their individual personalities is not good. The band has gone completely underground.

Unsound (US): What inspired you to form a Christian band?

Ivo Cutler (IC): Our goal is to destroy tired myths and political/religious dogma in an effort to get the individual to think more freely. Society tends to view the contemporary Christian in a certain stereotypical way. Industrial music is thought of as being a sort of negative reaction to the world as we know it. Both are lies which need to be disposed with.

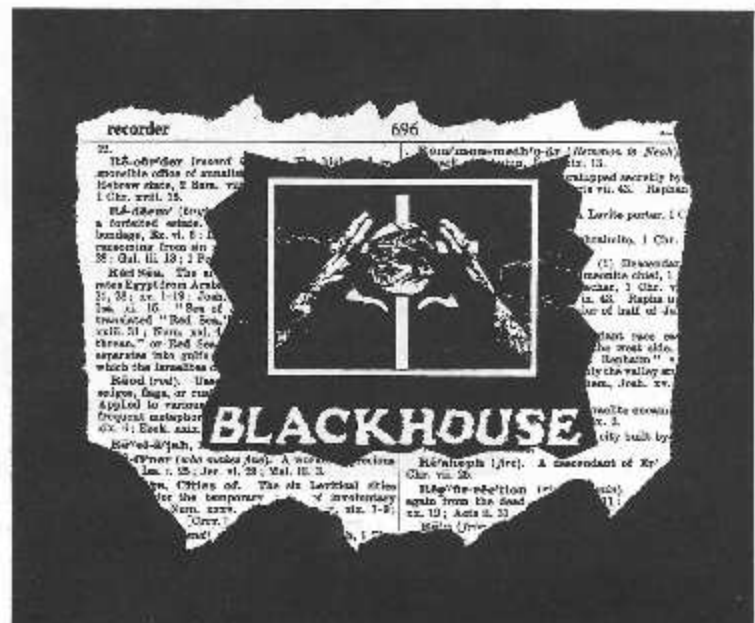
US: How would you describe your music?

IC: Open.

US: Do you see irony in the lack of 'beauty' in your music and the notions many Christians have about how their pop music should sound? If so, why and why not?

IC: First, we are not a pop group - we don't make pop music. Second, we feel there is a great wealth of 'beauty' in our music (writers note: I was probably thinking in the mind of the typical Christian pop fan when asking this question); just because it's not pop doesn't mean that it's ugly. Again, we are confronted with a powerful myth which needs to be abolished. True beauty lies in the interior - the heart ... Not in the polished exterior which is manufactured for mass consumption & popularization.

In the world of contemporary Christian music, some acts have made an attempt to be so 'harsh' as to attract new wave and punk crowds to the Gospel. However, none have been as truly abrasive as Blackhouse; the first Christian Industrial (or as they would prefer, 'Power Electronics') group. The following interview is with Ivo Cutler of Blackhouse.



US: What is the rationale behind the symbology of the skull in your logo? Skulls can be taken so many different ways.

IC: There is no skull in our logo. There are some buttons appearing with a smiling skull and our name, but it is no official logo. The rationale behind that is to promote our release, '5 Minutes After I Die'. Anyway, death is not the ultimate end to everything.

US: Was your name a conscious 'put-on' of Whitehouse?

IC: Whitehouse plays music with a very high emphasis on 'all that is bad'. They deal with the EVIL side of man's nature. When we decided to form Blackhouse, we wanted to convey just the opposite message, but with similar musical intentions. Opposites: Black and white. It's quite ironic too, that the GOOD is represented as black, and the bad by white. Let me say now that I very much enjoy the music of Whitehouse, but I am not in agreement with the lyrical content.

US: Do you see Blackhouse having an effect on the industrial music scene yet? What kind of impact do you hope to effect?

IC: Yes, Blackhouse has definitely had an effect on everything. I don't want to name names, but we've spawned a bunch of imitators and I'd dare to say that we do have a growing following of Christians and non-Christians alike. The effects we desire is already upon us: the opening of closed minds. The acceptance of new ideas. The abolition of tired myths and stereotypes.

US: How did God call you to your musical work, if indeed it was a calling from God?

IC: What are you asking? If a burning bush appeared on our front lawn? We do what we believe in. We believe in the word of Christ! We also believe in our music. We decided to mix the two. We love our music, and what better way to also spread the word of Jesus Christ.

US: Who do you think your audience consists of, and do you have any expectations of reaching the crowd of Amy Grant, or even the 77's or Undercover?

IC: Open-minded individuals, Christians and non-Christians alike. They are those who seek a higher understanding for themselves. We have no expectations of becoming a pop music group. It is not important to be popular.

US: Do you intend to send promotional copies of your records/tapes to the Christian music press?

IC: We don't send anything. We let our labels and distributors take care of that. They send the records where they will be reviewed and played. We are much too busy to market our own music by ourselves. We're too busy to do anything, but work and record. It's a constant, a never-ending cycle.

US: Do you believe art should be confrontational?

IC: That which disturbs is that which makes us think. We want to be demanding, and our content is about controversy and conflict.

US: Blackhouse promotional material suggests that you've had violent reactions to your live performances in the past. Could you be specific, and what do you think the Christian mainstream wants in entertainment/art?

IC: Violence is all around us. When you deal with controversial issues, you are bound to be targeted. It ranges from electrical disconnection to verbal abuse to actual 'death threats'. To single out any of these people would only fulfill their desperate need to be recognized, and therefore I refuse to acknowledge them. They are but unfortunate souls, desperately seeking salvation. The Christian mainstream wants what every other mainstream wants - peer approval and to be part of the crowd. This does not interest us.

Organum

BY PAUL LEMOS

Unsound (US): What does the word 'Organum' mean and how is that meaning related to the music?

David Jackman (DJ): 'Organum' is a type of Christian vocal music. Historically it was the first development out of unison chanting, and being sometimes just a drone plus melody is of pleasurable interest to me. As you know, the Organum sound is very much drone-based. So that's the somewhat loose link with the music that I make and the name doesn't have any other significance, though it does have other dictionary meanings. Drone musics have always appealed to me, Celtic, Indian, Japanese Gagaku and so on.

US: What's the philosophical or social statement behind your work? For example, is there an element of mysticism in Organum?

DJ: There's certainly no social statement behind the work and, philosophically, there's nothing consciously being projected into the sound. Apart from the blind desire to make sounds, the only thing that was at work in the beginning, particularly with 'Tower of Silence', was the wish to make something that sounded completely new. So it was invention that was the driving force, even to the point of eccentricity in the way the sounds got made, like an alarm-clock case being scraped round a rusty bicycle-wheel run for 20 minutes. As it happened, nothing new got made at all. Instead, Organum music came out sounding really ancient, like something from the very beginning of music-making.

US: How would you define music as opposed to sound or noise? And where does Organum fit into that definition?

DJ: In my opinion, music is not any kind of opposition to sound or noise at all, so I don't think it's possible to even attempt such a definition. In any case, the work gets made in an intuitive way - which is my particular manner - so what use would definitions be? They'd just be limitations and stumbling blocks.

DJ: Apart from all the drone musics, listening to the weekly AMM sessions in the early 70's taught me most of what I wanted to know about sound-making. I really owe them a debt of gratitude - one of the world's great bands. I think it was through them that I really began the process of learning how to listen. At about the same time, the ritual music of Tibetan Buddhism also had an impact. I liked the music because it appeared to be totally relying on texture for coherence. Note relationships didn't seem to have anything to do with it. I may have misperceived it but that interpretation has guided my compositional approach a lot. But other sounds can be influences, too, apart from the musical ones. For instance, the engine notes of the various motorcycles that I've owned, 'Tower of Silence', for example has in its texture many sounds which can be traced back to a Kawasaki KH400 I used to ride. And the metallic scraping found in most of the Organum tracks is a direct result of hearing and liking the squealing brakes of trains at night when I was 14. I don't think I've used a noise yet that doesn't eventually turn out to have some personal meaning or historical link.

US: Can you say something about the ideas and line-up of The New Blockaders? How does it differ from Organum?

DJ: You'd better ask them. I just liked the noise they made and they liked the noise that Organum made, so we did some work together. Probably the major difference is that Organum has never had any strong Dadaist inclinations. But I like their music because it doesn't really register as music at all.

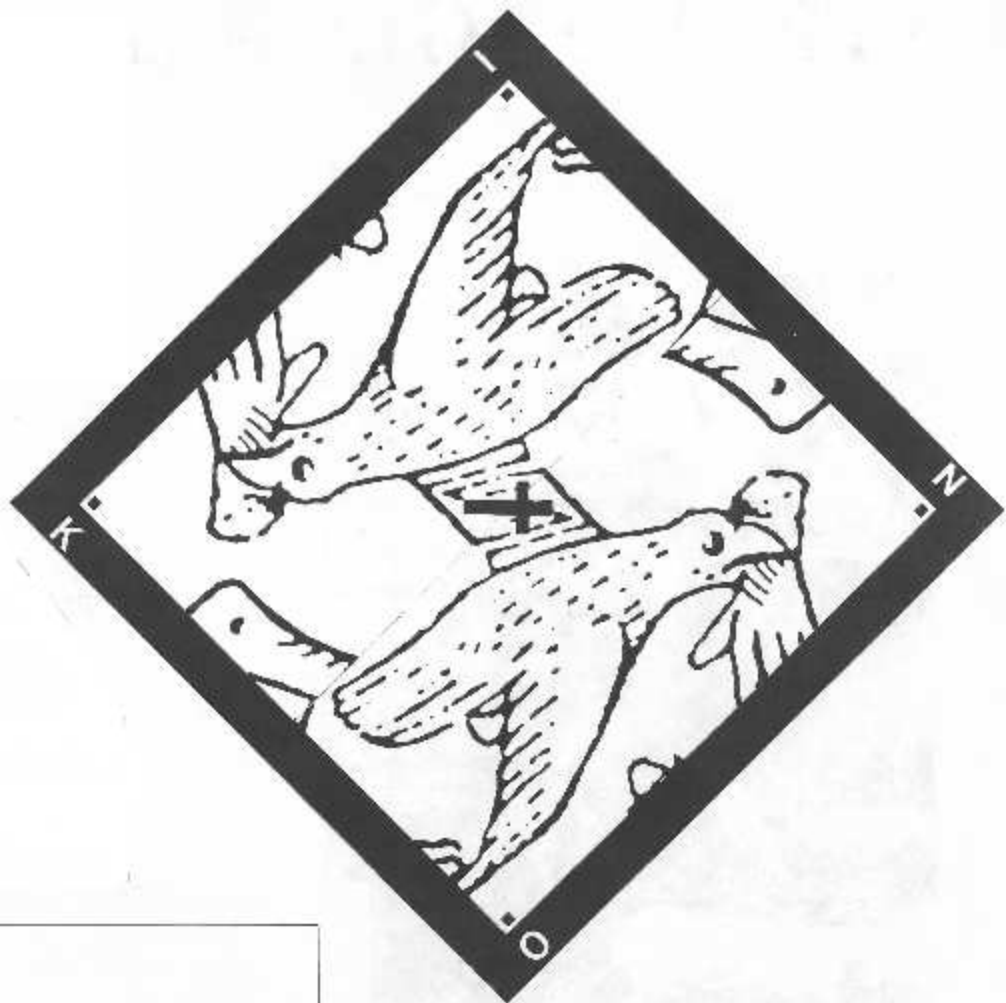
US: What are your feelings about American art and music as compared to Europe?

DJ: I wouldn't know how to make a meaningful comparison. But the last American artworks that interest me were the works of the minimalist sculptors and, more recently the music of Glenn Branca and Rys Chatham. Some of the hardcore was good too. However, it doesn't matter to me where art comes from. There are only three questions I ask - do I like it, do I think it's any good, and originality; have I come across anything like this before? Art considered on a nationalistic basis doesn't interest me.

US: What are you involved in outside of music?

DJ: I ride motorcycles, stare out of the window and have a nice time with my friends. And, I like a lot of people, I go to work in the morning. You know, just a normal life. But I don't regard music as a separated compartment of my life at all. Listening goes on all the time.





Organum Releases

Tower of Silence, EP, LAYLAH Antirecords, Belgium
In Extremis, LP, LAYLAH Antirecords, Belgium
HORII, EP, LAYLAH Antirecords, Belgium
RASA, (B-side to an LP shared with NWW), United Dairies, UK

The New Blockaders/Organum

Salute, C46 cassette, Frux Products, UK (not available)
Pulp, 7-inch 45, Aeroplane Records, UK (not available)

Forthcoming Organum Releases

Submission, LP, United Dairies, UK
Played/Nameless, (LP shared with Eddie Prevost) Silent Records, USA

Contact:

Organum
BM Wound
London WCIN 3XX, UK

US: What's your goal for the future of Organum?

DJ: Well, as I don't work with overt theories but with specific sounds and an internal urge there can't really be any goal. So each track is it's own end. Really, there's no mystery to the music; I just make it because I want those sounds to exist. There's no reason.

NELL STEWART

BY ANNIE ADDISON

UNSOUND (US): For a basic introduction, I know that you have a strong classical dance background.

NELL STEWART (NS): Dance has been a big part of my life. From when I was 9 years old to 21 I led a very self-disciplined life. I had to fight for it, and when I was 15 I won some scholarships, and proved to my parents how dedicated I was, they thought I was a freak. I'd spend hours practicing instead of laying in the sun with my other sisters. A really obsessive and compulsive reaction to getting discipline, it's a rebellious type of an attitude.

US: Why did you decide to leave the dance world?

NS: I got to the soloist level in the professional ballet, within American Ballet and other companies. I was bored being around those people, and I was really shy then, it was all too much for me.

US: What motivated a classical dancer into this other mode of thought?

NS: Rebellion, rebellion, rebellion. I just wanted to get out, change this thing, distort it, contort it.

US: At what point did you become interested with extreme forms of expression?

NS: I was working with the Dayton Ballet Company, but that was a big mistake. It's a geographical pit. My twin sister's boyfriend Clem was sending me Throbbing Gristle albums and other similar material. I just loved the music, it made a large impression on me. From there I moved to NY, and Clem ended up coming to work with me. With another person named James we did the first Function Disorder record as well many performances. It was a great vehicle for me to be rebellious with.

US: Why did you like TG?

NS: Genesis P. Orridge's voice sounded just like mine at the time, and the things they were saying and doing ... I was also using some of Monte Cazazza's music for performances. One of my early pieces was based on Monte Cazazza's song, 'Mary Bell', which I performed using my ballet training but I bastardized it, making it look awkward and backwards. I was dancing on point, but in a very bizarre manner.

US: So where would the ideas come from? Influenced primarily by the music, etc...?

NS: I got the ideas primarily from the music. I visualized from there and was able to really create bizarre ideas from all the music I used. There was a whole world that was already at work.

US: What were some of your earlier performances like?

NS: Madonna was working at a bar where once I performed, it was 'Zombie Night', and I was up on this huge white bar counter with another girl. I was this innocent thing with a whole package of chicken guts in my stomach, and my friend came along and stabbed my stomach, spraying chicken guts on everybody. Sometimes I get this proud and stupid adolescent feeling about Madonna having to clean it all up.

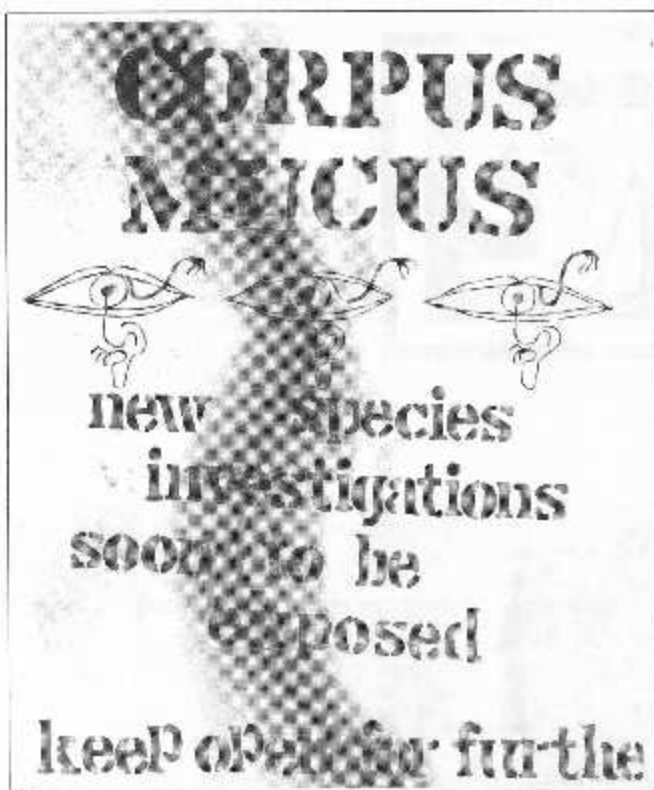
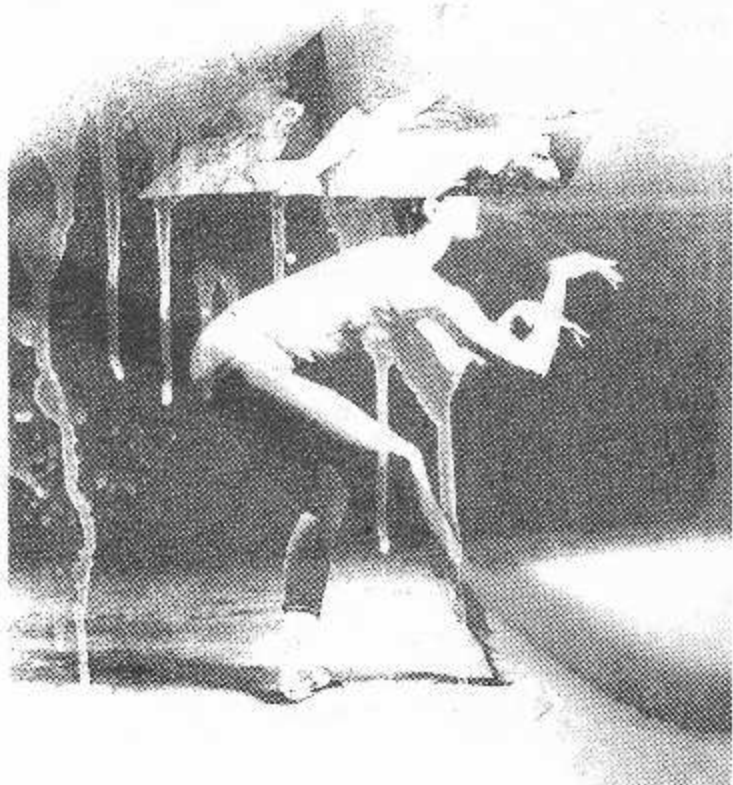
US: I was told about a piece that you once did at Club Generic (SF) involving a motorcycle and dance, what were some of the details?



NS: Billy (also in Function Disorder) and I went to Europe around a year and a half ago. I had wanted to show my paintings and distribute records. I ended up having my records taken away from me at the French customs, as well as our recording equipment that we had planned to use while performing. We didn't know that we needed a permit to bring them into the country. They said that our 4-track was a professional piece of recording equipment, and that we could pick up everything when leaving for the US. So we got into Berlin empty handed, no records to establish potential distribution and no recording equipment to play live/record others. We were also going to perform in France, but the people booking the shows had never really followed through on them. So after going to Europe and having those experiences, we ended up spending most of our time in Berlin, and had a great time. We made lots of good contacts, and also made as many mistakes as one could for what not to do in Europe.

US: Are you working on any new material?

NS: I've been writing a lot of songs. The last record I did was very vocal, and for me the most interesting instrument are the voice and lyrics. They are so personal, there is only one of each voice, every voice is different. There is so much told through your voice. I was really shy when I was young, and used to try to tell what a person was like by listening to their voice. You get a lot of information out of the way someone says hello.



This generation of kids are speaking out about how they are not too pleased with the world they were left in. The worlds our parents left us in, it's a rejection of that world. It's a reaction to the world that we were left in. They've put us in this world where we have to deal with all of these things. How much can we do to change it? Not a whole lot. The course is it's own at this point, and we have very little to do with it, but it's so much on mass.

RICHARD KERN AND NICK ZEDD



Nick Zedd

Richard Kern (1986)

BY BARRY SUBLAPSE

Richard Kern and Nick Zedd make films that are anything but subtle, they deal with sexual deviation and eroticism, pain and insanity, all set within a fantasy world not too far from reality. Their graphic images serve as studies into the psyches of those who are psychologically and sexually bound and tied. Although their work hardly breaks new ground, they raise questions and ideas that are valuable to a new generation of virgins untouched by criminal and sexual freedom. Kill suck Fuck eat cum destroy all guilt overcome unfounded hangups that exists in a world of lies, absurdity, and half-truths.

Zedd's film career began in 1979 with 'They Eat Scum', a perverse tale that made and broke new taboos for the uninitiated. Zedd has followed this with other equally wonderful excursions as 'The Bogus Man' (about a government conspiracy to clone the president), 'The Wild World of Lydia Lunch' (a home movie featuring a long triade against Nick by Lydia), 'Greek Maggot Bingo', and 'Thrust In Me', a collaboration with Richard that deals with necrophilia.

Richard on the other hand is unfortunately best known for the 'Right Side of My Brain' featuring a scene with a timid Lydia Lunch giving Jim Foetus a sloppy blowjob, sure to offend retarded feminists and other Falwell followers. As magnificent as 'Right Side of My Brain' is, Richard continues to pump out an endless array of atrocities that will offend your senses, stimulate your organ (s), and exercise your sphincter muscles

RK: I was subverted by rock 'n' roll. I had the same religious upbringing. When I was in high school certain guys or girls wouldn't hang out with me because I didn't play football or wear the right type of clothes, but fortunately the hippie or pseudo punk scene was happening and I said well there is something else out there. I just became rebellious and tried to go the opposite way of all those jerks who knocked themselves out playing football. I knocked myself out making money and said fuck you. Now it gives me great pleasure to see those dopes working in supermarkets or something with their fat wives, meanwhile I have a 20 year old girlfriend and live in extreme squalid luxury in the Lower East Side of New York and I'm getting ready to go to Italy to scum out with a bunch of Italians that I scamed into letting me fly over there.

US: Nick what do you think of Richard?

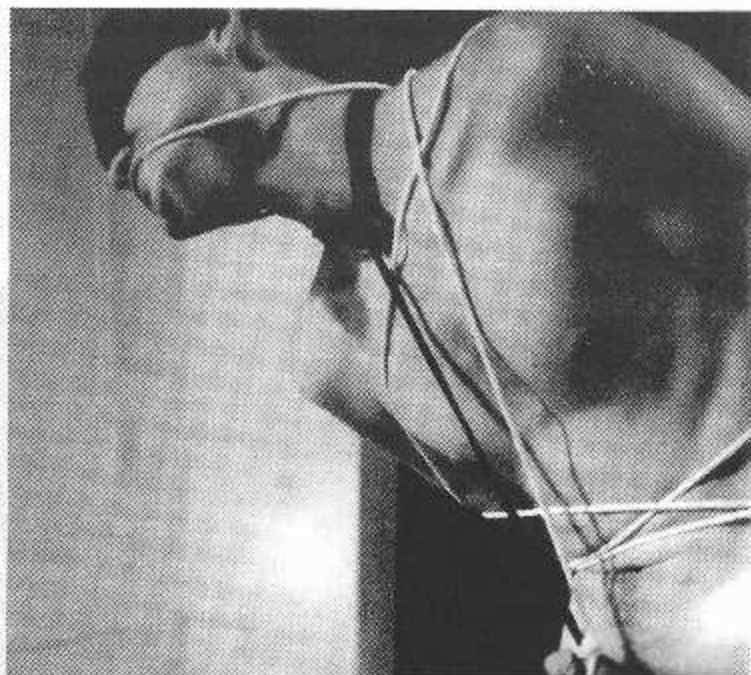
NZ: Richard is a master of deception. He leads people to believe that he is one thing when in reality there's something else beneath the surface - vile and quite violent, despicable in the eyes of all fascists. He's a criminal but he's very clever at concealing it his crimes are his biggest secret - it takes courage to be that way cause he's taken a big risk and he could end up in prison for a long time for his way of living but he seems pretty unaffected by the way of existence is. He's really honest in his own way ... he likes to be a mystery.

US: Richard what do you think of Nick:

RK: I admire Nick because he adheres to his values. Unfortunately his values will hinder him from ever succeeding at whatever he wants to succeed at because due to the nature of his nihilism, is included an auto-function to eradicate himself at any possibility of him getting done anything he wants to get done in the world. He is plagued by technical difficulties as they would say in television. Someone must help him .. please give Nick your money.



Lydia Lunch in 'Fingered' by Richard Kern (1986)



Richard Kern, 'Submit to Me' (1985)

US: Do you have any message?

RK: If you get some message from it you fail. There's nothing useful in my films, nothing that isn't obvious to anyone in the world with half a brain. The message is revenge against an audience that enjoys it, or against a stupid art world who embraces you because they think it's fashionable to do so.

US: Are you rebelling against your upbringing?

NZ: I was brought up in Maryland. My parents were very religious and Christian and I was brainwashed into believing their religion until my mother got into a car crash when I was 13 and she had to be put in traction. I prayed for god to make the pain go away and I realised if god exists he is a sadist. I started to realise there is no god and it's just a bunch of lies. I started reading which is the most subversive thing you can do to free your mind ... Marquis de Sade, Nietzsche, and Spiderman. I guess I'm still in open rebellion against my upbringing.

KAREN FINLEY

BY CARL HEYWARD



Unsound (US): In a way I get the impression of your work as being like a 'performance terrorist.' Would you describe yourself in this way?

Karen Finley (KF): I don't really feel myself as a terrorist, although if you saw me as an 'art terrorist' I then might have something to comment on. But nothing comes to mind.

US: I think that perhaps the superficial aspects within your performance may be above and beyond what the content is, for although the content is strong, its the shock value to the puritanical society - a society that wants to keep its eyes shut to certain things or doesn't want to see, for instance, a woman take certain liberties or evoke the kind of power or selfness.

KF: I don't feel that I am out to assault. I don't even feel that my work's sensational and that's the point I want to make, that it's the audience and the culture that considers that sensational.

US: Would you like to change that, and how do you feel about that? Does that lessen the impact of what you are trying to do?

KF: I don't feel that that is my job, nor do I have the power to be changing something like that. I can't change anyone. I can just expose what the condition is right now.

US: What are your concerns as a performance artist?

KF: My concerns are to expose both abuse and sexuality, cross-gender, different points of view, going into different points of view of examining the victim, the person that is actually doing the crime or the act of passion and changing points of view. In some ways I'm really much more interested in the language - in the points of view. It just happens to be that the topics are like lust, sexuality or emotionality. For instance, there has been a lot of attention on the sexuality aspects. I am interested in showing that women can be dominant in their sexuality and really express their sexual preferences without always having to appear as a whore, and I'm dealing with that kind of cross gender situation.

US: What about some of the other projects you have been working on, musically and otherwise, and are they in some way an extension of your performance work?

KF: I consider myself a visual artist, and I don't think that an artist in order to create has to be limited to the non-static. You know, I do static work. Static work ... I like that word a lot. And I like images and my performances are definitely images. My work is also very verbal, and because the music industry has been interested in me I've done two recordings - on which is basically a rap record with Robert Gorro which will be released on Cram Discs. Then I did a monologue which is being distributed with



Performance review - Media, San Francisco

When Karen Finley opened Pandora's fleshy box, the harpies and furies that flew out bore the faces of torment and abuse. The twisted thinking that results in rape, incest and just plain strange sex is the basis of her performance work and was the material presented at the Unsound/New Generic Video benefit at Media Gallery, San Francisco, 9/87.

Finley's extreme language and behaviour might initially be viewed as exhibitionistic, lewd or even of questionable taste. Her appeal seems to lie in the self-effacing humor, spontaneity and ability to communicate through the surface veneer of voyeurism.

Her characters are largely dispicable examples of human waste, walking and talking shit bags with brains. Finley's universe is so severe that feeling can only be achieved by the most extreme of measures: foreign object penetration, felching as a sexual fluid retrieval system, the cramming of yams up the ass, paraplegic rape, etc... From these actions, told in mesmerizing tones, a human connection is made between victim and perpetrator at the site of moral decay. Her work is less an indictment of the people who commit the acts as it is a howl at the culture that provides the environment for their necessity.

At Media, her wrenching, exhaustive performance employed a number of characters, all speaking in sinister voices, describing or re-enacting their deeds of defilement: a para-plegic boy is raped and feels for the first time, a Grand Mother, so bereft of the human touch is grateful for the administration of yams like a vegetable enema; a SOMA crawler gets a hot funnel up the butt; a Black-voiced reveler smokes cocaine and invokes the funniest lines of the evening: "Sushi Party, ain't nothing but a sushi party," etc... One after the other, these demons emerge from Finley's mouth and mind, each more shocking than the former, each made more horrible because they are devoid of conscience or consequence. Her graphic display is made all the more repellent when the viewer realizes that their 'victims' are often quite appreciative of the attention, rendering the encounter morally ambiguous.

There is nothing titillating about the performance, even the sight of Finley's yam encrusted ass had to be viewed with revulsion, given the context of the presentation. Finley has to be appreciated for her intention of exposing a very particular condition that we find ourselves in: of money-lust and human devaluation at the cost of human feeling, of moral ambiguity that obscures the line between a failed culture's bankruptcy and its facade of humanistic abundance. Karen Finley seems to sacrifice and purge herself in full public view, for our enlightenment and entertainment.



KF: My audience is broad ranged, from anyone who has witnessed any range of emotionality; has witnessed or felt any type of desertion, prejudice, abuse, or any type of crime; or they are aware of this going on ... That's what I feel is my audience.

US: Could you comment on the reactions or anticipations of the audience?

KF: There's several different audience reactions to go with different spaces. I really gear my performance to the particular space almost in the same way as one would approach an installation. For example, if I had to perform in a night club ... it's at 3:00 a.m. in New York, and people are drunk or drinking or in an 'un' mood. They are going to the club to feel better. So when I perform there's a lot of euphoria, shouting and heckling. It's considered that they are part of it, a more communal situation. When I do something in an art gallery, people are much more of the 'sponge' type. They are sitting there, they want to take it in ... they've got their cotton crotch panties on, their tweed jacket, they're almost all college educated, they're a little more secure and they do have an historical perspective on what's going on. I'm really analyzed a lot more when I perform in an art space. It isn't something that they can just let be, that I'm just performing. So I realize that the people in art spaces are just a bit more uptight and reserved and they are judging me. People don't really judge me in a club.

US: Why is or isn't your performance pornographic or demeaning to men and women?

KF: I don't feel that pornography is demeaning towards men and women so that is a decision right there to your question. Pornography, from my opinion, is something that's final result is to turn someone on sexually, and that's a pretty broad category for what people want sexually. Now some other person's sexual needs may be to someone else's sensibilities a form of violence, and many times I feel that it isn't really sex but actually violence that we're talking about and somehow in our culture we can't experience sensuality, that we have to experience violence in order to get a hard-on or to have our multiple orgasms...

to be able to do what I want to do. But how I came about doing performances - I went to art school in Chicago, and in high school was lucky enough within my educational process because performance was considered as adequate or equal part to other static forms, painting or sculpture which I did as well. So I really grew up with the notion that performance was the same as any other art form, there was never any difficulty with it. When I went to the San Francisco Art Institute I began doing performance, and I had experiences at that time which really dealt with my emotional world. My father committed suicide. I just saw pain in people which really seemed to affect them a lot more than looking at a painting which, if you look at a painting you stay there for 3 seconds and you leave and it's always about something about dealing with the history or the historical view point of it in aesthetic, in the different movement and I didn't feel part of that movement. I didn't feel part of the abstract expressionism going on in San Francisco. I didn't feel part of the many male artists that were around at that time who painters or sculptures, and I didn't feel part of the feminist situation that was going on then. So I started doing performance and it immediately began dealing with feelings about my pain.

US: What were some of those earlier performances like?

KF: One of them was called 'Death Cakes and Autism' which I did at the A-Hole Gallery (S.F.) dealing with the different funeral arrangements or the whole comedy or the third person approach I was having to my father's funeral where people weren't really concerned about the fact that this man shot himself, and the pain and the desperations of whatever had happened to him or as if it there's really violence going on, and that when they are watching me the pain that goes on within sexuality is no longer sex or sensually pleasing - its something that deals with degradation and I'm really showing that. I'm showing the sense of power and the powerlessness.

US: Do your characters come from personal experiences or fantasy?

KF: From both. Fantasy, real life experience or actual observations, collective situations.

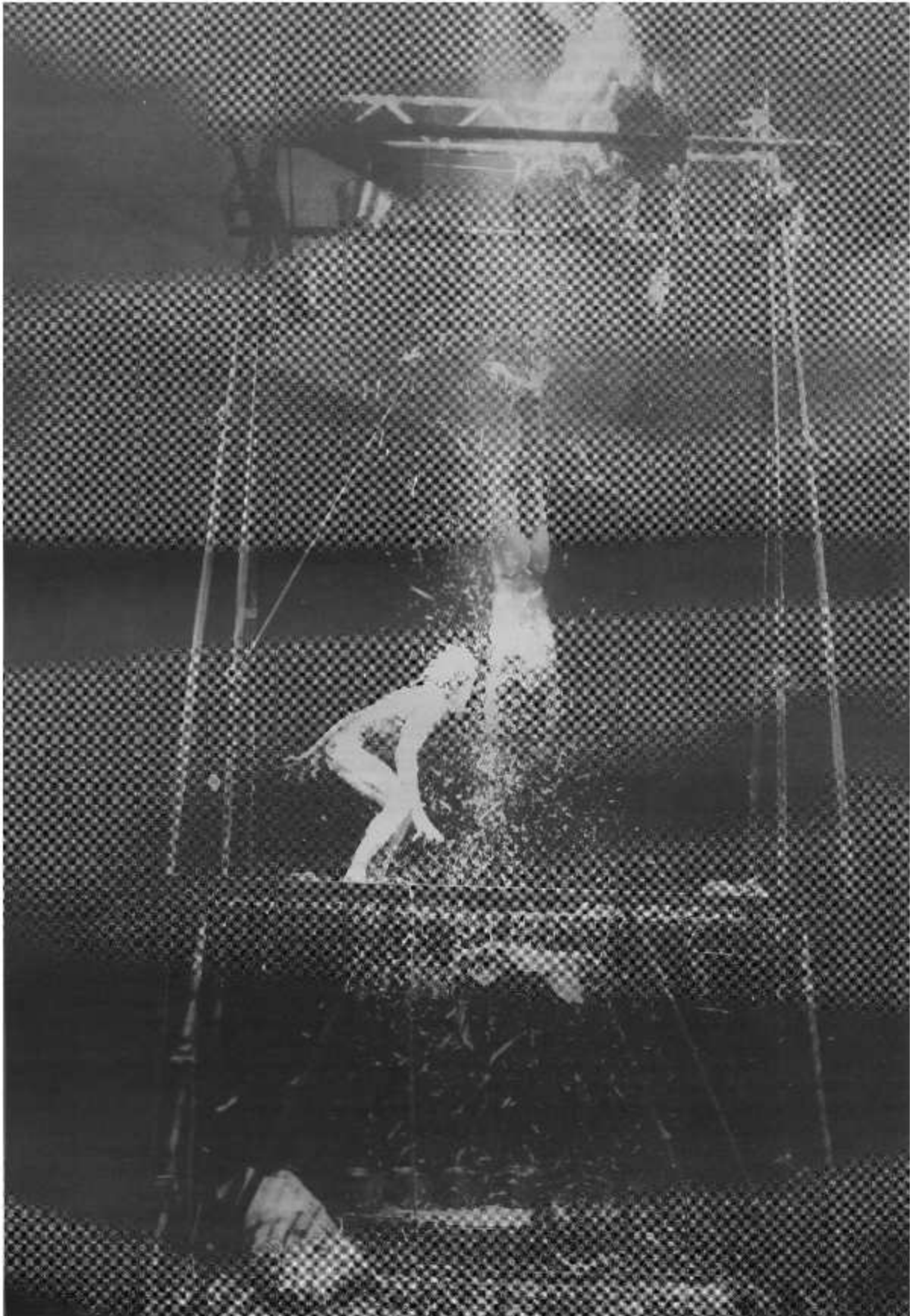
US: I would imagine that there is a lot of observation involved, for example in the part of the performance that sounded like a Texas or Western radio evangelist cadence. Is that from listening to, from traveling...?

KF: Well, I did live in Chicago, and people talk real funny there. There's a lot of Appalachians and black language - I really love black language a lot. I consider it to be a high art form, its a difficult language as in an opera, and I love to hear the way people talk and how they make the words sound more like a song. So when I talk and when I'm performing, I speak extremely rapidly. I like to change tonalities within the English language because I do not speak any other language, cutting off the consonants which makes it a lot easier to listen to, the words go from one into another.

US: How are you physically and emotionally affected around your performances?

KF: I'm extremely nervous beforehand as if I'm going to become violently ill, and everytime I perform I tell myself I'm never going to do this again.

LA FURA DELS BAUS



THE INTERVIEW BY SALVADOR FRANCESCH

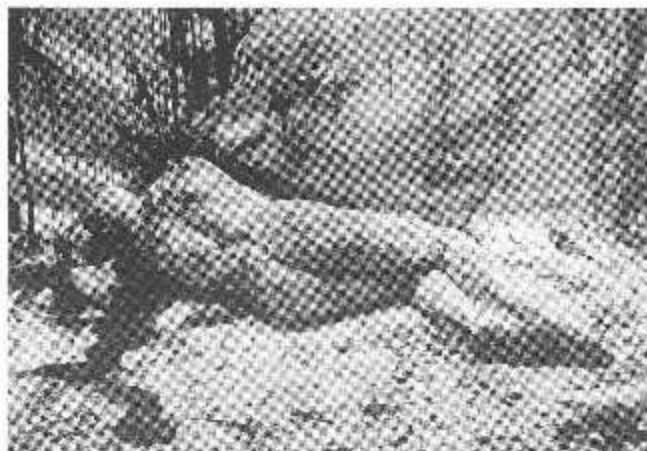
La Fura Dels Baus is one of the leading forces emerging within the Spanish scene. Focused in the independent province of Catalonia where they originate, the group concentrates their efforts in manifesting in performance what could be framed as "industrial Buto." La Fura Dels Baus has left the theatre to create a total integration of theatrical elements with the performing arts and new music, sweeping away the limitations of the claustrophobic stage. Their is a reenactment of the shamanic seance which brings back on us the instinctual nature of regeneration, trance and fascination. Their anti-information, anti-intellectualism, and their attack on the overlord of cultural effects ranges them with the current industrial wave to which they add a Nietzschean instinct for creating at the edge. Their actual performances constitute an act of tribal participation which exorcises the blessed demons of the industrial age.

La Fura Dels Baus (FDB): In principle we could talk about "Actions" which is our current performance and then about the group. We try to collect all the information that urban and city life brings about in our daily lives. Urban life is a fact, a generational experience, contemporary and phenomenological. This information gives support to "Actions". "Actions" is an impact piece which acts like a mirror reflecting the experience of the group during these last years. "Actions" was premiered in the Sitges Festival of 1983. At that time "Actions" was an exercise and an attempt to put into practice ideas that we had on a very instinctual level. We did the exercise or performance under a bridge of the railway system; between the railways there was enough space for the audience.

US: You have mentioned an important point and that is the need to return to the instinctual nature.

FDB: Yes, we are now preparing a new performance. You see, "Actions" represented a form of theatre or rather a para-theatre event in which we tried to avoid the text or spoken word which is too intellectual, too determined to direct. That brought us to take elements, we even call them residual elements which convey a wide range of visualization for the audience to codify the piece without too much cultural interference. From this point on we tried to introduce what we call the theatre of conduct. This form of acting is not related to the cultivated actor but a fusion of energy and character of the actor. This is because the actor becomes instinctive instead of knowing a certain role. This form of extreme reacting we call "theatre of conduct". The actor is the thread between the audience and the performance. We were able to achieve that directly.

The audience reacted in a very mimetic and contagious way. The audience was our accomplice and there wasn't any scape nor any specific cultural linguistic direction. Within the musical and plastic elements we use industrial elements, regressive urban sounds trying to



Lona (Canvas) Mercado de Pescado (fish market), Madrid 1984

recycle the sounds we receive from a large city like Barcelona. Basically this is our aim regardless of whether it is understood this way or not. There are also melodic moments but, for instance, using barrels, smashing metal sheets, or using powered engines as sound accompaniment is a choice that is at hand. This is the reality around us. We didn't have to make an effort, it was all there, and what we did is bring it from reality into a fictional world of theatre. The plastic of theatre in so far as we understand it, the use of paint is merely reduced to a backdrop or make-up. What we do is pick up the concept of paint and add to it several meanings. For instance, when bags of paint are hanging against the white canvas it means 1) the use of color and form on the canvas by means of the explosion, 2) the use of the body as a passive element, that is the body is the brush that manipulates the paint and constructs the picture, 3) the ephemeral aspect of the work as afterwards, the paint can be washed away. Nothing is left behind. Then we have make-up. We use integral make-up, a name we give to our way of characterization, instead of the typical actor's dress, integral make-up is basically mud that give to the performer a plastic form with a value in itself. As a result the mud man that appears at the beginning of "Actions" has two readings. On the one hand, it is the actor's presence itself. He is covered with layers of mud and appears from a hole in the earth into the light. This gives a strong sensation to the audience as the mud man begins to have constant repetitive convulsions in themselves. Plus the nausea and the feeling of vomiting. This is one reading, the other is the presence of the performer totally covered with mud, constituting a form with meaning itself. The combination of these two elements gives to the action a feeling of totality.

US: At the same time, from what you are explaining, the mud man that appears in the light suggests to me the idea of birth, and a man that is revealed to the world.

FDB: "Actions" could have other meanings, or, as you say, more metaphorical and symbolic meanings, but somehow when we speak of "Actions" we seem to speak more about materials, and in a more neutral way. We could understand it as the mud man coming in to the light, into the world, a strange world, and react to it in a certain way, that would be a poetic interpretation. But our interpretation is that we did not want to reach the audience in a determined way, especially in a very decontextualized way. We did not want to give a determined impression, but a sensation. That would be the difference. There is a whole world of significance in "Actions" within the whole concept of the nuclear holocaust and all sorts of other metaphorical values, but what we wanted was the action-reaction. For this was the important thing, not the level of signification but reaction. We did not care about how to reach the audience but how strongly we hit them.

US: In what you are saying, I notice that there is a great tendency to reduce theatre, if we could call it theatre, practically to a ritual.

FDB: Yes, this is a ritual, I did not want to use the word ritual because we will use it in the next performance, but it could be called a ritual.

US: Well, rituals now--I don't know if you are aware of it--but one of the very strong tendencies within the rock movement is precisely the great need to return to rituals.

FDB: I see...this is contemporary...that's very curious.

US: I find the ritualistic aspect of your work essential and very important. How do you perceive ritual? Is it an instinctive need to return to a primal form?

FDB: Yes...exactly. "Actions" for us was a return to meaning, that is to say a public contact based on complicity in ritual, there is always this type of relationship, without intellectual or economic need. We understand this complicity or relation between the active and passive participants as a primitive form of communion between the performer and the audience. This is how we destroy the concept of comfortable theatre sitting where the audience follows the fictional world while he is in the real world. By destroying this separation we transfer the fictional world into every corner of reality so that at any point the performer may start offering the rite or ceremony. From this very moment the complicity starts. 700 people will move from one point to another completely converted according to the music and the climax of the ceremony that is taking place.



Fakirs (like the fiakirs of India),
Mercadok de Legazpi, Madrid 1984



Sonateros (noisy jingles), La Funeraria (funeral home)
Madrid, 1985

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

Their bodies muddied, La Fura Dels Baus begins their performance emerging from a trench or tomb-like hole. They move with embryonic agony, crawling on the floor, gesticulating towards the audience. Music thunders violent and aggressive penetrating the bone structure.

The music subsides, and more members emerge, repulsive looking, from different places. They crawl through people's legs and contort their bodies in frightening ways. Audience members try to escape but La Fura Dels Baus seems to be everywhere.

They cover their bodies with gelatinous substances and eggs. They scream like hell. A phantom-like being smashes a wall. Makeshift bombs explode; the building is engulfed in flame in multiple colors. The pyrotechnics continue from the building as La Fura Dels Baus come forward with axes and smash a car to pieces. A strange being appears from the darkness and screams the only words of the night in an unknown language.

The performance thrusts forward with an aerial birth. Two embryonic beings go through space on hardly visible rope. Their foetal movements end when the rope 'breaks' and they hit the wall. A huge red stain covers the wall. The performance is over.



DIRTY MANIFESTO

F.D.B. - It's not a social phenomenon, it is not just a group, it's not a circle of close friends, it's not an association pro-anything.

F.D.B. - It's a criminal organization in today's cultural scene.

F.D.B. - It's the result of the symbiosis of ten peculiar and well differentiated elements supporting themselves mutually in its development.

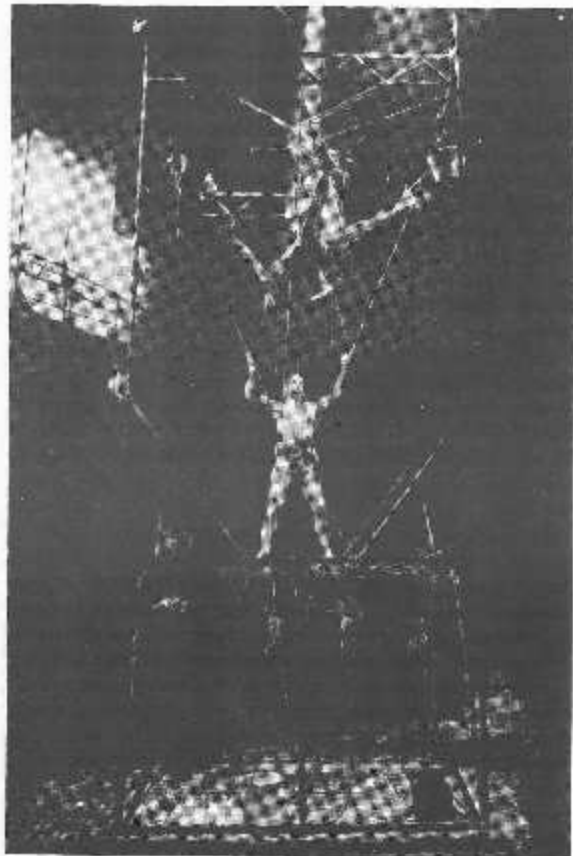
F.D.B. - It's closer to the self-definition of fauna than to the standard model of citizen.

F.D.B. - It's a theater of non-ruled behaviour and without any preconceived trajectory. It works as a mechanical engine and generates activity by pure necessity and empathy.

F.D.B. - It has nothing to do with the past. It doesn't learn from the traditional fountains and doesn't like pre-manufactured and modern folklore.

F.D.B. - It produces theater by means of constant interferences between both: intuition + investigation.

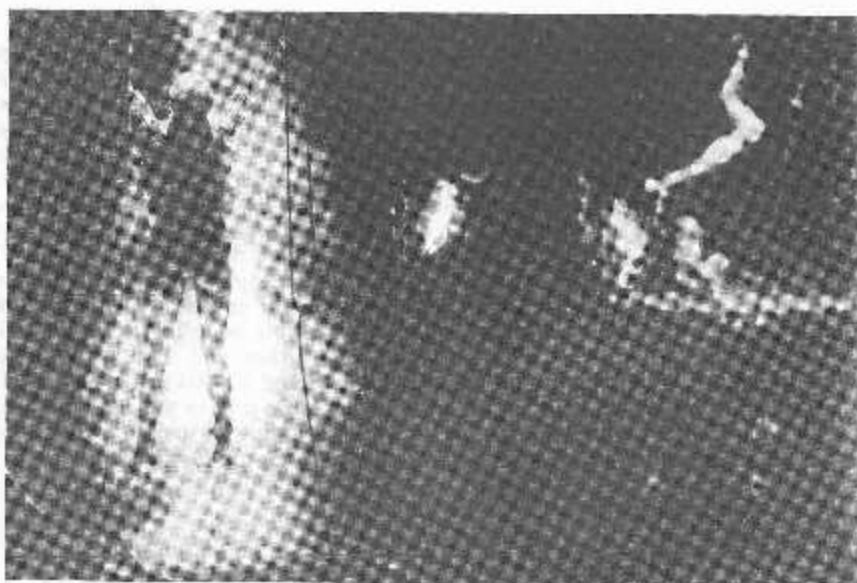
F.D.B. - It experiments alive. Each action represents a practical exercise on aggressive playing against the stillness of the spectator, it makes an irruption to impact and alterate the usual relationship between spectator and spectacle.



Las Pencas

Madrid 1985

This performance will not have a name such as La Fura dels Baus presents "Actions". We will work with a symbol, a distinctive sign. That is, from now on, the audience will see the sign, a semiotic symbol, which each individual will perceive or understand as being representative of a certain value. For instance, if they see the symbol of the snake they will identify as a snake performance. This is an abstraction of what we are. We use music as a primordial value of solidification and infiltration. We destroy the melodic element which is excessively cultural. Percussion is again used as a more primal means within the musical language. We understand percussion as something of immediate assimilation as it goes with the heart rhythm which works by beats the very same way we function. We incorporate a one hour and 10 minute performance on a concert level that is purely musical. Within the musical context we introduce a sort of ceremony and it comes together at the end with a musical climax. It is music which is the most primeval form of expression, music and perhaps painting. It is not the word or the text. This is why we introduce the ceremonial aspect. In "Actions" we did not talk about ritual. We were hinting at the theatre of conduct and impact theatre. Here in the new



Las Pencas,

Mercat de las Flors (Flower Market), Barcelona, 1986

performance we are talking about ceremony and ritual. This is where we return to the origin which we call the neo-ethnological origin.

US: This is very interesting because it really is primeval. It is as you said that through the drums we return to a state of origin. So let me summarize: your next show will basically be ceremonial and magic.

FDB: Yes, that is what we're trying to do.

US: And the first show, "Actions" was instinctual, or primal.

FDB: I think we can say that instead of evolution we are setting up a counter-evolution. This means that the avant-garde has reached a point where they abstract themselves so much that they become unintelligible, I would even say dangerously dull, and excessively contextualized. So that when we reach such a high point of abstraction in the avant-garde there is a need to return to classicism--not the academic classicism, but a primal information source that begins a sort of regeneration. It's like cycles of overuse in evolution and counter-evolution. We accept then that if the first show was sort of instinctive aggressiveness, then in the second one we will be more magical, more ritualistic and more primitive.

US: Primitivism. I am very surprised by what you are saying because it's so close to what Maurizio Bianchi the Italian industrialist is talking about. The idea to eliminate all the excessive information, excessive culture, and to return to the ethnological centre of being, to the primitive roots which are intrinsically rooted inside being. It reminds me that Genesis P. Orridge from Throbbing Gristle (now Psychic TV) has also mentioned his concern and need to de-inform himself. This seems to be coming up as a new concept. You do mention it many times in my program that the audience should de-inform themselves. What it means is that excessive information generates fear of being. People know in any situation what they have to say to protect themselves thus protecting their fears. This is a prison state situation created by society and is happening more and more.

US: The industrial music phenomena is no longer considered rock, it may be considered a reaction against rock in it's many interpretations. How do you see yourselves in relation to this cultural phenomena?

FDB: The concept is with us, like a sickness that feeds us constantly. We can go to a rock concert, but when we pass a factory the sounds are really there. This feeling reaches us from all sides of the city, for Barcelona is a large center for textile production, and it gives us more musical meaning than rock. Rock is something more free, playful and it's meaning is not serious enough. There is no repulsion in rock now as there has been at other times. On the other hand the industrial sound has a real character which appeals to us even more so when we approach it musically.

US: Do you see a metaphysical dimension in industrial music?

FDB: Some people do, but I think it in a materialistic way with no ideology. There is ideology in its utilitarian application.

US: To be more specific. I believe industrial music came about as a result of the anguish and despair of urban life, and this refers to the metaphysical references I had mentioned. This cultural despair has succeeded in separating us from our contact with being, that is, our instinctual essence which is the one that consequently has brought us into ritual music. You said that there is only a utilitarian approach in terms of music. But I believe that this is the best way to demonstrate this despair, anguish and lack of direction in man, as he is experiencing total disorientation due to excess of information and analytical capacities. The point is to avoid experience because experience brings pain or another form of suffering. The best way out of this shield or barrier is created between yourself and reality coming from the outside. This information shield acts like a buffer ...

FDB: To answer this we must specify that our geographical area is very different, namely that we are not Anglosaxons. Being Mediterranean we have the capacity to sooth this metaphysical concept of anguish. For the Germanic and Anglosaxon people this soothing is different, and metaphysics from this angle belong more to the North. Even if our industrial approach is based in anguish, we are anguished with perhaps more optimism. We are not that masochistic. Mediterranean culture is not based on concept imbedded in masochism as people in the North seem to be inclined to. Mediterranean anguish is diluted by that which is intranscendental and bound to oblivion but it the result of the light, geographical location and cultural tradition. We work with anguish as well, but our use of it is very different, we want to divorce ourselves from the transcendentalism of the European industrialists. It's too purist, in the same way that technology is purist and so are their

cultures. These are uniform cultures without cultures without capacity to dilute. In Zurich for instance the punks were punks, the progressives were progressive, etc. They are all closed up tribes. On the other hand we Latins are much more mixed up, more elastic, less serious, tolerant.

In our next performance we want to be more anthropological towards ourselves. We want the South, Africa - to lean towards cultures that are less sophisticated and less rigid as they are in the North.

US: But when you look North do you see this anguish as something real?

FDB: Absolutely. The industrialization process is stronger there than here. Here you can get lost within Extremadura, a strange isolated province, and it is amazing. When we did a performance of "Actions" in Andalucia, while we smashed a car with axes the Andalusian people clapped the way they do in Flamenco music. This was really a beautiful statement and authentic. They could not accept our ideas from Barcelona, but that is the way they deal with life - giving to the performance their own perception. On the other hand, we went to the North in Navarra. The Basques have a culture of cutting to pieces tree trunks as a national sport and entertainment, thus when we smashed the car they gave it little importance. In Barcelona the people fled as we smashed the car, preferring to watch at a distance. At the very same moment that we began smashing the car in Navarra the people moved closer, there was no difference between the car and the tree trunk. If they had had axes in their hands everyone would have participated, its in their culture... "Actions" transforms itself according to the place, and this shows us that the ethnological elements are not dead yet.



BY DRAEGER G. GUNN

UN SOUND (US): I see mentioned on 'The Flickering of Sowing Time' the term 'extraction' ... This sounds like a term I once heard used in a linguistics class, is there a connection?

KIM CASCONE (KC): Yes, but the connection originated purely on an intuitive level at first, as I wasn't familiar with any of the terminology or concepts of semiotics at the time. It started as a way of working visually where I would draw on tracing paper over coloring books in such a way as to obliterate the original image. I discovered that the drawings for the most part bore no resemblance to the original material and the concept of tracing became very important in my work. I then started applying it to music where I would take Muzak, slow it down and trace out certain melodies with various instruments. These



experiments were interesting but failed to generate any solid material, so I shelved the idea till about two years ago. I had been in the studio messing around with patching delays and things together when all of a sudden these incredibly intricate sounds were coming out of the speakers. I checked the signal source only to find it was a dense structure on one track and that I had been pulling these sounds out of it with the set-up. I found this directly related to my tracing pieces and set out to develop this idea further. I created one solid piece from it called, 'In the Shadow of the Lions Cage', which is on the second album. The



EXTRACTION CASCONE

connection with semiotics is that both the signal source and the extracted signal have connotative meaning which are determined by the coding of the person listening. It's sort of like an aural Rorschach test.

US: Do you have a audio or visual (or both) background.

KC: I am trained as a musician. I came through a few years at the Berklee College of Music without too many scratches. I hung out at SVA and Parson's in NYC and picked up a lot of information concerning film and painting ... hung out at the New School's electronic music studio with Dana McCurdy ... took a few lessons with the guitar player in Ornette Coleman's band ... worked on an installation with Maz Neuhaus ... I've been around and have tried to learn about art from people I looked up to.

US: As an artist how do you deal with the aspect of having to package yourself in order to give people a handle with talking about PGR or Thessalonians?

KC: The way media works unfortunately tends to automatically place people in categories such as 'industrial' or 'experimental' or whatever. I mean when this article comes out people expect to see something that fits into the format of this magazine. If this were an article about country and western music it might confuse a lot of readers so I'm 'packaged,' as you call it, just by association I guess. On the business level I suppose it is the way of the West that everything becomes commodified because we are dealing with a consumer mentality, art is really no exception. There will always be someone exploiting a new style of painting or music because they can capitalize on it.

US: Aren't there people in the noise scene who exploit the artists, who try to capitalize by running a record company and collect a profit from the record sales? Do you feel that because of your position of being an organiser and businessman that your political ideals take a back seat once in awhile?

KC: There are people in the noise scene who carry the same disease as the people involved in rock and roll, but the noise underground contains the element of networking where mainstream music doesn't. This is a core activity which is evidenced in many of the magazines, and keeps a political heirarchy from forming. People want to make contact by sending their music around and getting feedback on it or seeing what others are up to. In this pool there is an occasional shark or two but that stems from a few people offering services that others need and don't have access to on any other level. As long as we don't have free access to equipment or funding for people who aren't accomplished grant writers by trade we are dealing with a situation of limited access. Socialism isn't going to happen in this country for quite awhile, so until it does I have to learn how to acquire the funds to support culturally 'subversive' activities. In that way I don't feel as if I'm exploiting the artists although you're right in making the connection between the 'commodity' signifying a mediation of the artists work, such as exploitation. Its a difficult issue in that I sincerely want to let people hear music-sound-noise that I feel is of high quality, but I'm also aware of the connotations of creating a product to be consumed.

That is a problem with some noise bands, they are limited in their vocabulary and what they have to say becomes monotonous after awhile, or they try to express difficult ideas and don't have the 'chops' to get it across. The action of constantly mirroring the negative aspects of society shouldn't be confused with approaching the problem in a constructive manner.

US: On a more mundane level, what are some of your influences as an artist and describe some of the other projects you are working on presently?

KC: Some projects are Silent Records which just got underway with The Haters Lp being the first and the second is the Architects Office soundtrack piece for Jane Brakhage's play, 'Caswallon the Headhunter', and future projects are a shared Lp by Organum and Eddie Prevost (member of AMM), and a Kings House Lp. A major influence on my both personally and artistically has been the filmmaker Stan Brakhage, our correspondence has been a source of strength for me.... some other influences have been electronic music composers like John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Cornelius

US: It seems to me that a great parallel exists between your application of semiotics in your musical extractions and your attempts to balance being a socialist and a businessman.

KC: A certain amount of intergration is necessary to keep me from being too scattered. I think the interconnectedness of sub liminal levels and being in touch with the communications between them is what being an artist who isn't alienated is all about.

US: Is the act of noise music a way for bands to discharge the tension that results from alienation? And does 'noise as catharsis' seem to be a mode noise bands are settled in?

KC: Any art activity serves as a way of channeling or releasing energy ... it serves as a safety valve. But it can also be used as a tool for introspection, by only using it as a means to express catharsis seems to be a very limited application. The mastery of a large vocabulary gives you more tools with which to express a wide range of ideas and feeling. Cardew, and Brian Eno has been a great model for me as an artist. I admire people who do both music and visual art and run a continuity through them both. I've seen some drawings by Glenn Branca that were very beautiful. Recently I've been playing the guitar again and I've been listening to a lot of Sonny Sharrock, Mayo Thompson, John McLaughlin, Pete Cosey... musicians who mix noise and jazz which is an area I think I'm heading into... we shall see.



STEVE FAGIN

BY WILLIAM DAVENPORT AND TAMARA F

Voice-over of Italian female narrator:

As a child, Raymond had accompanied his mother to India. They had rented a private yacht, special for the occasion. One dawn, after many weeks of travel, she was awoken by a sailor whispering in her ear, 'Hurry! Come see! India by first light!' She quietly scurried topside. The captain proudly gave her his spyglass and pointed. She looked, just for a moment, returned the glass and said, 'Do not dock, turn round, turn round.' The captain had no choice. A few moments later, Raymond awoke. He had missed India.



'Virtual Play: the double direct monkey wrench in Black's machinery'

Steve Fagin attacks video, askewing our expectations - the stagnated box becomes a moving painting, a graphic representation, opera at it's best, a silent movie, or an ethnographic documentary ... Not television but sculpture that has come to life. Video is one of the most difficult mediums to work within because of our constant exposure to the form as a means of entertainment and information. Steve Fagin challenges the notion of video and presents us with a work more akin to 'high art'. He creates a battlefield for the mind, beyond consumerism, 'difficult' in the true sense of the word. Pushing the boundaries past clichés and dogmas ... examining theory, creativity, and self.

Steve Fagin has completed two feature length videos within the past few years - 'Virtual Play' (1984) and 'The Amazing Voyage of Gustave Flaubert and Raymond Roussel' (1986). Both works have been presented nationally and internationally at numerous galleries, museums and festivals.

all photographs by Margret Hussey
all other photos from 'The Amazing
Voyage of Gustave Flaubert and
Raymond Roussel'.

Unsound (US): Why did you choose historical literary figures such as Gustave Flaubert and Raymond Roussel?

Steve Fagin (SF): I chose Roussel but Flaubert, more or less chose me. Let me explain, I wanted to explore the 19th centuries obsession with orientalism, along with a general interest in the epistolary mode, so Flaubert's letters became a rather obvious area of research. I found Flaubert's letters so interesting that I started pursuing him, and then came across the Sartre book on Flaubert, which I thought was spectacular. Somehow it sort of made sense to include a second person. Roussel would write, spinning off of two different words, taking the one that had the lesser meaning, and then writing from there. The idea of two travelers, like two words, became a writing and structuring dynamic. So Flaubert sort of hopped on almost like a hitch-hiker, while Roussel was the driver of the piece or at least it's chauffeur.

I chose Roussel initially because of the eccentricities associated with his life. How many times he changed shirts, that he traveled in the dark, never left the hotel room when in exotic lands, and of course the extremely stylized way he wrote his books, documented in his posthumously published 'How I Wrote Certain of My Novels'. As with Lou Salome, his life seemed very exotic. Full of gossip and fragmentary data, a life documented fully on the margins with very little information or curiosity about his core. All of the information about them simply seemed to shroud them in more and more obscurity. I was very interested in the nature of his language and that it had such an important impact on 20th Century art [Duchamp, Margritte, Giacometti...] as opposed to literature. I wanted both to capture the nature of his language, a symbolic system full of laws but absent of content, truly more than an imaginary language, his work being a symbolic machine trapped perhaps hiding in the imaginary, caught in it's web, and to explore it's psychopathology. My piece is like a mobius strip, the one side unwrapping the language and the other side invoking it, cloning the style. When the piece is working perfectly, everything is static, but usually the piece misfires between the unravelling and the construction. It becomes a constant stuttering, spitting, stopping, gliding type of a machine.

US: What do you mean by misfiring?

SF: I have an interesting story about the first piece on Lou Salome - I was at this Psychoanalytic conference. A very good friend of mine was giving a presentation called, 'The Everyday Life of Lou Andreas Salome', and it was about the relationship of my work to the writing of Freud and Lefebvre. It was an excellent presentation and I was very pleased. Right before he began someone came up to me and said, 'Oh, Andrew (who was giving the presentation) told me your piece is wonderful and its all about you breaking up with your girlfriend!' I would say the second piece is centered around an eye accident that I had, and the male voice is written exactly describing that experience. I think work should start from a personal dilemma that you want to resolve, or work through, or at least address yourself to. The major issue during the period of my life when the Flaubert/Roussel piece was written has to do with being alive, being almost totally blind, almost allergic to all of sight - light, which I cringed from. Writing as if in the lives of Flaubert and Roussel functioned to fill this space of darkness and isolation. It was what is called solace . .

Flaubert and Roussel were extremely lonely people, and their writing stemmed from their longings, wanting language to somehow evoke the imaginary, to reconnect them to the maternal. The act of writing was almost like an effort to construct and bind them to their mother's body, the tapestry of words becoming an imbilical cord, tying them to their mother's prom-dress strings. This is my co-habitation of their world and the one that evokes the piece on a personal level. Basically the way I work is on a mediated secondary revisionist level turning primal things into narration. What I take is the relation to these very dense personal events, then filter them through their lives, in this case the European writers Flaubert and Roussel, then reassimilate them through American popular culture. Things have to be thrown out very far if they are to be returned to their proper place.

US: Such as how you juxtapose popular dance songs from the 50's and opera?

SF: I juxtapose the sound for two reasons - one to provide the perspective dimension that the image lacks, and two to in a mystical manner, produce an orchestration of sound that will be the correct order to open the door hiding the treasure. It's not just the sound but the order. I'm looking for the imaginary or perhaps it's the other way round, looking to get out of its clutches. Surely the piece has this ambivalence. Other times I just think I'm drowning and have constructed a machine that will keep me afloat and I'm just yelling for help.

US: The machine is the whole video?

SF: Yes.



SF: The parts don't work and the timing is a bit stuttered. One sets a spark, and there is an occasional glide and sometimes a fall. The machine has three cylinders, death, origin and mythology and the effort is to get them working together, at all costs to annul their so called contradictory relation.

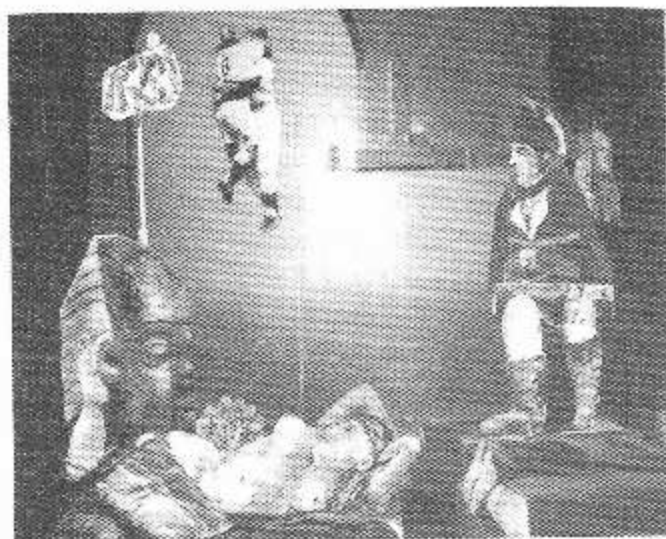
US: It seems that Roussel is the main character and Flaubert comes along for the ride.

SF: But to what degree... who comes along for the ride and changes the course of the journey? Flaubert is Roussel's better half. He's a more famous character. In the piece each of the characters is kvetching about the other one, although in reality they didn't even know each other. Their dates overlap by two years - Flaubert dies two years after Roussel is born. I then inverted their relationship, the texts on Flaubert are about his pre-language years, his infancy, and the texts on Roussel are about the fabulous death that he had. He died of an overdose of barbiturates, in a hotel room in Sicily, very sleazy for so fabulously wealthy an individual. This story is told in two sections of the tape called 'Dying in front of the large glass.' One should remember that historically, Flaubert is marked as that person who 'mucks with the novel,' who disorders the relation between quotation and direct speech, he writes in styles. The piece was very motivated around fantasizing the novel, picking up exactly at the point where the novel is already misfiring.

US: When imagining a fantasized novel, I think continuous stories ...

SF: There is a part in the text which says, 'Roussel talks about 1001 Arabian Nights,' which is about how you keep telling stories so you don't die.

US: Are there any personal or autobiographical situation within your work?

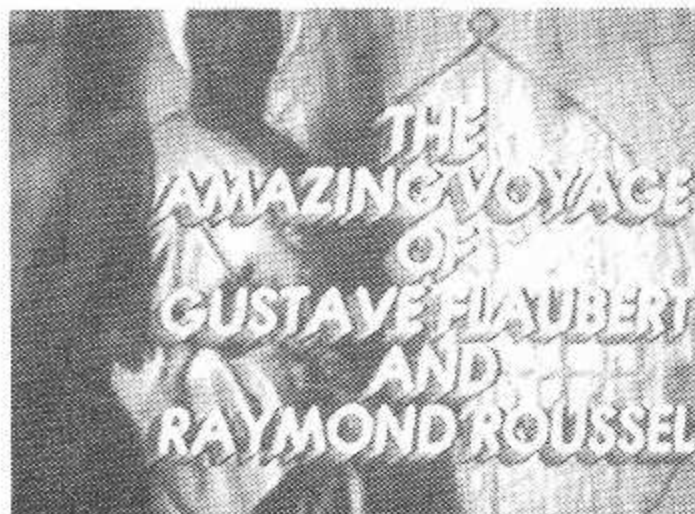


US: Like how the machine is the whole novel for Roussel. Bringing up another point, one particularly consistent theme is the mother relationship. Could you explain further?

SF: There are texts within each of the pieces on Roussel and Flaubert that talk about their relation to their mother. The last text in the piece, evoked from Hamlet, says, 'at least their mothers talked to them, a tongue taken from a broken image, cracked and luminous. The sons sat attentively, warmed, but the message was not understood'. Also in Duchamp's bride side of the Large Glass the language is evoked from an analogy with geometry, a mistaken analogy. The language could never have been constructed from the geometric model, but still the bachelor listens to this language, nonsensical but systematic. The father is in some sense unavailable, he haunts the piece in the third dimension, like a shadow. One of the other mapping stories that goes along with the piece is the Ulysses story, 'Odysseus'. There's the journey outward, you stop at an island for three years because you get chained up. You stop at another one because of the sirens, your journey is an awkward returning and there is always the sense that Penelope is waiting for you to return to the throne.

US: The mothers in the piece are stand-ins?

SF: Yes, they are more or less stand-ins, or maybe a way of putting it is that they're baby sitters. Being produced in a manner that trivializes them, within this trivialization remains the cause of their need to be trivialized, their power is so great that it is only in this mediated form that they can figure at all. This is explained in detail in the narration accompanying the section called 'Penelope's Song.' The presentation is based on the style of Roussel - to restore things from the dead, to give them not life but the impression of life (death animated). Also, to present things in a music hall manner, and to produce presentation by activating the space between two words that sound the same, in this case Bellini's Madonna and MTV's Madonna. But the piece includes its self-doubt and mocking, and this is presented in the male narrator, very ironic. More than melodramatic but not quite tragic, what one might call operatic.



US: It seems that you're creating systems in search of cultural identity.

SF: To lay out the construction of the individual in a very Rousselian manner - kitch and daydream. I am not pursuing things in a direct way. They are things which are traversed, and it is not a question of choosing to deal with the father or mother, its more like what's your point of entry into this system of representation. The choice of entry into the system of representation is on the side of the imaginary, which in some sense is culturally evoked on the side of the mother.

US: And everything is being presented simultaneously, but in fragments.

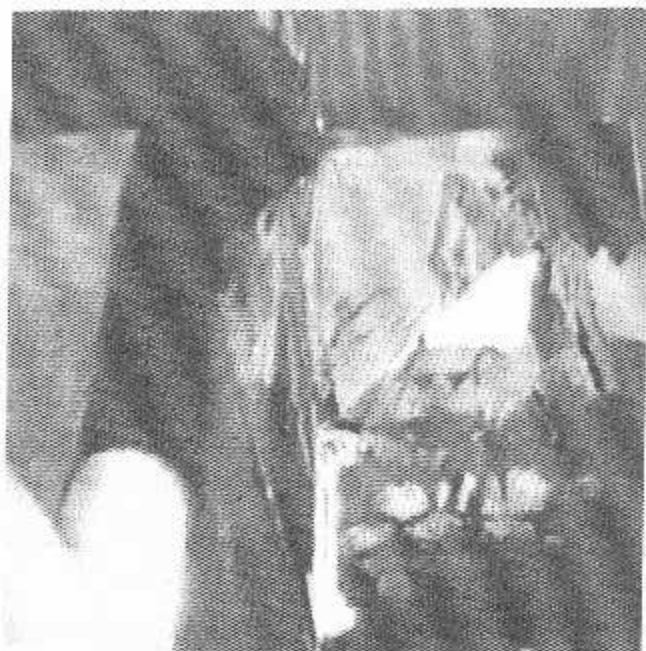
SF: All the pieces are there in one way or another. Video is very good because it supports the two dimensional structures, putting everything on the same level - the fragment of an arm, the picture in a book, the image from an old movie. The sound/image relationship is very important, and the sound is meant in some senses to be like Frankenstein's lightning, to put life in a world that is a museum. Its a world that is already represented, already a copy, already found.

US: You parody theory, like the hand-play on simulacrum.

SF: Often some of the pieces are sort of vaudeville versions of theory. The Señor Wences piece with the puppet is based on an article by Deleuze about the difference between copies and simulations. I took the article and filtered it through a childhood memory of a character I liked very much named Señor Wences, which was this voice, a talking hand, a box, and how they would shift and always look at each other. It was looking at looking at looking, talking at talking at talking. At any point the so-called person is simply repeating the simulacrum. The copy is controlling the original. It matters at what point you enter, as each one takes on their identity only in relation to the other, not existing outside of those relations. Its not a question of eliminating, and that's the joke because each is always trying to eliminate or dismember the other.

US: In what way do you relate sound and image?

SF: For me the sound/image relation is the key. Unlike in film where everything is image centered, in video the sound has the aura, it is potentially riveting and symphonic. On the other hand, the image is an ontological 'Waiting for Godot', never producing dramatic resolution. The image is this tacky leftover with a pane/pain of glass between you and it. This relation is intriguing for me, an interesting place to construct narrative from sound looped through image, then recycled back through language, quite an ecological process. As a child I never really liked comic books, but the only time I ever read them was on Sunday morning, which was really waiting for my parents to wake up. It was the only time that they woke up together because my father went to work very early. So you could take all the fantasy scenes around what was going on... and I would listen to the radio. They used to have a guy reading the comics on the radio, the Sunday funnies, with all these great sound effects, and this was the only thing that kept me moving on the image. So a lot of my piece has static tableau images brought to life by sound. One of the emphasis' of doing the soundtrack was to evoke almost a radio play by using a lot of ambient radio sounds.



writing process. To trick himself into being creative, he devised a system of working off of dictionaries. I also had a problem with writing, and decided to work off books that I loved, not using the dictionary but theoretical texts. Months after taking notes from a theoretical text I would only write the story from the notes. Or for example I compulsively would want to talk about a painting, listing things from the painting, etc. Another approach was setting more limiting demands on the text like: I have to evoke the things about the father, so I start with Hamlet, then Danish, and that reminds me of breakfast and I'd continue with 'eggs, toast and bacon and something is rotten (in Denmark). Rotten, yesterday is still sitting. I'm haunted by a chapter...' So things are written in that type of a manner. I was reading a lot about Duchamp and there is the famous piece he did where he put something inside a package and you didn't know what was inside. So the piling of the packages was inspired by that Duchamp piece. Those things are also grided out, with cards for everything, and I end with a classical construction. The piece folds towards the middle, the ends are very parallel with much symmetry, with much repetition. So there's this use of repetition, there's serializing certain types of things, such as birth (Flaubert's infancy and Roussel's death), letters and postcards, things that are close, things that are far, the indoor and outdoor, and the intense effort to map and mirror. After a certain point it's the building of the machine that takes priority. This machine that I have built is very related to the work of Freud, exploiting the processes of: the unconscious, displacement, condensation, repetition and absence of negation. But the machine that Freud built, a machine consecrated to the act of memory has disconnected us from an important process, the act of forgetting, which is perhaps just memory worn inside out. My work tries to simply invert the process, using the mechanism's of the unconscious, constructing a machine of forgetting which is the flip-side of Freud's construction.

US: How do you feel is the best way to view your video - to have repeated access to it in the home, or to watch it in a more official and temporary setting?

SF: First off, in some ways I think it is more important for my work to be heard. The sound is that which energizes the image. I want a large soundtrack that animates the Cornell-like box that we call the video screen. The sound is meant to be sensual, the image the remnants of sensuality. At this stage in time I think it's very important for video to be taken in a culturally important way where people would spend five dollars and go to The Kitchen at 8pm on a Friday night. I am actually very resistant to my pieces being distributed on a home viewing basis because it would undercut people's willingness to go out and see them. So on a level of video being taken seriously, not just as 'moving wallpaper' on their way to lunch, I really want to produce something that people view as special. In the art world you have to accept the fact 'Gossip' is the real mark of genius. Whisper, Rumour, Gossip - Gossip being the highest form, and video has not reached the lofty form of Gossip. It is only when a work is gossiped about, that you reach the Olympian level of the art world, your work becomes part of 'la scene.'

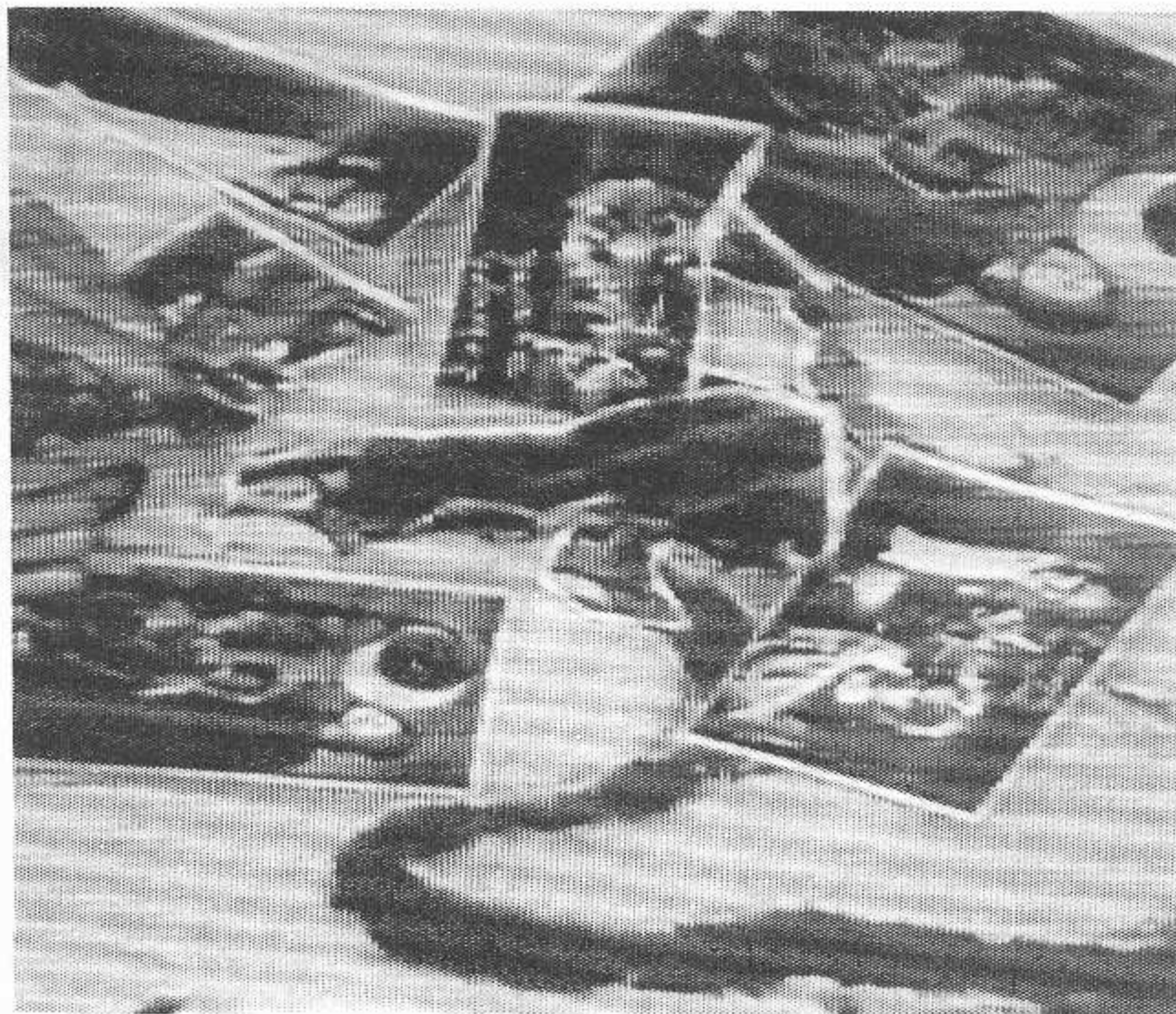
US: Let's talk about some of your influences...

SF: I think that Joseph Cornell and Marcel Duchamp are on one level very important to me. The ambition of certain types of high modernist writers like Pound, Joyce and Eliot is the inspiration to be self-indulgent and dense. Syberberg is an important influence, Godard, Michael Snow... I think that I've half forgotten my resources, in a way, I don't wish to be like them. There are also contemporary artists whose work I like very much, and who I've had a chance to learn from, such as Leslie Thornton, Trinh Minh-Ha, Aimee Rankin and Mark Rappaport. I used some of Minh-Ha's footage in the recent piece. The composer Verdi was very important, I wanted a certain relation among gesture, body and voice.



abstracted image of Roussel made recognizable through mirror

SF: I've been very fortunate to have worked with very talented people such as Jack Walsh, Dave Baker, William Davenport and Valerie Manenti, as well as all of the other people who have worked with me. Interrelating their skills and strengths was definitely part of the working process. For instance, when I work with the performers I don't tend to write what they do in advance, I meet with them, listen to their own stories, find out what they do well and then go back and rewrite the piece to what they do well. For instance, the girl that plays the stand-in for Roussel's mother, Kathleen-Marie Shelton, initially was chosen for her 'look,' more like one would select a model. Discussing the part with her, she was very eager to expand her role, I found out she had toured as a polynesian dancer from the age of twelve to eighteen. There was no Polynesian dancer in the original concept. She told me some stories about her experience, one of which gets transformed into the broken framing story of the tape. Also she had a fantastic memory and could remember very long texts, which gave me the room to write the 'land of prop' sections. Surely I could go on about every on-camera in the tape, anyways, I see one of my skills as being able to take the personalities and abilities of people and adapt them to my project.



RICHARD

LIKE

Independence, warmth, tolerance, ebullience, efficiency, humor, open competition, principles, integrity, perceptive, dumb artists, El Greco & Picasso, porridge & other breakfast cereals, wine, candles, Italian restaurants, my own writing, staying at home, contemporary art that is needlessly obscure, films and the Marx Brothers), contemporary movies (except sports films, rock, lakes & rivers), reading (especially in the sunshine), loving, love-making, sobriety, sleep, meeting strangers who know my work, postcard-writing, finish-ing projects, napping with my feet up, New York and Berlin to live, use, bookstores, mountains and the sea, listening to music, windowless rooms, Puerto Rico and Israel to visit, religious edifices, public transportation, buses (especially for long-distance, traveling at night), color television, hockey & football & track, televised news, typewriting, fine-point felt pens, showers, sneakers, history and art criticism, books and records, Gertrude Stein, E. E. Cummings, literary journals, American literature, German culture, anarchists and libertarians, Stanley Edgar Hyman & Northrop Frye, Groucho Marx, classic radio comedy, Johann Sebastian Bach, The Rolling Stones, Charles Ives & Anton Webern, P.D.Q. Bach, John Cage & Milton Babbitt & Albert Ayler, Blind Willie McTell, B.B. King, modern music & baroque, Dinu Lipatti's recordings of Chopin, Paul Zukofsky's of Bach and Paganini, Glenn Gould's of Bach as well as his features, Moholy-Nagy and most other polyartists, Merce Cunningham, Islamic art, constructivism, Piet Mondrian & Reinhardt, artists who know exactly what they are doing, Guinness stout and Berliner Weisse, oatmeal cookies, celrey-soda, cinnamon chewing gum, milk with coffee or amaretto liqueur at bedtime, oriental restaurants, champagne,....

DISLIKE

KOSTELANETZ

PYTHAGORAS AND THE "MEN WITH HAMMERS"

BY TIM O'NEILL

The irony seems supreme ... there, at the very bottom of the frontispiece to Athanasius Kircher's 1650 treatise on music, the *Musurgia Universalis*, is a fanciful portrait of Pythagoras, the father of mathematical tonal-music theory, calmly pointing to a group of men busily pounding away with hammers! In a Seventeenth Century treatise on music? Is this perhaps Einsturzende Neubauten or Test Department in a previous incarnation? Actually, it is an allusion to Pythagoras' discovery of the mathematical relationship between tone, weight and distance in stringed instruments. The legend has it that Pythagoras was walking past the local smithy in Crotona one pleasant afternoon when he suddenly realized that the relative tone and pitch of the hammering depended upon the weight of hammer and anvil. He rushed home and constructed a monochord to test his theory. The monochord is simply a string stretched out across two moveable bridges or nodes, which was then in common use to determine tuning systems for the lyre. Sure enough, as he suspected, heavier hammers and anvils produced lower tones, and heavier weights placed on the monochord produced deeper tones when the string was plucked. Through trial and error, he eventually evolved a purely mathematical description of how weight, the length of the string and the distance of the weight from the node all produce a specific tone. For the first time, musical tone became mathematically predictable. This discovery meant that tonal music took on the aspect of a science as well as an art, and even took on specific mystical significances, as we shall later see. This fortuitous discovery in the 6th Century B.C. altered the course of Western music and is still sending shockwaves toward us.

Previous to this discovery, the Greek tuning 'modes,' the Dorian, Phrygian, etc. had all been generated not by mathematics, but simply by ear. The modes, much like the rasas and ragas of Indian musical theory were all attached to specific emotional states and social functions. As Eugene V. Palisca points out in his 'Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought,' later musicians were equally interested in this psychological aspect of the Western tonal system; 'The modes were fascinating to Renaissance musicians not simply because they were a link to a noble ancient past but because they were thought to unlock the powers of music over human feelings and morals.'* One of the favorite illustrations of the Middle Ages and Renaissance was that of Orpheus, plucking his seven stringed lyre and soothing the savage beasts with the power of the modes. As Ernest G. McClain points out in 'The Pythagorean Plato,' Plato followed the Pythagorean musical and mathematical tradition very closely when he designed the four utopian cities of the Republic, Laws, Timaeus, and Critias. He used mathematical and musical allegories to define the basic nature of each city, and used the modes to structure the emotional and social life of each into a carefully patterned systems of politics. The often repeated criticism that Plato's republic would constitute a fascist dictatorship is based on a



mathematical constructions of the modes.

The growth of atonal music within the Twentieth Century has been one of the most significant factors in the history of all Western music, yet we must remember that mathematics has much to say even on this side of the fence. The influence of information theory, communication theory and the field of probability and statistics on modern music cannot be underestimated. The influence of a single volume, J.R. Pierce's 'Symbols, Signals, and Noise,' has been enormous. The use of chance, random and stochastic processes in modern art has been as strong as the interest in non-Euclidean geometry (see Linda Dalrymple Henderson's 'The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art') and together, all of these fields have provided a rich resource of ideas for modern music. From the view point of a music concerned with the production and recording of altered states of awareness, the automatist and Pythagorean, the Non-Euclidean and Euclidean can both provide the tools necessary to the job. In this context then, the tonal and atonal become of equal value, a conclusion somewhat heretical to the staunch Modernist, but perfectly acceptable once we take the Surrealist's injunction against any aesthetic preoccupation to heart. The means to the production of the altered state is thus of little interest, while the state itself is central. In its own way, this art without an aesthetic is as radical a break with the past as was the Cubist's insistence upon the picture plane. The one element that bars this approach is the misperception that inner exploration is simply an escapist release from the political and social realities of the outer world; a charge that Sarte levelled at the Surrealists after WWII, despite their vigorous Left-Wing activity against the Nazis. It seems to hold true that it is often precisely those who have made the mystic's journey who seem to be the most preoccupied with social change, Gandhi and St. Francis being two great examples. An entire strain of anarchist & revolutionary desire within Western mysticism is well documented in Norman Cohn's fascinating 'The Pursuit of the Millenium.' It seems that once having seen the perfection possible in the mystical world,



Frontispiece of Kircher's *Musurgia universalis* (1650), with Pythagoras at lower left

misunderstanding of his musical symbolism, as McClain discovered.

At this point in history, we are again beginning to examine the basic correctness of the assertion that music has specific psychological effect, both in the laboratory, with sophisticated biofeedback technology, and in the artist's studio with access to everything from metal percussion to sampling keyboards. Still, the basic perception that music does have the power to induce powerfully altered states of awareness almost certainly dates back some ten or twelve thousand years to the Neolithic shamans. It is only within the past couple of decades that atonal music in the West has begun to seriously examine this function of music, through noise, repetition and rhythm. The rebirth of interest in shamanism and ritual magic in Post-Modernist art and music can be seen as a need to reopen the territory of the unconscious that was only begun with the Symbolists and Surrealists. In a sense, this realm within is one of the last great frontiers for the artist in an age when purely formalist preoccupations provide less and less dividends. As I have pointed out previously, ('Toward a Pure Automatist Music', *Unsound* Vol. 2, #1; and 'The Art of Mediumistic Music', *Another Room* Vol. 3, #6) the possibilities of automatism, of pure unconscious control, are very significant for the contemporary artist and musician, however, buried within the heart of tonal music is another road to the altered state of awareness ... the

one can hardly sit still with the situation here as it has always been! Pythagoras himself worked vigorously against tyranny and oppression and apparently met his end as a political martyr, fighting to the last against elite rule.

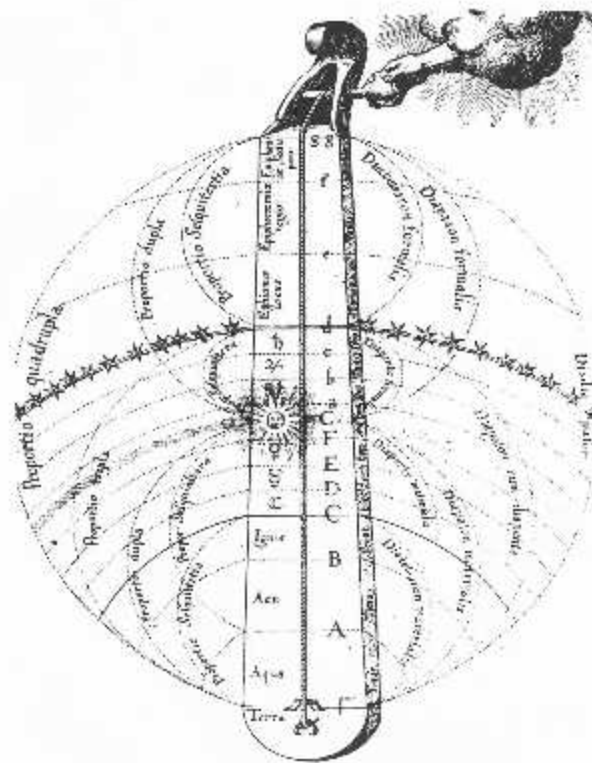
With the stage thus set, and our social and political perspectives intact, we can approach the alternate road to altered states of awareness, besides the automatist, the one that Pythagoras discovered that fateful afternoon. The whole system of pythagorean music and mystical ascent is founded upon four key elements:

- 1) The Decade; the numbers from 1 to 10 to which the Pythagoreans assigned various esoteric qualities and signs
- 2) The Triangle, or law of dialectic; the meeting point between opposites
- 3) The Means; arithmetic, geometric and harmonic, which established relationships in the Decade
- 4) The Monochord and its modes

Very briefly, each number in the Decade was assigned to a planetary sphere (remember, they had the Earth at the center, and each planet rose higher into the realm of the gods), various gods and goddesses and qualities. In short, each number of the Decade became what Jungian psychologists would term a 'constellation' or group of associated psychological terms. Each number within the Decade also found its place in the triangle, or 'Tetractys' (the triangle of the Decade) which was formed thusly:



The discovery of the ratios of the consonances by Jubal and Pythagoras, from Gaffurio, *Theorica musica*, 1, 8



The Divine Monochord

Mystically, this represented the descent of the visible universe out of the invisible and primordial unity at the top of the hierarchy of planetary spheres. The Means were used to determine the relationships which occurred secretly amongst the numbers of the decade, and the Monochord symbolized the vertical hierarchy from lower, more earthly tones, up into the higher tones of the celestial spheres. Since the planets moved at the same distances as defined by the musical tones on the monochord, the entire universe resonated with music, the famous harmony of the spheres. To put it into vastly over-simplified terms, by following the mathematically generated tones of the Modes, one could ascend up into the realm of the gods and achieve a great anamnesis (memory) of one's true being as a soul amongst them, immortal and all-knowing. Thus, like the shamans, music became a direct means to the great return to the realm of the creative-gods for the pythagoreans. This concept was found in the Mysteries of Orpheus and his seven-stringed lyre (each string representing a planetary sphere) long before Pythagoras, but his great contribution to it was the discovery of the precise mathematical key could make the great ascent into the hidden worlds. After Pythagoras, the concept found its way into Gnosticism, Kabbalah and Hermetics, and thus found its way into such later traditions as the Neo-Platonic, Alchemical, Rosicrucian and Masonic. It was at the root of the Renaissance's conception of music and art and accounted for the deeply 'heretical' and pagan quality of much of that work. It also found its way into Medieval music via Boethius and accounts for the profound psychological effects of Gregorian and Ambrosian chant. The increasing availability of books detailing the specifics of these systems, such as McClain's and Palisca's, bring information that was once the private preserve of specialists, into practical working range for the contemporary musician. As of yet, this tremendous gold-mine of information hasn't received as much publicity as the more automatist approaches, and I am only familiar with one group of musicians working consciously with it, namely EX-1, yet the potential for those seriously interested in the use of music in a psychological manner is enormous.

US: WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE DO YOU THINK LISTEN TO YOUR MUSIC?

Ralf: As far as Germany and Europe go, it's easy to say. In Germany, you can classify people, since German sub-culture is relatively strong. You can say, 'That person goes to that type of concert or buys that type of record or is interested in this or that.' That's Germany, but who buys our records in other countries? I know that the sub-culture is structurally different in France or in Italy than in Germany, but what about America? Subculture appears to be small or non-existent there, though you can surely classify this minority. Maybe, there is a connection with intelligence or some theoretical foundation associated with art of culture that I'm not aware of.

US: DO YOU THINK GERMAN EXPERIMENTAL MUSICIANS ARE HUMORLESS?

Achim: Yes they are fairly humorless. (Laughter) Actually, you could attempt to give a variety of answers, criticism of records that others laugh at or something. The best way to give a precise answer is to ask how Americans see Germans. Most picture Germany as Bavaria, ignoring the other German regions. When you are actually here (in Germany), you see that German humor isn't like that. Perhaps, humor means being optimistic for pre-determined or specific reasons, or to look at things a certain way, or to have a certain political attitude. Humor, as far as I'm concerned is something Catholic, but not religious.

Ralf: Yea, 'Mainz-humor', 'Munich-humor,' that's usually associated with Carnival (Author's note: Pre-Lenten religious festivities somewhat comparable to the Carnival in Rio.) That's where the reputation is from. That's what these people associate German humor with.....

Makxs: ...Organized happiness....

US: DO YOU THINK THAT MOST GERMAN MUSICIANS ARE PESSIMISTIC?

Achim: Yea, that as well...how could you be optimistic under Herman Kohl? (Laughter) I think that optimism is sensationalized and joined with manufacturing...it has nothing to do with money. It's more like it has to do with something undefined. But, yes, people are optimistic, they have the financial reason to be, and that's something that most musicians don't have.

Ralf: Of course, generally, one would have to say that about music too and for SELEKTION in general. So our 'preoccupation' with Aesthetic theory -- a French theory -- with structuralism, with Philosophy and our location at this moment. Aesthetic theory is important.

US: THIS PHILOSOPHY IS IMPORTANT FOR SELEKTION?

Ralf: Yes, it's a personal understanding between our members. I believe that the typical result of music or art is so inferior or bad, but there are a few musicians that are also working in the same direction as us. Maybe it's that they have similar theoretical interests and therefore their musical sound is similar or will be similar.

Ralf: We're getting a relatively large amount of mail from people involved intensively with music or other things. In the beginning, we'd only get records which was nice since it saved us time going to the record stores or waiting for the record ships to get a certain record. Things have gone well enough for us to release new material and that gives some meaning to our own projects. One drawback, though, is that a relatively large number of people think, 'Oh, Selektion is a label and they release other artists besides P16.D4.' So they send me a tape or ask me if we can release them.

Usually it's difficult to answer these people. There are times, that they are repeating (or copying) something that's already been done and how we would represent them wouldn't be appropriate. Sometime, there are things that we'd love to release, if everything could be financially organized. But I can't pay everything and I can barely give up time for my own work.

MIXED BAND PHILANTHROPIST (Author's note: Richard Rupenus from BLADDER FLACK and NEW BLOCKADERS who has recently released an album 'The Impossible Humane' on SELEKTION.) was the first group in years that wasn't one of the people from here in Mainz and who was obsessed with self-perfection, as we are. That, for us, was a fresh shock. We had corresponded for years and we knew all his material. He received raw material from us, P16.D4 and SBOTHI, as well as a large number of other people, and he did all the work but the project was his alone.

In principal, we do release other people's material on Selektion. Lots of people ask us, known groups as well as unknown groups. Usually, if we're interested, we tell them they can send a cassette or a tape, and what we really like, we might be able to release, but usually, even if we like the cassette, we're not organized enough because we set up everything ourselves. That doesn't mean we're lying and the cassette was totally bad, but perhaps we're not comfortable enough with the material to release it or we weren't so thrilled with it that we absolutely want to release it.

Ralf: This is an important leftist theory in Germany, it was connected to Marxism and the Weimer-Republic because it is the Frankfurt School. Walter Benjamin, Th.W.Adorno, Max Hochheimer, were Jewish intellectuals in Frankfurt then - the Frankfurt School was busy with the connection between Marxist theory and Germany. All immigrated to America in 1940 and came back later. They wrote a book called 'Dialectics of Enlightenment.' Adorno founded the Institute for Social Research, which at first in N.Y. as a part of Columbia University. Hochheimer and Adorno went to California where he took part and worked on a Radio Research Project and did a study on Authoritarian character: 'Studies of Authoritarian Character' a standard work of sociology written in the 40's or 50's. Then Adorno returned to Germany, to Frankfurt, to the Institute for Social Research. Their theories were very important for students in the 60's. Adorno wrote about aesthetic theory and that was heavily read in Frankfurt. So from this comes post-structuralism.

Ralf: The advantage of this point is that the noises change instead of our being pleased with the noises. That means, at any rate, if we want to achieve a certain complexity, the other person's noises can be changed before a certain spatial arrangement and a harmony of the noise can be controlled. That's how the complexity of a sound is achieved. If the complexity is not achieved, we can gain control of the sound anyways and we can always work with our existing material. When we organize something new, the noise and the tension will be achieved, it all depends how far we want to go with the complexity.

US: YOU'VE STARTED A NEW BRANCH OF SELEKTION, SELEKTION OPTIK. DOESN'T IT KEEP YOU EXTREMELY BUSY? CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT?

Ralf: We try to work as a record label, Selektion where our records are released. Now some different people are trying to work with us as Selektion-Optik with film, copy art and so on. Our activity has increased, and things aren't as quiet as when we were just releasing records, though even then, there was no quiet around here. But now, there are other considerations at Selektion. The idea of an art organization in Germany is difficult, so we've decided on a collaboration between our people in a sort of society/organization. This is registered with the state or the officials. Then we can try to and should be able to apply for a stipend as a public utility or organization. That means working for the general public. When you are granted this status, you receive specific qualifications and there is a possibility to receive special monies for use from the state or from whomever you invite to enter. There are specific things that young people have the possibility to do. People presume that there is a lot of money, so to speak, money to spend, since not all money can be spent as taxes and because our organization is non-profit and works for the general public, a payment to Selektion is a contribution --

record. What we do for ourselves, we really don't need the studio for.

US: YOU GO TO THE STUDIO TO CUT THE RECORD?

Ralf: No, the cutting, the exact editing also happens here (points to his room). In the studio it's re-recorded from the master tape onto the laquer pressing. So what you see here is where one, to or more of us get together and work.

US: IS THE MUSIC PLANNED OR PLAYED LIVE/SPONTANEOUSLY?

Ralf: It depends, with P16.D4, some things will develop within our membership. For example, we'll take the four track to a church or a house where there's an organ. There we'll take turns, alone or together, playing the organ and we'll capture that on tape. Or we'll go with the amplifiers into a building that has some specific acoustic properties. We'll take instruments and the cassette recorders and tapes that we've already produced. There we'll work out effects. We've done that a lot with SBOTHI. We have built up a relatively large sound library, much of which will be further worked on. We can choose from other sounds and work them further or we often find new sounds from the recording noises produced when we play the original sounds. We also take material that we've worked on individually and mix it collectively or construct the pieces collectively.

Achim: For myself, musical work is somewhat different. As I think of the concept of a sound or an action, I realize what is influencing the music. I try, with my or with sounds to create what I'm thinking or what the sounds want to be. Our concept is that everything is exchanged and further worked-on between us. The graphics, drawings, writing, paintings, optical things also have their own further possibilities. That means, there aren't only things that we do spontaneously, or that we find good as we produce them, but things that we work on repeatedly. Also things that are distant or somehow temporal or else specific from our work will be worked on.

Selektion Releases

Cassettes 1980-1982

'Rhein Main-Sampler', with P.D., Rogalli, Messehall, 6.094, Kurzschluss, Schwarzes Loch, Der Letzte Tango, Elektroange, C60

LLL, 'Hoffnung', C60

P16.D4, 'Wer nicht arbeiten will soll auch nicht essen', C45

'Wahrnehmungen Sampler', with P.D., P16.D4, Pari Kekkonen, Rogalli, Ertrinken Vakuum, APO NOW!, Les Crepes, 1981 C45

Rogalli, 'Neue Deutsche Reinlichkeit', C30

'Der Apathische Alptraum', C20

'Reiss aus vor Krach und Chaos', with P.D., P16.D4, Rogalli, Permutative Distortion, Der Apathische Alptraum, El A, LLL, Kurzschluss, C45

Permutative Distorsion, 'Bruckenkopf', C45

P16.D4, 'v.r.n.l.', C45

'Offene System', with Renaldo & the Loaf, Der Apathische Alptraum, Lt. Murnau, Art, P16.D4, Die Todliche Doris, C45

P.D., 'Nur die Tiere Bleiben Uebrig', C60

Records 1980-PRESENT

P.D., 'Alltag', EP 1980

P.D., 'Inweglos', LP 1980

P.D., 'Skartrack', flexi 1981

Permutative Distortion, 'Bruckenkopf', EP 1981

'Schau hoer main Herz ist Rhein', with Froehlich Eizeit, P16.D4, No Aid,

Hean Gilbert, Totto Lotto, LP 1981

'Masse Mensch', with Laughing Hands, P16.D4, Nurse with Wound, the Work, Smegma, DDAA, LP 1982

P16.D4, 'Kuhe in 1/2 Trauer', LP 1984

P16.D4, 'Distrukt', LP 1985

Swimming Behaviour of the Human Infant: 'Same', Lp 1985

P16.D4/SBOTHI, 'Nichts Niemand Nirgends Nie!', Lp 1986

Mixed Band Philanthropist, 'The Impossible Humane', Lp 1986



We do not want to give the people contemporary art, We want a new art and a new public.

Our aim is for **constant change**. We want to agitate for continual revolution in a world full of so-called certainties and we want to break with these certainties. It is the art to prevent institution and certainty. The quantum theory and the theory of relativity made it clear that the visible representation of our experience only concerns a restricted area, and that in no case it belongs to an irrefutable thesis of science. We want to continue discovering, not because we want to know everything, but because we love the idea of continued discovery, because we love the infinity of this prospect and we make this **endlessness** our object. We must give shape to the new, starting from the principle that new forms only arise from a **new content** and not vice versa. Making a new art means **making a new content visible, audible and palpable**.

Art has to be functional. We see art as a creating principle in society. Art has to make use of the materials, the media and the possibilities of its time in order to have influence on its time. Science and art have to be a **revolutionary power** within society and not an embellishment of a miserable existence or an economic factor.

ART HAS TO BE DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE.

V2 ORGANIZATION

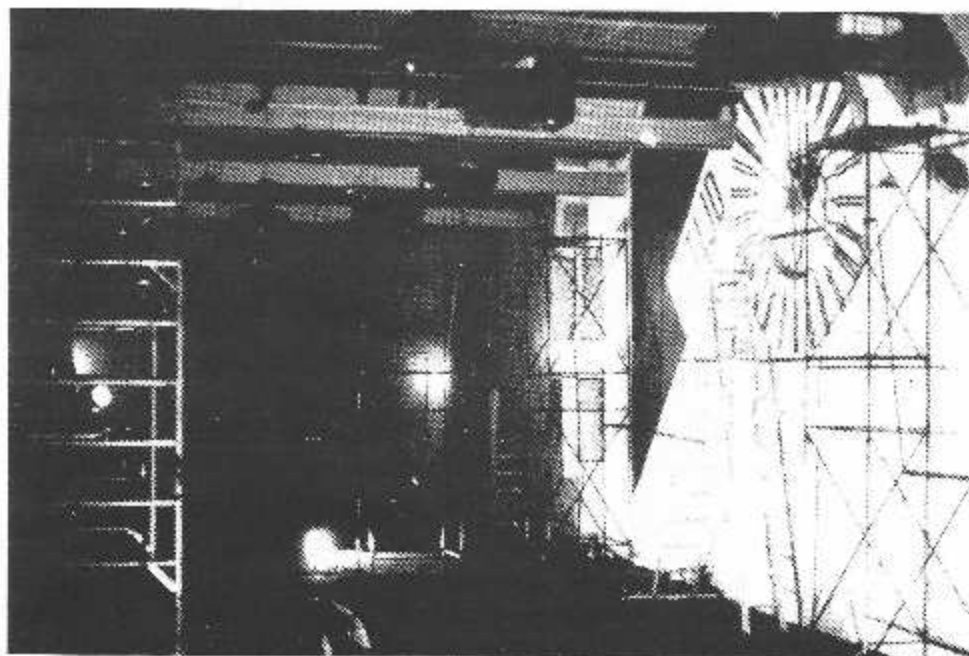
V2 Organization is a group of artists and musicians who work and program events and other activities at a former textile factory in the centre of 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands). For six years now V2 has been active without interruption. The activities are multi-media oriented, often based on a theme, and are closely related to the artistic developments of the people involved within the organization.

Besides using the building for activities and work space, V2 has a shop/archive in which all types of information are available for purchase and display.

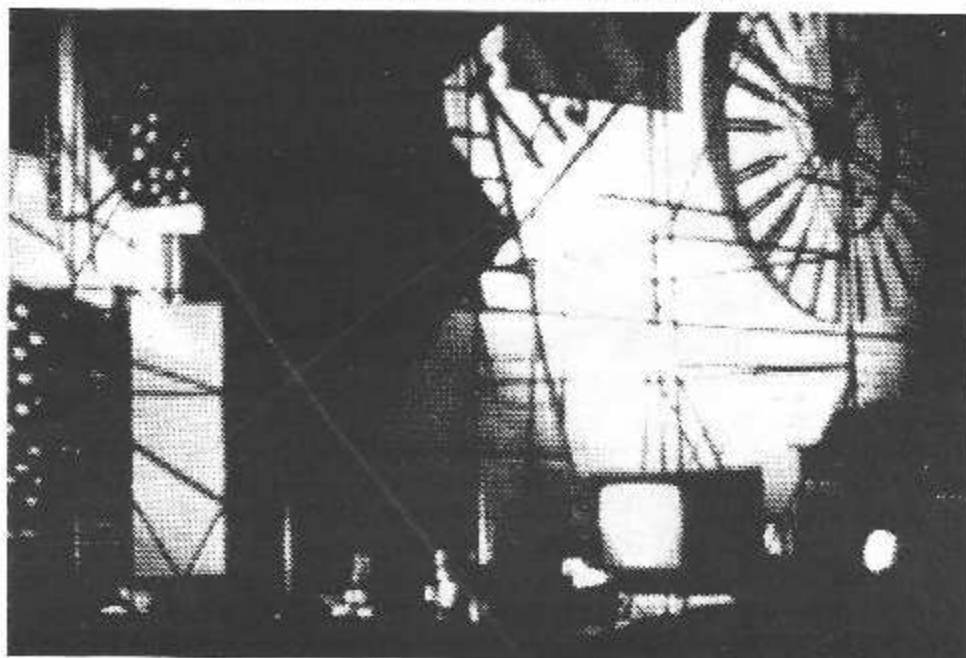
The motives and interests of the V2 Organization can be derived from the texts below, which have been formulated through the years and will continue to grow and change.

Art, science or what ever medium, is no purpose by itself but a **means** to realisation of an idea to be formed. It must not become an autonomy within our social system, but it must be a part of it, not to confirm the prevailing morals and politics but to **propagate change**. Art must not take place in the autonomous world of galleries and museums because they just oppose change. The art trade is not profited by and therefore is not interested in changes, all they want is the finished product, not the process. They suggest the absence of the urge to upset the result. Their motives are apart from that obtained by the social code in which according to an interesting process the knowledge of art has ever come to power and therefore influence and prestige. Our mentality intends to criticize this attitude and make it impossible. **WE LOVE THE UNCERTAINTY AND CHAOS.**

We strive for an optimum realisation of the possibilities of the individual and the collective as a link to a new culture. We believe in this world now and not in a realisation of the possibilities beyond this life. **We address ourselves to the present** and not to the future or any other time in history. The possibilities have to be realized now **without compromise. WE STIMULATE THE TRANSIENCE IN ART.**



BEWEGING TIJD RUIMTE, installation 10/18/86



Anton Serve, Roderick Henderson, Alex Adriaansens

DAS SYTHETISCHE MISCHGEWEBE



Des Cerises Nommees Desir, performance 3/7/87 Stadtbad Neukölln, Berlin

Fragile and subtle music which asks for the entire concentration of the listener.

'As much as possible we avoid the use of common instruments. If we use them then we change or manipulate the sounds by playing through very small membranes and horns which are often installed in rooms when performing. Beside this approach we play other sounds over cheap tape recorders which are connected to other horns and membranes. Many of the recordings are live, recorded simultaneously, and with the mix we change the volume of the tape recorders, or we move the microphones. Another approach is to mix up the material that each musician recorded by himself. During recent concerts and performances we have worked with two people from France: Isabelle Chemin is a choreographer - moving, dancing, speaking and reacting with her body in response to the individual room. Jean-Rene Lassalle writes all the texts, stories and dialogues that are used within the performances or music. DSM has chosen performance/installation spaces that are normally not used for this form of presentation, allowing the rooms to appear in a different fashion, while changing the viewpoint of the audience. Some types of spaces have been a cinema, a very old swimming pool, or a factory-lift in which we traveled up and down and the audience, on different floors, were able to hear different things. Since the summer of 1986 DSM has been working on a project titled 'In die Produktion, oder man halt den Ajtem an', before this project we were working around the idea of 'deformation', with the final outcome being cassettes and a booklet documenting all of the performances involved.'

SELEKTION/P16.D4

BY KARL SCHMIEDER

The very obvious, now tired denominators that seemingly joined bands working the so-called industrial music spectrum were noise, anti-music, the industrial imagery/the factory atmospheres, and the structure of (or lack thereof) the music. After the initial inventiveness and the fresh air that these images and ideas breathed on the tired art/music scene, they too, were soon overused. And, as with punk rock, upon 'analytical' listening, the majority of 'sacred' or 'industrial' records will reveal the same elements common to the, in other words, they all sound the same.

(Is it actually worth stating this fact? More than ten years have passed since the onset of punk and the first industrial albums).

As time passed, a number of musicians fell back on conventional, rock'n'roll-time tested imagery and ideas -- isn't it ironic that as punk turned into death rock, a number of 'industrialists' turned to occult.

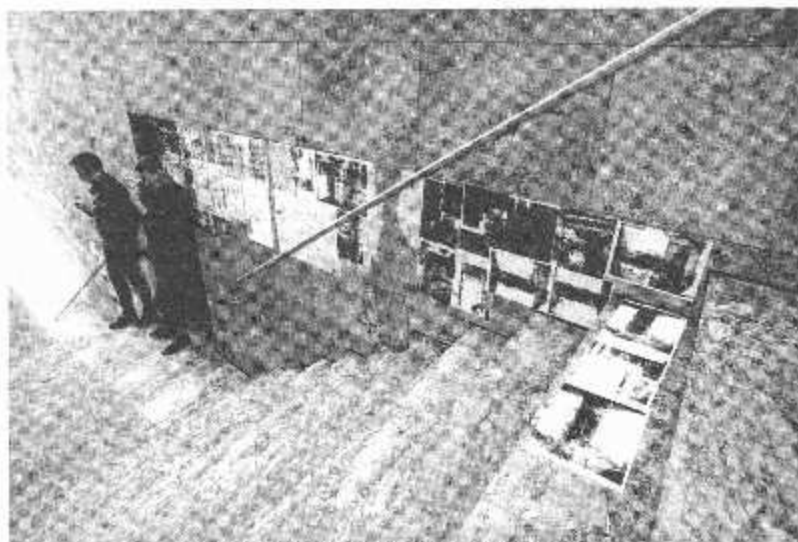
Of the bands currently involved in exploring the possibilities of 'noise,' very few are attempting to discover new areas of the imagination. In fact, most continue to use the same ten-year old formulas that made the original bands interesting but which make 'new' bands (yawn) boring.

Selektion (P16.D4 & Swimming Behaviour of The Human Infant) are a group of musicians/artists based in Mainz, West Germany who are interested in musical material research and the structure of music. Existing isolated from in Mainz, they have remained uninfected by the 'virus' of uniformity that has swept over the scene.

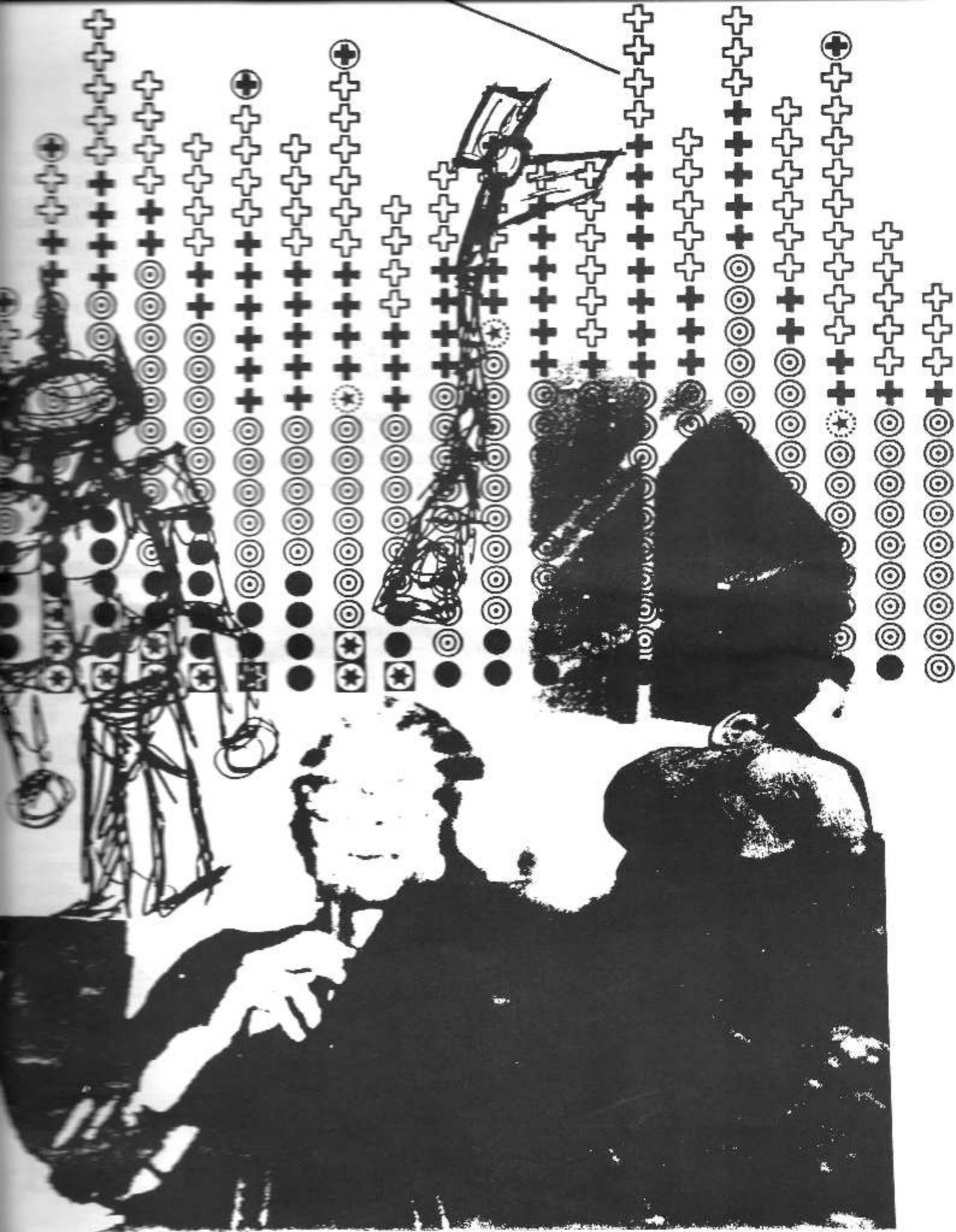
Born before the commercialization of the 'neue Deutsche Welle,' they have remained true to the critical Philosophies of Th. W. Adorno and the Frankfurt School, as well as to their own personal philosophies.

Despite the use of noise elements, which in Selektion's case, are not typical, the structure of the music is different, the techniques used to produce the music different, and the goals and reasoning behind the music are quite distinct.

Selektion. perception, a-perception, observations,



Selektion Optik, copy-aktion, Beklebung, Mainz, 1984



UNSOUND

a poem by Dave G. Harris

7-31-85

We went to the P.O.
And look what we found
The latest edition
Of the Mag called UNSOUND
Hot off the press
And full of fresh thought
Enterprising ... inventive
With new issues fraught
Intellectual ... arty
Ahead of its time
An enviable effort
The world as its clime
Chock full of ideas
Many minds in the making
All in all worthy
A real undertaking
In-depth perceptions
Not yet earthshaking
Conceptual ... constructive
Visionary ... painstaking
Motivated ... reflective
In the futurist mold
Pioneering progress
but for the bold
Keep up the good work
Always better and better
A really great effort

Part of the movement
To better this life
To recast society
And eliminate strife
The kind of a project
That falls to our youth
The enthusiasm that bristles
In the search for the truth
Pull out all stops
Full steam ahead
Who would be leaders
Just won't be led
So ... when spirits wane
And the going gets rough
Remember ... so was it always
Trailblazing's Tough

This poem was submitted some time ago, and we have been waiting for the proper opportunity to present it. Dave G. Harris happens to be one of our oldest subscribers (78 years old) and we appreciate his contribution as well as his consistent interest in contemporary activities; hopefully all of us will



Allan Winkler

