



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.

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

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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, The Science Group and p53 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 regularly 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...), The Artaud Beats and The Artbears Songbook. Adjacent projects include commissioned works for radio, various live movie soundtracks, *Signe de Trois* for surround-sound projection, the daily year-long soundscape project Out of the Blue Radio (for Resonance FM) and p53 for Orchestra and Soloists.

He founded and runs the independent label ReR Megacorp and the art distribution service Gallery and Academic, is editor of the occasional sourcebook *Unfiled*, author of the book *File Under Popular* – and many articles and papers published in 16 languages. He was on faculty for a while at the Museum School in Boston and lectures irregularly on theoretical and music related topics worldwide. He has appeared on over 160 recordings.
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PROBES #8.2

Auxiliaries

The PROBES Auxiliaries collect materials related to each episode that try to give a broader – and more immediate – impression of the field. They are a scan, not a deep listening vehicle; an indication of what further investigation might uncover and, for that reason, most are edited snapshots of longer pieces. We have tried to light the corners as well as the central arena, and to not privilege so-called serious over so-called popular genres. This auxiliary explores extended techniques for strings.

01. Playlist

Note: For your listening pleasure I have, as always, been cavalier in editing the tracks together, overlapping them, making sometimes hard-to-spot joins, etc. – so, for the sake of clarity, I have prefaced each track with its start time.

00:00 Programme icon

Gregorio Paniagua, 'Anakrousis', 1978

00:08 Jon Rose and Derek Bailey, 'Table Two', 1987

Derek explains as he and Jon tour the tables, the drawbacks of his profession.

02:28 The Budapest Gypsy Symphony Orchestra (aka 100 Gypsy Violins of Budapest), 'The Lark' (excerpt) Live recording, 2010

Normal folk practice; not in pursuit of a new aesthetic, but for virtuosity's sake, fun and to paint an onomatopoeic picture of birdlife. Featured violinists are Sandor Buffo Rigo, J. Lendvai and Andrew Suki Csócsi.

04:34 Jon Rose, 'Table Nine', 1987

06:06 Patricia Kopatchinskaja, 'Crin', 1997

A miniature by the Venezuelan composer Jorge Sánchez-Chion, now resident in Vienna, performed by the great Moldavian violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, who moves seamlessly between the virtuoso traditional music of her country and high art. Slides, pizzicatos and singing along.

07:01 Krzysztof Penderecki, 'String Quartet no.1' (excerpt), 1960

Written in a few days, this work uses the full range of traditional string techniques and many specified by the composer himself, including trilled portamenti, playing on the tailpiece, slow vibrato with sliding pitches and slapping the strings with the palm of the hand. He also makes extensive use of microtonal and indefinite pitches.

10:37 Jacob Druckman 'Valentine', 1969

One of the great virtuoso pieces of its time that explored extended techniques for contrabass – particularly percussive techniques – and included vocalisations and a theatrical presentation. Druckman, who was born in Philadelphia and studied composition in Paris with Aaron Copland, also worked extensively in the field of electronic music.

11:56 Stéphane Barral, Doublebass slap and snap solo, 2012

This percussive technique, a ricochet combination of snapping (that's pulling the string back hard enough to make it snap percussively against the fingerboard) and slapping (hitting the string against the fingerboard with the palm, or several, parts of the hand, depending on the speed required) is commonly used in rockabilly, psychobilly – in fact most of the billys, jazz and bluegrass.

12:52 Antonio Bertoni, '½ (h)our drama', 2013

A short extract from this 30-minute piece for double-bass in which what you hear here continues to happen with minute variations.



[Jon Rose]

13:36 Helmut Lachenmann, 'Salut für Caudwell' (excerpt), 1977

The guitars are scraped, rubbed and knocked, the strings pulled up and released to snap against the fingerboard, while the two guitarists recite, intermittently, fragments of Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality*.

14:58 Mattias Eklundh, 'Disco Diabolique', 2010

Mattias la Eklundh is a Swedish guitarist and vocalist active in various Swedish bands, including, Freak Kitchen and Art Metal. He runs an annual International Freak Guitar Camp in the Swedish woods every summer, and he knows his way around a guitar.

16:16 Mozart 'Minuet in G K1', 1761-2, played by Greg Howard, 2012

On a 12-string stick guitar, a variation of the Chapman stick, using keyboard-style two-handed tapping technique.

17:39 Giacinto Scelsi, 'Ko-Tha' (excerpt), 1967

For solo guitar, played with the guitar face up on the performer's lap; there's no conventional notation for this piece and the techniques are essentially percussive.

18:52 Chris Mercer, 'A Snowball's Chance' (excerpt), 2003/4

Performed by Colin McAllister for acoustic guitar and tape - the tape part derived entirely from guitar sounds produced in collaboration with McAllister. Techniques include bowing and scraping the strings, playing with a nail file, beating the body and the obligatory alligator clip. Tuning is in ascending quarter-tones.

20:24 Hans Reichel, 'The Flight' (excerpt), 1979

The great Hans Reichel, composer, improviser, instrument builder and master of unorthodox techniques doing several almost impossible things at once. And singing along.

22:39 Yoshihisa Taira, 'Sublimation' (excerpt), 1971

Taira moved to France in 1966 where he studied with André Jolivet, Henri Dutilleux and Olivier Messiaen. This work for harp, is played here by Sylvie Beltrando.

24:36 John Zorn, 'Tasmanian Devil' (excerpt), 1995

Possibly named for the short-lived Warner Bros cartoon character, this is a focused catalogue of extended techniques for the harp. Performed by Carol Emanuel.

26:56 John Cage, 'Postcards From Heaven' (excerpt), 1983

An ambiguous score for 1 – 20 harps in the form of an improvisatory raga, occasionally using e-bows.

27:32 Jimmie Webster, 'Wonderful Guy', 1952

From the seminal and of course unavailable – and never reissued – LP in which Jimmie wrote the rulebook for two-handed tapping.

30:14 Programme icon

Gregorio Paniagua, 'Anakrousis', 1978

02. Notes

On length and edits.

The purpose of these programmes is to give some practical impression of the probes we discuss. This necessitates for the most part extracting short stretches of music from longer wholes, which, of course, compromises the integrity and disrupts the context inherent in the original works. I have also, on occasion, edited different sections of a longer work together, better to illustrate the points under discussion. So the examples played in the programmes should not be confused with the works themselves. Wherever the word 'excerpt' appears after a title in the programme transcript, this indicates that what follows is an illustration, not a composition as it was conceived or intended. If something catches your ear, please do go back to the source.



Notification

If you want to be notified when a new probe goes up, please mail remegacorp@dial.pipex.com with subject: Probe Me.

03. Credits

Recorded at Studio Midi-Pyrénées. Engineered by Bob Drake.

04. Acknowledgments

With thanks to Bob Drake, Jon Rose, Bill Sharp, Dave Petts, Darren Woolsey, Frances Marie Uitti, Fred Frith and Helene Breschand.

05. Copyright note

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