

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 lancu 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 surroundsound 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

PROBES #3

This is where pitch becomes weightless and all that is solid melts into air: futurism, noise, electricity, ecstasy and uncertainty. We look at the lure and power of sliding tones.

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 third programme continues to explore probes into pitch, this time through its effective obliteration through ceaseless movement, sliding tones, and radical portamenti which defy all quantisation.

02. Playlist

- 01 Gregorio Paniagua, 'Anakrousis', 1978
- 02 George Gershwin, 'Clarinet portamento opening of Rhapsody in Blue', 1924
- 03 Tahitian choir, source and date unknown
- 04 Alflaiai, traditional Mapuche song, 2001/2002
- 05 Edgard Varése, 'Amériques' (excerpt), 1918-21
- 06 Percy Grainger, 'Free Music No. 1', 1935
- 07 Joseph Schillinger, 'Airphonic Suite' (excerpt), 1929
- 08 Bernard Herrman, 'The Day the Earth Stood Still',1951
- 09 Miklós Rózsa, 'Lost Weekend', 1945
- 10 'It Came from Outer Space'. Uncredited score by Irving Gertz, Henry Mancini, and Herman Stein, 1953
- 11 Percy Grainger, butterfly piano test, ca. late forties, early fifties
- 12 Percy Grainger, 'Free Music No.1 (for Four Theremins)', 1935-1951
- 13 Percy Grainger, oscillator test, 1952
- 14 Henry Cowell, 'The Banshee', 1925
- 15 Johanna Beyer, 'Music of the Spheres', 1938
- 16 Jolivet, 'Trois Poèmes', 1935
- 17 Olivier Messiaen, 'Fête des Belles Eaux', 1939
- 18 Olivier Messiaen, 'Turangalîla Symphony' (excerpt), 1946-8
- 19 John Cage, 'Imaginary Landscape No. 1', 1939
- 20 John Oswald, 'Pretender' (excerpt), 1984/1988
- 21 Iannis Xenakis, 'Metastasis', 1955
- 22 György Ligeti, 'Glissandi', 1957
- 23 Krzystof Penderecki, 'Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima', 1960
- 24 György Kurtág, 'Perpetuum Mobile', composed between 1975 and 1993
- **25** Gloria Coates, 'Symphony No. 7 part 3' (excerpt), 1990 **26** Gloria Coates, 'String Quartet No. 6', 1999
- 27 Harmonic Choir, 'Arc Descents', 1982
- 28 Dan Burk, 'Squiggles', 1992
- 29 Harmonic Choir, 'Arc Descents', 1982
- 30 Karlheinz Stockhausen, 'Strahlen (Rays)', 2002
- 31 Karlheinz Stockhausen, 'Hymnen', 1966-7
- 32 Tod Dockstader, 'Whisper' (excerpt), 2002-5
- 33 Gregorio Paniagua, 'Anakrousis', 1978







[Gloria Coates]

03. Selected links

The Percy Grainger Museum www.grainger.unimelb.edu.au/

Joseph Schillinger www.schillingersociety.com/

John Oswald www.plunderphonics.com/ www.pfony.com/

The Pedal Steel Association www.psga.org/

The Ondes Martinot Society www.martenot.fr/Ondes-Martenot

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.

05. Acknowledgments

With thanks Bob Drake, Simon Emmerson, William Sharp, Charles O'Meara, Udi Koomran.

06. Copyright note

2013. All rights reserved. © by the respective authors and publishers.

Ràdio Web MACBA is a non-profit research and transmission project. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders; any errors or omissions are inadvertent, and will be corrected whenever it's possible upon notification in writing to the publisher.