



## Curatorial > PROBES

With this section, RWM continues a line of programmes devoted to exploring the complex map of sound art from different points of view organised in curatorial series.

Curated by Chris Cutler, **PROBES** takes Marshall McLuhan's conceptual contrapositions as a starting point to analyse and expose the search for a new sonic language made urgent after the collapse of tonality in the twentieth century. The series looks at the many probes and experiments that were launched in the last century in search of new musical resources, and a new aesthetic; for ways to make music adequate to a world transformed by disorientating technologies.

Curated by Chris Cutler

### PDF Contents:

- [01. Summary](#)
- [02. Playlist](#)
- [03. Selected links](#)
- [04. Credits](#)
- [05. Acknowledgments](#)
- [06. Copyright note](#)

At the start of the seventies, Chris Cutler co-founded The Ottawa Music Company – a 22-piece Rock composer's orchestra – before joining British experimental group Henry Cow, with whom he toured, recorded and worked in dance and theatre projects for the next eight years. Subsequently he co-founded a series of mixed national groups: Art Bears, News from Babel, Cassiber, The (ec) Nudes, p53 and The Science Group, and was a permanent member of American bands Pere Ubu, Hail and The Wooden Birds. Outside a succession of special projects for stage, theatre, film and radio he still works consistently in successive projects with Fred Frith, Zeena Parkins, Jon Rose, Tim Hodgkinson, David Thomas, Peter Blegvad, Daan Vandewalle, Ikue Mori, Lotte Anker, Stevan Tickmayer, Annie Gosfield and spectralists Iancu Dumitrescu and Ana Maria Avram. He is a permanent member of The Bad Boys (Cage, Stockhausen, Fluxus &c.) The Artaud Beats and The Artbears Songbook, and turns up with the usual suspects in all the usual improvising contexts. As a soloist he has toured the world with his extended, electrified, kit.

Adjacent projects include commissioned works for radio, various live movie soundtracks, *Signe de Trois* for surround-sound projection, the daily year-long soundscape series *Out of the Blue Radio* for Resonance FM, and p53 for Orchestra and Soloists.

He also founded and runs the independent label ReR Megacorp and the art distribution service Gallery and Academic and is author of the theoretical collection *File Under Popular* – as well as of numerous articles and papers published in 16 languages. [www.ccutler.com/ccutler](http://www.ccutler.com/ccutler)

# PROBES #2

All the 'normal' music we listen to is out of tune, especially when it's 'in tune'. So, should music be in harmony with the laws of physics, or adjusted to fit the wishful thinking of stave notation?

## 01. Summary

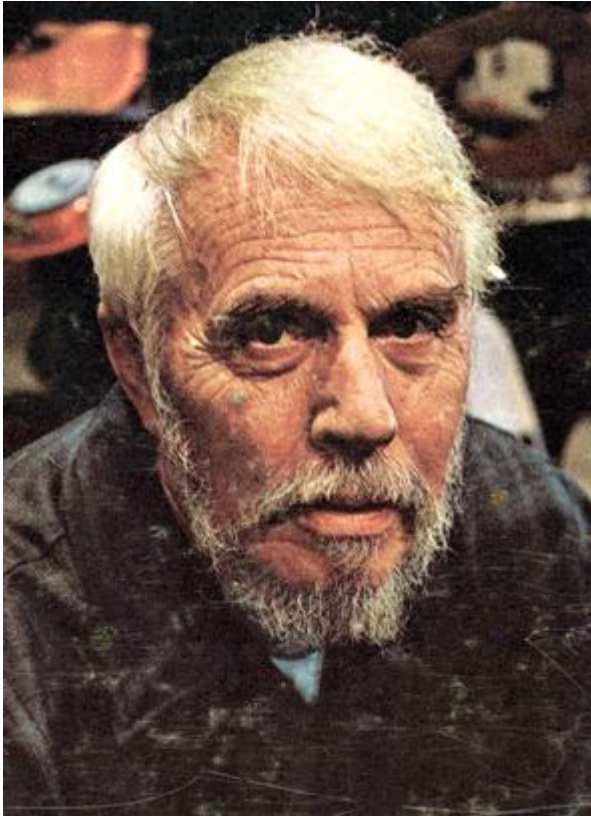
In the late nineteenth century two facts conspired to change the face of music: the collapse of common practice tonality (which overturned the certainties underpinning the world of Art music), and the invention of a revolutionary new form of memory, sound recording (which redefined and greatly empowered the world of popular music). A tidal wave of probes and experiments into new musical resources and new organisational practices ploughed through both disciplines, bringing parts of each onto shared terrain before rolling on to underpin a new aesthetics able to follow sound and its manipulations beyond the narrow confines of 'music'. This series tries analytically to trace and explain these developments, and to show how, and why, both musical and post-musical genres take the forms they do. This second programme continues to explore probes into pitch, examining alternative tuning systems based on the naturally occurring harmonic series, opening up a potentially infinite series of customised Just Intonation scales.

## 02. Playlist

- 01 Gregorio Paniagua, 'Anakrousis', 1978
- 02 Tobias Hume, 'The Lord Dewys of Favoret', 1605]
- 03 Harry Partch, 'On the Seventh Day the Petals Fell on Petaluma' (excerpts), 1964
- 04 Harry Partch, 'The Letter', 1943
- 05 Lou Harrison, 'Cinna (fast movement)', 1957
- 06 Theatre of Eternal Music, 'Day of Niagara' (excerpt), 1965
- 07 La Monte Young, 'The Well-tuned Piano', 1964
- 08 David Seidl, 'Penumbra', 2010
- 09 Ezra Sims, 'Quintet for Clarinet and Strings', 1987
- 10 Ellen Fullman, 'Harmonic Cross Sweep', 1998
- 11 Tuva, overtone singing extract, details unknown
- 12 Natascha Nikeprelevic and Michael Vetter, Youtube extract, details unknown
- 13 Mongolia overtone singing extract, details unknown
- 14 Koon Goor Toog, 'Koon Goor Toog', 1994
- 15 Arthur Miles, 'Lonely Cowboy' (excerpt), ca. twenties
- 16 Karlheinz Stockhausen, 'Stimmung' (Paris, short extract), 1982
- 17 Charles Ives/Johnny Reinhard, 'Universe Symphony' (extract from Part IV of the Birth of the Oceans), commenced 1913 by Charles Ives, completed 1995/6 by Johnny Reinhard
- 18 Leo Ornstein, 'Wild Men's Dance', 1913
- 19 Michael Harrison, 'Vision in the Desert', 2007
- 20 Annie Gosfield, 'Four Roses' (excerpt), 1997
- 21 Wendy Carlos, 'Beauty in the Beast', 1986
- 22 Matthew Bourne, fluid Piano improvisation (youtube)
- 23 Utsav Lal, fluid Piano improvisation (youtube)
- 24 Jon Catler, 'Joint', 1994
- 25 Root, 'Tight Out of Sight', 2001

## 03. Selected links

Kyle Gann. Microtonality explained  
[www.kylegann.com/tuning.html](http://www.kylegann.com/tuning.html)



[Harry Partch]

Just Intonation vs Equal Temperament  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhZpvGSPx6w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhZpvGSPx6w)

Harry Partch  
[www.harrypartch.com](http://www.harrypartch.com)  
[www.corporeal.com/cm\\_main.html](http://www.corporeal.com/cm_main.html)

Harry Partch documentary  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cKnTj2cyNQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cKnTj2cyNQ)

Lou Harrison  
[www2.hmc.edu/~alves/harrisonbio.html](http://www2.hmc.edu/~alves/harrisonbio.html)

La Monte Young  
[melafoundation.org/lmy.htm](http://melafoundation.org/lmy.htm)

Ezra Sims  
[www.ezrasims.com](http://www.ezrasims.com)

Ellen Fullman  
[www.ellenfullman.com](http://www.ellenfullman.com)

Overtone singing  
[khooimei.com/types.htm](http://khooimei.com/types.htm)

Karlheinz Stockhausen  
[www.stockhausen.org](http://www.stockhausen.org)

Leo Ornstein  
[poonhill.com](http://poonhill.com)

Natascha Nikeprevelic  
[www.natascha-nikeprelevic.de](http://www.natascha-nikeprelevic.de)

American Festival of Microtonal Music  
[www.afmm.org](http://www.afmm.org)

Michael Harrison  
[www.michaelharrison.com](http://www.michaelharrison.com)

Wendy Carlos  
[www.wendycarlos.com](http://www.wendycarlos.com)

Annie Gosfield  
[www.anniegosfield.com](http://www.anniegosfield.com)

Nils Wogram  
[www.nilswogram.com](http://www.nilswogram.com)

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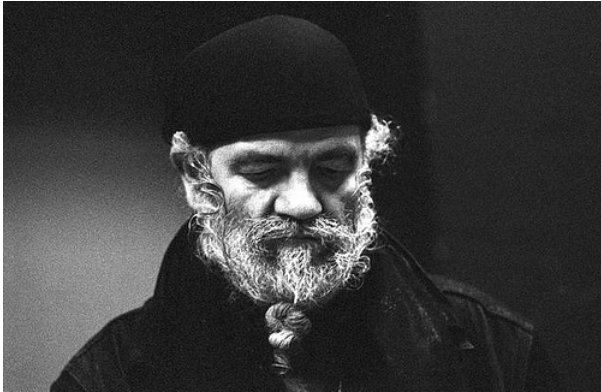
## 04. Credits

Curated and produced by Chris Cutler. Engineered and mastered by Bob Drake at Studio Midi-Pyrenees, Caudeval, France. Recorded with Studio Projects C1 microphone, home-made mic preamp built by EM Thomas, designed by Yasushi Utsunomia and a home-made compressor by EM Thomas. Edited with a PC and Samplitude Pro version 12.

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## 05. Acknowledgments

With thanks to Nicholas Collins, William Sharp, Charles O'Meara, Udi Koomran, Jack Vees, Nick Hobbes and Simon Emmerson.



[La Monte Young]

## 06. Copyright note

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