

Of Other Narratives

tracings in the ground of
Collective Autonomy
people–practice–theory–history

Volume 3

Program Notes Part 1¹

PRIMAL COMMUNICATION

PRELUDE : I suppose it reasonable to say that for many years – the formative through to the intense work period, 2007~2009, that generated *of Paradox Once Found* – all my creative work had been a response to, and reaction against, what I felt from early childhood to be a coercive social milieu. Perhaps a strange thing for a baby-boomer to say(?). After all, us immediately post-World War II kids grew up in a free Australia with its booming economy, return soldiers the recipients of considerable social advantages as partial recompense for the horrors sustained through their various war experiences, the relentless advance of industrialization with its attendant domestic overflow – Mortine for bug killing, the fast-flowing river of aerosol, plastic items and the interminable range of petroleum-derived products, with all these being released via a new form in advertising, television!, on an exponentially growing market-place – and, of course, there was the constant reminder regarding the benefits of being a winner (the exemplar par excellence being British imperial might, their incontestable courage, and their military superiority) while concurrently we were served the assured security of economic growth (the exemplar here being the unsurpassable superiority of rampant American liberalism and its congruency with an ever expanding, bigger and faster mechanized production line for which Henry Ford was the folk hero and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal”, implemented pre-war in 1933, its effective economic facilitator). Indeed, we Australians, in the backwash of all this, were “riding on the sheep’s back”. And what a ride it was.

Better phrased, ‘follow the leader’, the ‘ride’ wasn’t gratis. Our Dad, my sister, Lynette’s and mine, was a return soldier. This was something I could never quite grasp as a kid, the meaning, I mean. It really was beyond my comprehension. Not that I thought it a bad thing. I simply didn’t know what to think. At our little public school in our working man’s suburb where lots of returned men and their families lived, all us kids were taught to salute the flag (an extended version of the British model which iconically celebrated imperialism through the inclusion of the Southern Cross constellation), to think about England as the mother to whom we should be eternally grateful and for whom we should sing, as often as possible, God Save The Queen, while, in harmonious juxtaposition with this there was the imperative to trust in our christian god to whom we were answerable and by whom we were harried into truth-telling, come what may. Well, actually, it wasn’t really god who did the harrying but more those who saw themselves as his stand-in. And there was no shortage of these! As a kid, it never occurred to me to question these basics and, of course, had I done so I’d have been in even more trouble than I seemed to forever be in as it was. I did question lots of other things though and already, by about seven years of age, I, and a couple of my good mates, were generally considered to be trouble makers. I guess we were. The one overriding reproach to the constant disappointments I managed to create was: “If only he’d knuckle down to his school work, he’d be okay.” By okay they meant just that. What I needed to be in order to please my environment was, above all else, *average*. Less than average spelled failure and, from the position of their self-elevated opinions, the considerable limitations of my sensitivity and my I.Q. rendered notions in the order of, *different to, more or better than* (the average), *inspiration* and *self-motivation, alternative to* (the average) or *original, creative drive* and *precocious*, totally beyond the realm of possibility. Well, actually, perhaps the latter word got a look in! It was settled, then. As far as my environment was concerned, mediocrity was my born and natural place in life. And to achieve this, the only sure way was that of discipline. Discipline was definitely the shortest distance between the two points from which consensus was established, those two points being mediocrity on the one side and the mediocre on the other. This was not so much a matter of thoughtful education as it was corporal ... in my case, often!... corporal. The idea that *self-discipline* might, psychologically, be a beneficial advent was never on the horizon. Us few trouble makers would discover in our teen years that we were not alone in our trouble making pursuits and by our mid-teens, somehow, an entire movement was in progress. Though, as with most else that emerges from our mechanized, materialistic culture, they, the powers

that be, managed to market the ‘movement’ thereby severing it from its foundations and thus rendering it, by and large, superficial; a superficiality the ‘learned’ would derogate as the ‘Culture Industry’ – low art, eternal sameness, and a means of domination and integration.²

My school years were completed just prior to my fifteenth birthday and, still too young to take up my rightful position behind machinery in a factory, I spent a year at a different sort of school, one that trained me how to be a factory worker. I actually turned in some pretty good marks that year, largely because, I think, I wasn’t getting the cane ever other day. Come my sixteenth birthday and I’d been accepted as an indentured apprentice. The contract duly signed I was set for the next five years to learn how to operate various machines and acquire the skills of a toolmaker. This I did. Though it wasn’t without its trials and tribulations for all involved. Being distinctly out of place, as I was, we, the factory environment and I, rarely saw eye to eye. Like my school teachers, the bosses, most of them anyway, lorded it over me as if my life was in their hands and depended utterly upon their opinion and judgement. My parents were happy because I was where I should be, to wit, in the heart of mediocrity. I saw my apprentice years through for one reason only. I knew that if I failed to do so it would break the heart of my Mum and Dad, and my as perceived insensitivity didn’t extend to quite those lengths.

These factory years, though, proved in the years to follow amazingly fruitful, beneficial, and to quite a large degree, enlightening. The entire story I’ll account for elsewhere. But as a direct consequence, the philosophy I came to embrace, Collective Autonomy, drew together strands in the human habitat – inter alia, prolonged engagement with a Worker’s Union, the struggle as a young man to come to terms with what it means, on a daily basis, to accommodate the vast gulf that exists between a mechanized, repetitive mentality and one whose ‘natural’ inclinations effervesce from creative, non-repetitive ground, the meaning, and consequence, of self-motivation as distinct from formulated rule-following, and the recognition that to ‘please’ (the boss) doesn’t necessarily imply pleasure, enjoyment, or gratification but rather toeing the line of authority – all of which coalesced as indispensable elements in the constitutional aggregate of its (Collective Autonomy’s) provision for egalitarian foundations to interactive creative structures.

Among the lessons: There *is* no substitute for years spent on the factory floor. Statistics won’t ever spawn spirit. Life-as-lived experience might. Where spirit comes into the world it bears potential to beget spirit. And in this it bears positive impetus and potential as a healing force.

As surely as a drowning person latches on to a lifebuoy, I’d latched on to jazz. By my early teens and with thanks due entirely to my Dad, I’d heard, live, the Ellington Band, the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and, crucially, had vinyl copies of Miles’s *Kind Of Blue*, Max Roache’s *Parisian Sketches*, and Mingus *Ah Um*.³ Thus, by fifteen years of age there was no question whatsoever in my mind as to the general direction I’d take though years would pass before I’d figure out a destination to which that direction might lead and, significantly, the ‘how’ of getting there. Circa 1968 ~ 69, while playing in a BeBop band comprising of vibraphone, piano, acoustic bass and myself,⁴ a momentous event took place one night, on the gig, that turned on a guiding light and illuminated the path ahead. Under anger motivated pressure on the part of the band-leader it was demanded of me that I play like Art Blakey. In utter naiveté yet with un-gated spontaneity I responded with equal fire that I *wasn’t* Art Blakey. Regular four-night-a-week situations for BeBop music was as rare in Sydney in those days as it is nowadays. Notwithstanding, I resigned, never to return to that particular band and shortly thereafter realized the significance of the event. It proved to be an incredible if unexpected gift, albeit one that set the bar incalculably higher than it already was. Intuitively I’d recognized and acknowledged that, whatever the price to be paid, emulation, whatever its form or reason, would never be a component part of my creative development. And it would be but a few years on down the track that I’d also discover, and, *accept*, that part of the price to be paid meant by dint, unacceptability by the majority of practitioners. The *real* task, it seemed, lay in other areas; areas that didn’t concern themselves with perfection of style, demonstrative technical prowess, *or* toeing the line. With this discovery I’d also discovered an attendant and inevitable sense of relative isolation. But there seemed no better path to travel for eventually it would reveal creative terrain both wholesome and self-perpetuating. But above all else it would be creative terrain that felt, and *was*, honest.

The crucial lesson, or perhaps better put, confirmation, I’d inadvertently garnered from the above-mentioned African American musicians (these among others, of course,) was that, ultimately, one can only play and express who it is that one is. It seemed to me that the ‘how’ of ‘getting there’ was, ultimately, to do with personhood and that the terrain to explore needed to be conducive to the discovery of, personhood. Put this way it seems that words like *excavation* and *archaeology* might be likely metaphors ...*the discovery of personhood*. Sometimes the quarry needs to be dug deep. Sometimes, perhaps mostly, the digging has its attendant pain. And the only thing one has to rely on, that is, in the process prior to discovery, is the intuitive, instinctive feeling that the quarry is being dug on fecund ground. And, where the ‘self’, *as person*, is intrinsic to the archaeological site, its easy to mistake barren soil as being fecund ground.

CONVERGENCE : In harmony with this path travelled towards what would become the focused work of Collective Autonomy was an intense number of years ensconced in exploration and experimentation with Roger Frampton and, just a little further down the track, David Tolley. I'll account for these significant relationships in detail at some other time, when I can devote to them their due space. Suffice for the present to note that, through these two men and their abiding predilections to find alternate ways of doing things, I was able to share in the development of creative environments vital to my own journey. In each instance, we shared in discovery. Each proved to be an uncovering on vastly different topography, though they seemed to me to be harmonious perspectives.

None of us lives in a vacuum. And music-making, being quintessentially a spontaneous mode of communicative art, is, in one way or another, utterly dependent upon resonance. And vacuums are not conducive to resonance. Though it would be many years before consciousness and life-lived ditch-digging would clearly reveal to me some of the characteristics intrinsic to my being *who* it is that abides in the present material incarnation, I'd been aware from early childhood that, put metaphorically, the compass needle already pointed in a certain direction. I clearly recall a happening around seven years of age that indicates this. A brief account would read thus: My father, Maurice Harrison Treloar, was a part-time trumpet player. He gigged on weekends and worked an office job during the week. He had abundant talent and a 'natural ear' but these he would only ever develop in a limited way. Dad wasn't a person who'd display his feelings too much and this, particularly, in front of his family. The occasion in memory is a christmas party Dad had taken us to. And it would seem that a few beers might have loosened him up somewhat. He and his musical compatriots began playing some tunes (piano, bass, drums, and Dad on trumpet). Me, this seven year old kid, became mesmerized, sitting on the lounge-room floor of a suburban home in a working-man's district, in front of a pretty large bass drum (in the corner, of course – drummers are always sent to the corner like naughty little boys in a classroom!) with the upright piano against the wall to my left, the bass player standing just off to the bass-end of the piano (another usual location!) and Dad, more or less, standing over my left shoulder between me and the bass player. I was surrounded with sound and, more to the point, them! I was in the womb, as it were. As a kid, as is equally true of today, too, I was not fearful of diving headlong into feelings, and my mesmerism increased to a remarkable degree. The catalyst that launched this wonder-filled excursion was not the music per se nor instrumental dexterity. These were only elements in a more psychologically rich complex. It was the joy. J-o-y. Pure joy!!! The experience of my own father issuing forth such exultant human feeling wiped this kid's very cloudy mirror clean as a whistle (or in this case, trumpet). And in particular, Dad's friend, Arthur (on drums), with whom he'd continue playing music for years to come, had a look on his face that left an imprint on my mind I can still see today. These men, in one brief moment, showed me the meaning of life. For me, music was it! And it would be creative music. Other than the piano player, these men didn't need written music in front of them before they could express themselves. *Their* joy came as a direct message from *them*. Years further on I went to listen to Dad and Arthur playing in a suburban hotel lounge. By now, my usual listening was in a very different vain. During the course of the evening Dad stepped forward from his more usual position behind obligato lines and the occasional half-chorus solo. My father, in his life, had never shared anything other than fear and sadness with his own father and this, anyway, terminated in his tenth year with his father's passing. Furthermore, Dad never shared his feelings about this with us, his family, other than mentioning it a couple of times with scant words of dismissal. And here he was, being featured playing an entire song, solo, with Mum and I in the audience. And the song? Oh, My Pa-Pa. Hearing him, feeling him, the tears streamed down my cheeks, just as they do now, as I write. I felt the depth of lived understanding enter my being, compassion, and discovered forgiveness; a kind of forgiveness that he, too, could embrace utterly through music-making though never with words.

There's a coda to this story. Eventually, in my mid-teens, I got to play a couple of gigs with my Dad. The feeling of this remains grounded deep in the center of my being. The music was as it was. But the feeling, still generative in the present as is equally true of the Oh, My Pa-Pa occasion, too, is absolutely inextricable from my ever-growing embrace of music's potential as a transmitter of spirit. In my mid-teens, and despite Dad's and my innumerable, often severe conflicts, Dad and I were able to bridge childhood to early manhood through music-making. Thus, from there, casting my gaze outwards into the world and to our universe beyond, when, in the early-'70s I came upon Albert Ayler's record title, *Music Is The Healing Force Of The Universe*, the simple yet profound truth of it rang so clearly. And indeed, it is! Or *can* be... a healing force.⁵

Musical categories were much more clearly defined then than is the case nowadays. And jazz in particular was a much more narrowly defined musical area. One need only to consider the scorn heaped upon Miles Davis after he'd turned to electric instruments⁶ to realize how thin the skins and mercurial the hearts of those who'd previously been his outspoken devotees. These folk were more interested in the predictability of tried-and-true song forms than in the sometimes creative excesses of his electric turn. Patiently, it was still the same Miles. His now ex-supporters simply didn't approve of his new clothes or his no clothes. Perhaps they were unable to sense the difference.

I'd taken to making regular trips to Kangaroo Valley where I'd camp for a night or two, and sometimes more. Often by myself or sometimes with my two young sons, Wynton and Teo. I'd go to pretty much the same spot each time because I knew I'd find there tranquility without interruption. My thoughts and imagination were free to wander and the clarity of the night sky was not only inspirational but astoundingly communicative. While there, I'd never drink alcohol, smoke dope, or imbibe anything of an intoxicating nature. Nature was already doing more than all those other things put together. I truly felt that I was in touch with something way beyond verbal description and thought. Kangaroo Valley not only gave me the gift of precious time with my sons, but also it was there that I began to find within myself compositional proclivity. Although I'd dabbled with the notion of writing music prior to this, the results were never much more than simple song writing. And this, to some degree anyway, was determined by a lack of traditional music education. But more to the point I think, the inner conflict that had raged within me between jazz as a way of musical procedure, the more recent musical discoveries precipitated through listening to the above mentioned composers, and an ever growing drive and determination to find a creative, expressive voice I could call my own; call my own beyond question; call my own as a free, unencumbered spirit able to reflect, through musical expression, the world, the cosmos, and the people who gave meaning to this reflection, led me to discover that in addition to personhood, spirit, too, was absolutely crucial to the process of, and engagement with, creative pursuit. It was in Kangaroo Valley that these elements converged, giving immediate rise to a large-scale composition that fell under a single arc; one that didn't depend on song form for its unity. This convergence gave rise to Primal Communication in its first generation and my first clear glimpse of, what would become, the philosophical thrust of Collective Autonomy.

[illegible]

PRIMAL COMMUNICATION

truth—faith—trust

exposing one's primal, moral, elements to oneself (Truth)

develops a belief in one's religious doctrines (Faith)

facilitating the Trust in others, necessary for communication²⁷

The rendering of Primal Communication as heard on *Of Other Narratives* volume 3 is from 1988. There have been, to date, three incarnations of Primal Communication with the 1976 account its inception.²⁸ The second, its first reincarnation in 1981, stands more as a variation of the primary account than it does one that chronicles any major change.²⁹ The third, however, its second reincarnation in 1988, called for a major rewrite and significantly, was occasioned round the time when lots of philosophical ditch-digging I'd been doing finally gave rise to the appellation, Collective Autonomy, in 1987.

In his philosophically determined biography of Friedrich Nietzsche, Julian Young asks an incisive question: "Can human life really flourish without the belief in free will, and can it flourish without belief in some kind of metaphysics, or as I prefer to say, 'transcendence'?"³⁰ Apropos Nietzsche's stance, perhaps Lou Salomé hits the nail on the head with the suggestion that "Nietzsche's genius sprang from the exuberant fire behind his thoughts ... logic alone could not have brought on his illuminations."³¹ The question is, I believe, absolutely fundamental to creative pursuit in toto and one, in various forms, I've been asking myself from quite a young age.

The three lines of text that accompany the title, Primal Communication, are intrinsic to the "Work" and in their unification celebrate a moral imperative; a *personal* moral imperative. This verbal representation arrived in 1976 as a consolidation of previous 'soul-searching' while concurrently, a message from a source I've learned to neither doubt nor question. These lines of text came as a gift and bore a weighty responsibility. Their arrival presented me with two choices – to either ignore their substance or accept it, totally. I chose the latter and in the doing determined the course my life would take. Considered in this light, I didn't write it, it wrote me. It continues to do so.

EXAMPLE 2.: *Primal Communication* score Page 5, from the original 1976 version depicting the area in the music's unfolding where the opening section is bridged to the first section of material on which improvisation was based.

The image shows a handwritten musical score on ten staves. The top staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'TITLE' field. The second staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes an 'ARRANGED BY' field. The third staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'CUSTOMER' field. The fourth staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'DATE' field. The fifth staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'PAGE No.' field. The sixth staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'PAGE No.' field. The seventh staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'PAGE No.' field. The eighth staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'PAGE No.' field. The ninth staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'PAGE No.' field. The tenth staff is for 'VCL' (Violin) and includes a 'PAGE No.' field. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'TACET' and 'Cresc'.

This suggests my having arrived at a fork in the road. And indeed, this is precisely what it was with each one of the “Work’s” three accounts. 1976 was to shed light on the crucial role music composition was to play in my creative development and particularly the emergence and development of Collective Autonomy. But by far and away the most profound aspect of this foundational account lay in the spiritual realm with its attendant psychic phenomena. The reincarnation of 1981 threw down the gauntlet vis-à-vis the pressing necessity to make an extensive, rigorous study of music composition as this is practiced in the Western music tradition. In this respect it was functional in that it gave rise to a focused concern for technical matters regarding music composition and, as things evolved, this proved to be no small consideration. Then, in 1988 *Primal Communication: version two – for improvising quartet and string orchestra*, arrived. This, the “Work’s” second reincarnation, provided an ideal opportunity in the wake of rigorous composition study to thoroughly compose out the “Work” through dots-on-paper and in the doing it clearly illuminated the task Collective Autonomy fundamentally stood for; a task that had previously been, though not entirely, concealed, bringing together on the one field the spiritual with the profane.

What this meant in concrete terms was this: I was no longer dealing with ephemeral ideas which, at best, might have served to harness the more profound aspects of the human condition I felt and, for years, had been intent on grasping. Now, with the spiritual and profane juxtaposed in the one workspace as it were, ‘grasping’, and all implied by that term, was no longer apposite. Truth be known, grasping never was apposite. I was no longer floundering around, reaching out for the means and the way. These had become concrete as far as the creative manifestations proper to Collective Autonomy’s task was concerned. However, in as much as the ground on which the task was to be negotiated was now accessible, the road before me and its horizon was, patently, a very long trek yet to be made.

As utterly indispensable as experiential knowledge is, it’s not the only kind of knowledge to be had nor the only kind of knowledge useful in the course of exploring a life-creative path. My long and devoted explorations on the field of improvised music led me to the realization that, at least in the terms my own perception would have it, improvisation qua manifest expression left much out of the picture. And, as I saw things, the same observation was true of thorough composition. As my concern had always been, and remains, primarily to do with expression qua communicative beneficence and not *l’art pour l’art*, one aspect of the task was to figure out how, and with what, the picture might be made more complete. For me, whether of an improvisational or compositional persuasion, falling into line with genre-determined vernaculars was not an option. A pivotal key to the problem was that where I’d previously seen music composition and its representational dots-on-paper merely as a tool to be used, with the emergence of *Primal Communication: version two* the process of composition itself, much as with the spontaneity of improvisation, had become a more complete spiritual engagement. Dialogue between the processes of improvisation and of composition now shared equally and at first hand in the creative space of Collective Autonomy. It would be here that one might inform the other without dependence on a hierarchical relationship between them. In light of the 1988 incarnation, this was now the vista before me. The journey however, I felt was only just beginning.

Although way beyond my purview at the time, these profound developments were inherent with the “Work’s” primary inception in 1976. Twelve years later I was beginning to discover the depths of what amounts to being a philosophy of communicative engagement through music making and not simply a philosophy of music per se. Though theory has played an important role, Collective Autonomy has been a hands-on engagement where music ‘in practice’ has provided and accounted for theoretical postulates. Having been a significant factor in the evolution of this philosophic turn it’s germane to mention, though herein without elaboration, that around 1976 I was first introduced to Buddhist thought³² and within a couple of years of this I’d also begun to consider ideas as presented in the European philosophical tradition.³³ Although introduced, these modes of thinking would remain very much on the periphery for some years to come but nonetheless proved seminal.

It was either late-1987 or early ’88 that I went to Hobart, Tasmania, to spend a week or so with a friend, Peter, who had been living there for some time and working with the Tasmania Symphony Orchestra. One evening while out and about we found ourselves at a bar in town talking with a lady who taught at the Conservatorium there. Though I had been only vaguely acquainted with her prior to this particular evening, she and Peter were good friends. The conversation got around to creative ideas and I happened to mention a dream I had which was to re-write *Primal Communication* so as to embrace both improvisation and rigorous, dots-on-paper music composition within the one unfolding structure. This lady, Amanda Wojtowicz, upon hearing this, eyeballed me and said words to the effect: “How would you like to do *that* as part of a residency at the Con?” Well! In the space of no time we were exuding energy and enthusiasm for the idea like there was no tomorrow. Amanda put the wheels in motion. Indeed a fairly tricky thing I’d imagine, given the nature of the music I had in mind and the atmosphere one generally finds in music institutions. But by mid-year, ’88, it was all happening.

Writing for a feature article which appeared in the Weekend *Review* pages of The Mercury, June 18, 1988, Rosina Beaumont observed:

“For two weeks they [Feeling to Thought] have been artists-in-residence at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, the first contemporary music group to be invited to such a position. ... The way in which Treloar crosses the boundaries between traditional art music and improvised music, with its sources in jazz, reflects his own musical experiences which embrace both a background in jazz music and an academic study of composition. ... Treloar now dislikes being called a jazz musician. One reason for his reluctance is an aversion to categorizing Australian music and musicians in terms of what is happening in music overseas. ... The residency of Feeling to Thought at the Tasmanian Conservatorium is an indication of the way in which traditional divisions between serious art music and music arising from the jazz tradition are being broken down.”

In the wake of the event Amanda Wojtowicz and David Hurst – who, as a member of the teaching staff at the Con. had been enormously supportive – published an article in the University’s *PRESS PRESS*:

“A PHENOMENON recently engulfed the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music in a whirlwind which radically altered many of the students’ musical preconceptions. This phenomenon was a residency by the Sydney based improvisation ensemble Feeling to Thought. ... The project was seen as a significant step in integrating performers of contemporary Australian art music with improvising musicians ... The residency further aimed to make a contribution to the Australian musical life in general by introducing the public to new ideas on composition and performance practice through the integration of disparate forces. ... Feeling to Thought’s residency was aimed at accessing student’s creative streams rather than driving home specific ideas or traditions. ... The emphasis on communication, respect for others and encouragement helped many people to build greater self-confidence and liberated some from the constraints of categorization.”³⁴

As heard through the voices of four students:

“Their openness, directness, refreshing honesty, intensity, sincerity and enthusiasm were a thrilling contribution.”

“...they’ve made me remember the basic reasons why we play music, and also remember the personal element. Whether improvising or playing someone else’s music, somehow making it your own.”

“The group has prompted me to reconsider the whole idea of music and the musician ... Especially impressive was their self-acceptance without egotism. Their philosophies of communication and creativity in a performance environment shed a great deal of light on earlier composers, especially pre-Romantic. This is what music making is all about!”

“[The] ‘Primal Communication’ concert was the most exciting musical experience I’ve ever been part of; I’m honored. The fact that they seemed to have enjoyed the residency just as much is an extra delight.”³⁵

And from the then Professor of Music and Head of the Conservatorium:

“I write to you and your colleagues on behalf of the staff and students of the Conservatorium to express our gratitude to you for so generously giving so much of your talent, commitment, energy and time to us during the period of your most successful and rewarding residency at the Conservatorium. ... I think it is clear that your visit gave focus to the exciting and creative possibilities across a whole range of interests in the Conservatorium. ... I look forward to working with you again here in Hobart.” Signed and dated, David Cubbin, 11th July, 1988.³⁶

To speak of an intersection between composed/notated and improvised musics in 2012 is a matter for fairly common discussion. Unfortunately though, the sting has been extracted from its potential to dig down beneath the layers of superficial cultural debris and with this, creative potency has been nullified. In 1988, this was not the case at all. It was, instead, exploration on relatively untrodden terrain. Few had given the matter any serious thought, let alone dedicated themselves to its province. The major re-write I made of Primal Communication was not a commission. I received no financial remuneration for the “Work” whatsoever. The Primal Communication performance which took place as a Lunchtime Concert, University Centre, University of Tasmania’s Stanley Burbridge Theatre, June 21, 1988,³⁷ was broadcast nationally, live-to-air, by the ABC. The broadcast magnified what was for those at first hand, performers and listeners alike, a unique experience. The residency, as is obvious from the above accounts, tilled fertile ground for positive development. And Feeling to Thought, being “the first contemporary music group to be invited to such a position,” established this ground for subsequent encounters. Yet despite these wide-ranging, unmitigated benefits, I have not since then been offered in Hobart, or at any other music institution either, another residency similar in potential. More tragically, Primal Communication has never received another performance. Had the ABC not recorded it, there would be no sound document. The audience response as witnessed on the *Of Other Narratives*, volume 3 reproduction is significant testimony regarding the “Work’s” inherent value and contributive potential. There has not been, to this day, from inside the academy or elsewhere, any suggestion of focussed interest in, much less study of, the project or the work of music composition. Not a single Masters or Ph.D student from any institution has ever expressed the slightest interest in this, or in any other exploratory work I’ve devoted myself to. No doubt, most are totally unaware of its ever having existed. Put in a nutshell, the years I’ve devoted to active research and performance in an area that is by now more widely accepted has been completely ignored by the establishment and all

but forgotten except by a handful of musicians who happen to have had bootleg copies of our performance efforts. Meanwhile, the ground I explore has shifted and developed considerably.

In consideration of my work from round the period of *Primal Communication : version two*, the following three reference citations are apposite:

“I got to know his [Phil Treloar’s] work well when, after a period of many years as one of this country’s best jazz percussionists, he took the courageous decision to become a student again and to undertake the degree course in musical composition in this Conservatorium, subsequently graduating with a distinguished record of achievement.”

Signed: Dr. Graham Hair, Head, School of Composition, NSW State Conservatorium of Music.

“Phil Treloar has a special place in Australian music. He is a composer who follows a very independent and personal muse. ...It is difficult to categorize Feeling to Thought. While jazz is clearly a strong element, other musical sources also come to bear. The music is absolutely fearless, virtuosic, impassioned, and never lacks interest or fire. Audiences love the group – and so do Australia’s musicians.”

Signed: Dr Richard Letts, Executive Director, Australian Music Centre Ltd.

“At a time when many of the discoveries of free jazz seem to have ended in something of a blind alley, this ensemble [Feeling to Thought] seems to be able to find new ways of communicating very directly without any loss of integrity. They seem to me to offer great hope for the future.”

Signed: Richard Toop, Head, School of Musicology, New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, September 27, 1988.³⁸

Whether perceived of as offering “great hope for the future” or otherwise, I was forced to terminate the Feeling to Thought project in 1991. It was never to see the light of day again. The struggle to secure scraps of never-well-paid work for the group, the never-ending run-around fostered by a culture that does anything but welcome (much less, celebrate) the thought of thinking the positive potential of its own cultural depth, and the ever burgeoning impact of market-place mentality not only prevalent in the culture at large but significantly, the increasing focus and *raison d’être* of funding bodies, rendered survival utterly impossible. I therefore chose to terminate the project rather than compromise its creative integrity and the creative integrity of its individual members. Despite all its promise the project, as perceived by most, fell into the ‘too hard’ basket. Put differently, it lacked user friendly convenience: that ‘this is a ‘hit’’ malady so readily appropriated by political ideologies and their attendant needs for overnight remedies that appear to be permanent solutions – the sort of medication Australian funding bodies right across the board find satisfaction in and so, support.

The state of Australian funding is, in a word, abysmal. It has been for years. And I doubt very much that it will ever be otherwise simply because the principles and guidelines that determine funding policy are politically rather than creatively motivated. Funding is controlled and implemented by institutional administrators who purport to having an interest in ‘the arts’ and whose lip service is nothing less than an insult to the few practitioners who, rather than play the political game, spend their time and energy on genuine creative activity. But, this said, Australian funding reflects accurately its cultural context. Neither reformation nor reconstruction will cure its terminal illness. Nothing short of a totally new regime will stand a chance of placing Australian creative expression on fertile ground: its very own, ground. Crucially, it needs to be freed from the limitation and short-sightedness of government whim and left to self-governed focus on creative practices rather than, as is currently the case, political maneuvering. Life dedicated to creative pursuit isn’t a business. It’s a form of devotion. A form of devotion about as far removed from business and political psychology as it’s possible to be ...poles apart, in fact.

Here, it’s germane to point out that from the same period as applies to the residency project that focused on *Primal Communication: version two* and through to the present time, Anthony Braxton was establishing what has become a central power-house in American creative music education. In 1985 he was, deservedly, appointed to a teaching position at Mills College, Oakland, California, and over the past 22 years has taught at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, where he holds a Professorship. Braxton is a self-confessed patriot and an ‘American original’ who thinks “there’s never been another country like the United States of America . . . We should be proud of our country.”³⁹ Though slammed by critics constantly throughout the ’70s and ’80s, few these days I’d imagine would contest his extraordinary contribution.⁴⁰

Going back to the 1970s, I’d been calling attention to the urgent necessity for Caucasian/Australians to side-line their predilections to import models – because always perceived as ‘better’ – and, rather than emulate, accept as realistic the model they’re able to create as individuals while establishing for themselves a ground from which creative expression grows true to its natural habitat.⁴¹ Like Braxton, I see this true-to-its-natural-habitat voice as ineluctable if creative pursuit be one’s devotion. Unlike Braxton, though, I’m no patriot. And I’m certainly not a nationalist, and utterly anti-imperialist. Despite his obvious ‘genius’, Braxton’s use of wide-ranging music genres and styles is tantamount to being a reflection of immoderate liberal politics (indeed, American!); another line of thought on which we differ. This said, Braxton has never, to my knowledge anyway, rendered his African American

roots and culture anything other than vitally crucial to his creative vision. And herein lies our major difference. His African American roots and cultural environment are so vastly different to mine – me, being of British/Cornish stock, though granted, our respective countries of upbringing are, in their current incarnation, a result of settlements on stolen soil, genocide, and institutionalized slavery in one form or another – that, rather than erode either by confusing them, better that each develops along its own creative, natural path. Whilst this in no way suggests we shouldn't share each others perspectives, *emulation* is not the way to share. If nothing else, emulation establishes a foundation for hierarchical practices with their attendant forms of answerability: a mild form of slavery, perhaps? Hardly the sort of ground that is conducive to creativity. It saddens me greatly to be witness to current, mostly crass, practices of 'borrowing' (to put it politely), what is hard to describe otherwise than ethnic musico/cultural expressions. These, often being traditional and thus to do with traditional practices rather than with the Western conception of 'creative Art', are enfeebled in their dislocation with their essence being eroded by ad-hoc mixtures in cute, quaint, and varied forms of the sonic melting pot, then, wherever possible, subjected to mass market cosmetics. All that is left in the aftermath is their (originally unintended) entertainment value ... meaning, their viability for mass-market consumption. And some of the most prominent offenders are the autochthons themselves – and surely, in such cases, this is more to do with financial gain, profile (ego), and politics – fundamentally, politics – than with the spirituality of their cultural roots.

I've labored the point vis-à-vis the case of Braxton because it's important to stress the significance of cultural background apropos creative expression. Braxton is, it seems to me, an exceptional example of a creative individual who has not only rationalized and stated in speech and writing his relationship with a range of cultural influences but, significantly, incorporated them in his work in such a way as to respect, utterly, their origins *through his interpretations* as these are made manifest in his music-making, both improvised and composed. Far from bearing the negative overtones of emulation and appropriation, his creative expression is a recognition and honoring of potential to share in a continuum without compromising integrity.⁴²

Gaining a clear view of the world in which we live and on which we depend as the inherently communicative beings we are, is, pretty much nowadays, essential to life-as-lived. In the particular case of creative music, to be aware of the music of other cultures and have insights regarding the background of those cultures *can* mean, in one way or another, benefit for all. If nothing else, these insights and awarenesses facilitate some sort of cultural intersection; some kind of ground on which we might find an understanding of each other's idiosyncratic characteristics. Understanding such as this is surely a matter for celebration and gives rise to, what should be the obvious necessity for, the preservation of our differences and not sufficient reason to 'borrow', wholesale, such that differences are emaciated to the point of death or, worse, subservience. Our differences should be respected, not eradicated. With this in mind, and as a motivating force, I have attempted, in my own work, to embrace other cultures through structural understanding and its inclusion, at times, in the formation of creative expressions. Through structural investigation I've managed to circumvent the crassness of superficial emulation and borrowing. Through the structural approach I've learned how to think and feel differently, not how to simply copy or superficially implement acquired knowledge and abilities. This, in its turn, has encouraged me to think differently about the sorts of structures I create that stem directly from my own cultural background, thus generating unexplored ground within a wider terrain that is, somehow, sometimes mysteriously, familiar.

PRIMAL COMMUNICATION: *version two – for improvising quartet and string orchestra* is structured so as to unfold as a single arc. The "Work's" substance is spiritual. The structure serves this substance. The arc describes a field of play and sets into motion at various points along its (roughly) thirty-five minute trajectory certain conditions of exchange. Compositionally, these conditions of exchange are an index towards the "Work's" spiritual ethos. Contrasting levels of compositional structure are accounted for through notation. The conditions of exchange are interactive at various levels with this sometimes applying to the string orchestra only, sometimes to the improvising quartet only, sometimes to the orchestra predominately with a secondary line of activity given to the improvisers while at others, the improvisers predominate with the orchestra playing a secondary line of action. Crucially, there are environments that juxtapose the improvisers and orchestra and where the terms and conditions that apply in these cases make manifest in performance results that are not specifically predetermined. They put to work in the one creative space both improvisation and notated composition.⁴³

The single arc of *Primal Communication: version two* is divided into several segments.⁴⁴ Each segment, though a structural unit in its own right, is bridged to the next with a brief overlapping of compositional material.⁴⁵ It's significant to point out that although each segment has a distinctive character, they haven't been conceived of, nor composed out, in structural terms that would apply to, for instance, a composition 'movement' as such. Though each segment unfolds with a linguistic sense appropriate to its character this does

not imply that the “Work” is, in toto, specifically tonal or a-tonal any more than it implies a genre-specific disposition. Various construals of rhythmic and pitch relationships have been organized so as to be consistent with and elucidate each segment’s character.

The alternating character between segments is narrative-like. The story is told via quasi conversational chunks of musical expression. This does not necessarily imply voice-like speech but rather alludes to spiritually derived expression – as chapters etched onto a sonic canvas constituted by strands of complementary, interwoven spirits. As with this narrative structure segment to segment, so too with its occurrence within each segment. In order that the narrative-flow be accessible (at least to some degree) to the vicissitudes of real-time, the overwhelming structural principle found in *Primal Communication: version two* is horizontal. That is to say, relationships between constituent parts that comprise any given moment are founded on essentially modal ground. This is not only reflected in the pitch domain but, perhaps more significantly, in the rhythmic. Rhythmic syntax in the “Work” is considerably more complex than outward appearances might indicate. These rhythmic structures are indispensable to the expressive unfolding. They prescribe, to a considerable extent, the flow of energy. Although this is particularly noticeable in the improvised sections, it is no less essential to the composed out, fully notated music *as made manifest in performance*. Crucially though, it constitutes the “Work’s” salient character as this becomes increasingly apparent through the relationships that obtain between each segment. This last (italicized) phrase is absolutely fundamental to gaining a clear understanding of *Primal Communication: version two*. It is a composed “Work” that engages performance as intrinsic to its structure. Put slightly differently, its structure, as composition, is fully realized as formal shaping in performance, as performed.⁴⁶

The following, far from being an exhaustive analysis, is more a flow chart that demarcates the segment by segment unfolding of the “Work’s” arc.

‘Segment’ Flow Chart for *Primal Communication: version two* A Bird’s-Eye View

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Orchestra & Quartet’s bass	Quartet : solos tenor & alto	Orchestra	Quartet : alto solo	Quartet : tenor solo	Quartet : tenor & Orchestra	Orchestra	Orchestra & Alto sax	Conclusion Orchestra & alto

Though in its realization the “Work’s” symmetry is not perfectly balanced round the E segment, this bird’s-eye view reveals a single arc that is symmetrical in form. As mentioned above, each segment is compositionally bridged.

Some Segment Detail

The A Segment: After a brief introduction – a cursory prelude, an upbeat so to speak, – the A segment settles on a sustained chord in the orchestra⁴⁷ juxtaposed with the entry of a solo melodic line played by acoustic bass. So, although fully notated at this point, right from the outset we find interpretation juxtaposed. Here, in the A segment, the solo bass line is given to the improvising quartet’s bassist rather than to one of the orchestral players. Modal harmony and long sustained sonorities in the orchestra and intricate rhythmic movement in the solo bass establish an ambience of marked contrasts for the following segments and their characteristic relationships.

The B Segment, for the quartet only, flows on directly from the tail of segment A with the bridging material in the quartet bass part. A 9/8 meter is established by an ostinato-like pattern in the bass which can also be interpreted as 3/4. This double reading bears the relationship, characteristic of segment B, between the bass and drum parts while the two horns play a tightly written unison melody in juxtaposition to this. Though the head’s pitch material is predominantly modal, it also includes dominant-like cycle material. Solos follow, using, first, the form established by the written head then, as the segment unfolds, the form is stretched, incrementally opening up the structure – i.e., the number of bars assigned to each area of the written head. Eventually this process arrives at an open-ended solo for alto saxophone then leads into bridging material, taking us to the next segment.

Segment C opens with a brief orchestral introduction which establishes a contrapuntal texture, a meter in 11/4, and the general character of the segment to be realized by the orchestra only.⁴⁸

EXAMPLE 3.: *Primal Communication: version two* – for improvising quartet and string orchestra.

Score pages 9 and 10, showing three measures from the string orchestra's introductory music to segment C.

The image displays two pages of a handwritten musical score. The top page (page 9) features staves for Violin 1 (Vn1), Violin 2 (Vn2), Viola (Vla), Violoncello (Vc), and Contrabass (C.B.). Each instrument has two staves (a and b). The bottom page (page 10) continues the score with staves for Violin 1 (Vn1), Violin 2 (Vn2), Viola (Vla), Violoncello (Vc), and Contrabass (C.B.), along with a section for the string orchestra (arco) and a section for the improvising quartet (f). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings (mf, sfz, f, p, mp, mf, f, sfz, sf). The tempo is marked '3.' at the beginning of the first measure on page 9. The score is written in a clear, legible hand.

This explores the “Work’s” pitch material from an a-tonal perspective though modally inflected. The 11/4 meter is subdivided into 4 - 3 - 4 and this remains constant. The rhythm, often working on more than one level, is complex with phrases bridging subdivisions and bar-lines. Downbeats are not a regular occurrence and accented entry-points sometimes fall in the middle of subdivisions. To add further to this already complex rhythmic structuring there are, at times, passages notated polyrhythmically but not in all the parts. The texture is thus complex but never dense. At its most transparent the texture is a single voice.

EXAMPLE 4.: *Primal Communication: version two* – for improvising quartet and string orchestra.

Score page 12 showing part of the solo for the violas; a very transparent texture with fragments of commentary from other string voices.

At its most translucent seven or eight voices are juxtaposed. But the texture is never so dense as to be opaque. In addition to facilitating a conversational, narrative sort of musical topography, the rhythmic complexity of segment C, in relation to its 11/4 meter, serves, paradoxically, to create a character I’d describe as ‘floating’ or ‘air-borne.’ This floating characteristic is in marked contrast to the quartet music that sits either side. The concluding moments of segment C are realized through a texture that, as with its brief introduction, builds to a seven-layered rhythmic structure which functions as the bridge into segment D and from which the quartet’s bass emerges.

EXAMPLE 5.: *Primal Communication: version two* – for improvising quartet and string orchestra.

Score page 23, indicating the texture of the orchestra in the concluding moments of Segment C and the ‘collage-like’ quality between segments.

NOTE: These are the first two bars of the bridge between Segments C & D. The meter has changed from the 11/4 of Segment C to the 4/4 of Segment D. The quartet’s bass part appears on the top line, functioning to introduce the quasi ‘Latin mood’ of Segment D. Here, the quartet’s bass is in one tempo, the string orchestra, another. At this point, given the fortissimo in the orchestra, the quartet’s bass is initially inaudible. It emerges from the string texture then gradually joined by the rest of the quartet.

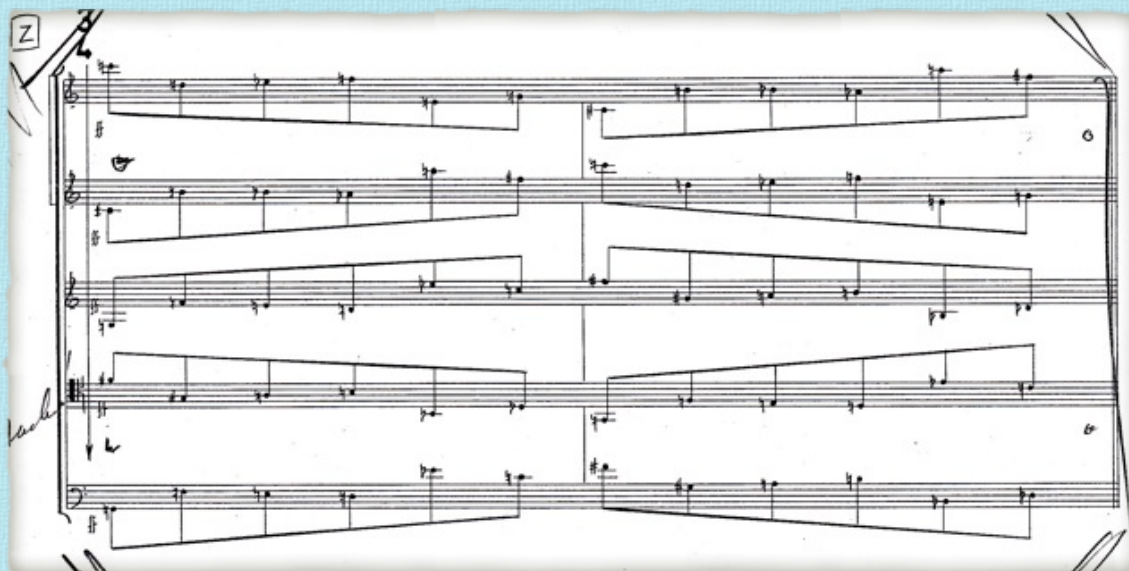
The image shows a handwritten musical score for a string orchestra and an improvising quartet. The score is for the bridge between Segments C and D. It features staves for Violin 1 (Vn 1), Violin 2 (Vn 2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (C.B.). The music is in 4/4 time, marked 'Sim' (Sìmplice). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'Poco a poco dim.' and 'Sim'. The bridge consists of two bars, with the first bar showing the quartet's bass part emerging from the string texture.

Segment D is *Primal Communication: version two*’s most buoyant. The bridge into it and the segment’s opening phrase constitute a significant moment in the “Work’s” overall structure, one that has been building psychological intensity since the very beginning. After the ethereal yet complex character of segment C, the D segment is grounded and palpable. It’s a celebration sketched in a quasi latin mood. Written in 4/4, the head, though certainly not four-square in its phrasing, creates a solid departure point and provides an environment ideally suited to an unfettered and joyous alto solo. Strictly speaking the head is not a-tonal. It is better described as quasi a-tonal implying a point of gravitation. Certainly, the bass part focusses on the dominant area of D major and its secondary dominant. And the alto solo’s focus is in that area, too, but not necessarily restricted to it. The head is repeated before the alto solo begins with the repeat staggering the melody in a canon-like dialogue between the two horns, further emphasizing the *quasi* a-tonal nature of the melody, especially clear when considered in relation to the bass.

The E Segment: After the alto solo another head is rendered, introduced by the very first phrase of the D segment’s head. The E segment melody is a unison between the two saxophones. The melody, however, is more angular than the D segment head and much more rhythmically complex. The E segment head is written so as to break down the 4/4 meter as it had been established and explored during the D segment, thus catapulting the tenor into an expressive outpouring that is both free and frantic. Compositionally the E segment is structured so as to break down the more traditional supportive relationship between ‘soloist’ and rhythm section, with the latter functioning more as a commentary and spur; a juxtaposition and counter-direction to the tenor’s increasing intensity. The E segment is designed so as to leave the tenor playing solo (as in singularly), with this totally open to the moment yet designed to escalate. Where the D segment is grounded and celebratory, the E segment is its opposite, digging down into the very depths of human fragility and through it, drawing out power – expressive while forging jagged, angular, straining lines of emotive force; an endeavor to overcome mountainous odds.

The F Segment: At the point of maximum intensity (seemingly) the string orchestra bursts forth, breaking through the tenor's powerful authority, introducing an interaction between soloist and orchestra that in no way can be predicted. The orchestral 'interjections' are written so as to achieve maximum diffusion and introduced in accord with the conductor's determination. Although segment F is almost entirely improvised its general shape is compositionally prescribed. There is, in this sense, a dialogue between compositional intent and real-time structuring by the soloist. While the inter-gestural string material is fully notated both its tempo and timing are entirely up to the conductor's choosing at the time of performance. Obviously, the conductor's chosen points of entry are influenced by the soloist and, in response to the orchestra's entry, the soloist is influenced by the orchestra. The passage from segment D through segment F describes a musico-emotive topography extreme in its realization – from a celebratory atmosphere to one that plumbs the depths of the human heart and mind; from one that, though with freedom to move in and out of, draws focus on a particular key center to one completely free of pitch predetermination. The pitch domain for the soloist in segment F is utterly free of compositional specificity. Meanwhile, the orchestra's notated pitch material bears no tonal gravitation whatsoever. To achieve this the pitch material is drawn from a particular six-note collection that not only maps into itself as a prime form but also into its inversion. Furthermore the same prime form, under transposition, generates its own complement and of course, the same characteristic under inversion applies, thus rendering the chromatic gamut.⁴⁹ Though there are several points of climax throughout *Primal Communication: version two* – indeed, each segment manifests a climax in one way or another – segment F is the composition's apotheosis and from which the "Work" gradually leads back to a state of quietude.

EXAMPLE 6.: *Primal Communication: version two* – for improvising quartet and string orchestra.
Score page 25. String "Interjection #1"



Segments F and G actually overlap. While the tenor winds down the intensity of an extended, escalated solo, the orchestra has entered the next segment. Thus, the tenor completes segment F in juxtaposition with segment G.

Segment G has two parts I'll refer to as G.1 and G.2. Though brief and bridge-like in its function, segment G is more than just a crossing. Considered in local terms, G.1, comprising as it does of very short figures connected to longer time values, functions to ease the tension created in the F segment. G.2 functions like an introduction to segment H, with a quasi ostinato figure spread across five voices – contrabasses a & b; cello; violas a & b – which eventually develop into juxtaposed lines, each with their own integrity, in the concluding segment of the "Work". But segment G also functions on a much broader background level, too. It reconnects us with the initial atmosphere of the "Work" while concurrently taking us towards its conclusion. This does not imply recapitulation though, at least not as commonly conceived. To be sure, segment G reestablishes a sense of modal center and sets up an ambience for the kind of melodic material we heard in segment A, there played by the quartet's bass. But in addition to these sorts of large-scale relationships (reminders and reconnections) segment G, significantly, establishes a form of voice exchange which is very dear and central to Collective Autonomy. And the G.2 quasi ostinato figure grounds this firmly.

Segment H is the “Work’s” ending. It takes us home. But the home is now on new, though by now not unfamiliar, ground. *Primal Communication: version two* is a narrative journey. Its end point is not its beginning. Though the sonic material of the H segment rings clear overtones of the A segment, the journey itself has transformed the terrain. We now have access to very different feelings. Where the A segment presented us with modal material in a form I’ll describe as a moving melodic contour in a single voice with static-like orchestral support, the H segment provides several juxtaposed voices, each tracing out its own contour, each with an integrity of its own. These juxtapositions lead inexorably to the concluding segment.

The I Segment, in a sense, turns tradition on its head, though not in any grandiose sort of way but rather, exultant. The melodic material assigned to the alto saxophone throughout segment H arrives at its destination logically enough yet the orchestra has not completed the process of melodic layering that began at segment G.2. Thus, the alto settles on static material, a repeated ‘B’ natural, while the orchestra continues to accrue melodic layers eventually culminating in seven juxtaposed lines.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: *Primal Communication: version two*, it is reasonable to observe, plays out its structural processes in a traditional format, using traditional principles to achieve its unity. The structural development it pursues and the sorts of contrasts that bear this out are essentially traditional and, to some extent, predictable. Though reasonable, these observations are superficial.

A significant question to ask at this point might run: Why, after years devoted to musical expression that was, in the view of some, ‘off the wall’, would I want to cast an exploration, the exploration that lay at the heart of *Primal Communication: version two*, in what would seem to be a conservative frame of reference? It’s a fair question. And one I think deserves clarification and a degree of justification.

Years would pass before I’d be in a position to gain what I consider to be a relatively balanced perspective on relationships between art, culture, and spirit. But already by 1988 I’d begun to see tradition and convention embraced by positive creative values. My essential character is, from my earliest memories, one of being a hands-on, learn-through-experience sort of person and more recently I’d discovered the advantages of rigorous study and research. I think it was because of the years spent ‘off the wall’ that I’d been able to discover at first hand and in practice, not only the limitations as well as the creative benefits of ‘off the wall’ pursuits, but also that a creative life devoted to *only* these was to miss out on comprehending a sizeable portion of the picture, at least the picture I envisaged before me. I’d begun to realize in a cursory sort of way that similar kinds of benefits lay in convention and tradition. But to discover these would require of me the same kind of time, focus, and energy output that I’d been devoting to ‘off the wall’ practices. There’d be no short cut nor quick entry. The four-year course of study as a composition major I’d just completed had, among many positive things, given me some research tools and opened my heart up to conventional questioning and not just shooting off in the opposite direction as if blind and deaf to anything other than my own ego-centered views. In a sense, then, I’d returned to the foot of the same mountain I’d been faced with when, in 1976, *Primal Communication* first arrived. This time, however, I was better equipped to deal with its calling.⁵⁰ Its calling was spiritual. And I needed to bear this in mind and remain absolutely true to its essence.

What we have with *Primal Communication: version two*, then, is a new game played out on a familiar field. It’s the field of play that constitutes the conventional aspect and not the game itself. What is actually missing from what *appears* to be a familiar game, is, just for example: (1. Goal orientation set into motion by streams of conventional idioms. These are at times, and at best, merely alluded to.⁵¹ (2. Many of the sorts of structural elements common to ‘jazz’ improvisation are all but missing as are, (3. the kinds of quasi-linguistic agreements made (often as non-verbalized foregone conclusions) between performers common to ‘free jazz’. With further consideration of compositional aspects, (4. the “Work” seems to function as if ‘through composed’. But this is not the case either. The improvisational segments disturb that theoretical notion, leaving matters of *form* open to the moment. Then, the overwhelming presence of horizontal procedures notwithstanding, there is, (5. the vast variation in compositional language employed, segment to segment, none of which evolves linguistically to any great extent. (6. The “Work” is not propositional and therefore doesn’t proceed in any direction that sets out to establish the inevitable: no attempt is made to align or bring together in a single segment, these variously posited linguistic construals. And (7., if propositional certitude were to be its aim, there is no facility established, at least in the conventional sense, for this process to unfold.⁵² Indeed, without putting too finer point on it, it is quite clear that a great deal of the ‘conventional’ is missing altogether. But significantly, it is not any one of these anyway that seeks to constitute background structural unity.

In fact, if *Primal Communication: version two* is like anything else at all, then it more resembles 'collage'; collage where the lines that separate each object are not clean-cut but rather blurred by the compositional material that bridges each segment, with the segments being mounted, as it were, on a traditional field that more resembles a blank canvas. Put differently, the usual lines of convention have been erased from the field, leaving its space blank so as to fully enable terms and conditions of reference and relationship that pertain, segment to segment and which, in toto, constitute the "Work" per se.

What is it, then, that unifies the single arc which constitutes the "Work's" structure? The creative spirit of each segment reaches through these brief blurrings to connect with that which follows. These connections are not just the compositional material and the segments as structure, either. Crucially, it's the expressed feelings as these are made manifest by the performers, connecting the segments in spirit, that is the ground of *Primal Communication: version two* and which constitute its unity. In this sense the "Work" is not only realized by the performers but, reciprocally, the performers are performed by the "Work". Years ago I coined the phrase, 'the "Work's" work', to refer to this formative play of exchange. It reflects the philosophy and spiritual implications of *Primal Communication* and the three lines of text that initiated it.

Seen in this light, then, *Primal Communication: version two* is not conventional but rather, through the juxtaposition of divergent forces in the one creative space, convention is addressed as allusion from a unique perspective yet on its own terrain just as tradition is an allusion rather than an adherence. Neither fully present nor fully absent convention and tradition hover and float round and through the "Work's" work and function in pretty much the same way as any other nuts-and-bolts structural element might. Space is there for them to be, but only as part of the story and not to define or to dominate it. While it was crucial to the project of Collective Autonomy that these divergent forces maintain their identity, the words in the title of the "Work" itself remain a critical index to its processes and to that which its processes reveal. The spiritual that lay at the heart of my work had clearly become the determining factor in what I did, how I did it, and its all-embracing purpose, to wit, the *why* I did it. And, as things turned out, I devoted the ensuing years to further clarifying and putting into order this difficult to negotiate, mountainous in fact, terrain. The visitation of *Primal Communication* had yet again provided the key to a supra-musical realm.

**Primal Communication
version two**

for improvising quartet
and
string orchestra

The original program
University of Tasmania
Tuesday, June 21, 1988

University of Tasmania
Lunchtime Concert - Tuesday 21st June 1988 - University Centre

"Primal Communication Version II" for improvising Quartet and String Orchestra -

Primal Communication is a work based on the following philosophy...
exposing ones primal moral elements to oneself (truth) -
develops a belief in ones spiritual perspective (faith) -
facilitating the trust in others necessary for communication.

Whilst the composition does not seek to transfer this philosophy in a literal sense it is aimed at setting up a musical environment whereby the three notions (truth, faith, and trust), become an integral component of communication through the act of music-making.

Today's performance is a premiere of the work in this format. It is scored for improvising quartet with string orchestra. While the orchestral component is fully notated, the quartet plays both notated and improvised parts.

This performance today is in fact the realization of a long-standing aspiration of the members of "Feeling to Thought" and Christian Wojtowicz, all of whom have independently envisaged the potential for the boundaries between music forms to be crossed. This event is the culmination of a two-week residency by "Feeling to Thought" and a dedicated effort by the String Orchestra at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music.
(Phil Treloar)

Members of "Feeling to Thought" are:
Phil Treloar (percussion)
Steve Elphick (acoustic bass)
Mark Simmonds (Tenor Saxophone)
David Addes (alto saxophone)

The University String Orchestra
will be conducted by Christian Wojtowicz.



FOOTNOTES

¹ Due to the extraordinary length of program notes and the detailed footnotes that accompany them, I've divided *Of Other Narratives* volume 3 into Part 1 and Part 2.

² ADORNO, Theodor W. *Critical Models : Interventions and Catchwords*. Trans. Henry W. Pickford. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. p. 174.

See also inter alia, Adorno's *The Culture Industry*. Ed. J. M. Bernstein; *Essays on Music* with Commentary and Notes by Richard Leppert; and also Lambert Zuidervaart's *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory - The Redemption of Illusion*

³ Miles Davis, *Kind Of Blue* (vinyl, Coronet KLP - 893); Max Roach, *Parisian Sketches* (vinyl, Mercury Records, MG-20760); and Charles Mingus, *Mingus Ah Um* (vinyl, Coronet KLL - 1658). Also Miles Davis, *Someday My Prince Will Come* (vinyl, Coronet KLL - 1706).

⁴ Alan Lee, vibraphone/leader; David Martin, pno.; Rodney Clark, CB.; and Phil Treloar, dms.

⁵ I never owned a copy of this particular Ayler album, though I did/do have, from the same session period – August 26 ~ 29, 1969 – *Albert Ayler : The Last Album* (vinyl, Impulse AS-9208). But, to be sure, profound impact came from, in particular, *Spiritual Unity* – recorded NYC, July 10, 1964 – (vinyl, E.S.P-Disk SEJL.933), and also *Albert Ayler in Greenwich Village* – recorded December 18, 1966 and February 26, 1967 – (vinyl, Impulse AS-9155).

⁶ Miles Davis, *In A Silent Way*, late 1968 and onward. My original vinyl copy has long gone missing but the vinyl disc was digitally remastered from the original analogue tapes and released on CD (Columbia CK - 40580). An excellent 3-CD set, *The Complete In A silent Way Sessions* has been released (Columbia C3K-65362).

⁷ Anton Webern, *The Complete Music For String Quartet*, Quartetto Italiano (vinyl, Philips 6500-105)

⁸ Erik Satie, *Parade, Geneviève de Brabant, Relâche*, Orchestre Symphonique De Radio-Télé Luxembourg, dir., Roland Douatte (vinyl, Musidisc RC-676). Also *Piano Music Of Erik Satie*, Jacques Fevrier & Georges Auric, piano (vinyl, Everest 3221).

⁹ Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Gesang der Jünglinge, Kontakte 1 & 2* (vinyl, Deutsche Grammophon 138-811)

¹⁰ John Cage, *Indeterminacy - New Aspects Of Form In Instrumental And Electronic Music*. (vinyl, Folkways Records, FT-3704). Also *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano*. Though my original vinyl copy has long gone missing there are, by now, several interpretations available on CD. Among these are: Steffen Schleiermacher, *John Cage - Complete Piano Music, Vol. 1* (MDG 613 0781-2); Philippe Vandr  (Mode 50, *The Complete John Cage Edition, Volume 14*); Joshua Pierce, *John Cage - Sonatas & Interludes for Prepared Piano* (Wergo 60156-50); and an excellent reproduction from a recording made at Town Hall, New York, May 15, 1958, *The 25-Year Retrospective Concert of the Music of John Cage*, published as a 3-CD set, with CD-2: Maro Ajemian, *Sonatas and Interludes* (Wergo: WER 6248-2). For those with a passion for Cage, this set is a historical 'must have'.

¹¹ *BUDDHIST CHANT - a recorded survey of actual temple rituals*. (vinyl, Lyrichord LLST 7118)

¹² Olivier Messiaen, *Messiaen: Quartet For The End Of Time*. Erich Gruenberg, violin; Gervase de Peyer, clarinet; William Pleeth, cello; Michel Beroff, piano. (vinyl, EMI, ASD-2470). Also *Messiaen – Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-J sus*. John Ogdon, piano (vinyl, Argo, ZRG 650-1 & 2)

¹³ *Sounds Of The Sitar*: Ravi Shankar, sitar, with Alla Rakha, tabla (vinyl, Festival SFL-932 040)

¹⁴ *Musica Elettronica Viva – The Sound Pool* (vinyl, BYG-Actuel 26 : 529326)

¹⁵ Cornelius Cardew (1936–1981) formed, in 1969, the 'Scratch Orchestra', dedicated to the performance of 'libertarian pieces'. Cardew was a composer we, Roger Frampton and I, discussed rather than listened to. I had no recordings at all and I don't recall whether Roger did or not. However, as a result of Roger having participated in a 'Scratch Orchestra' session while on tour in 1972 with David Ahern and Teletopa, this first-hand encounter gave rise to many possibilities we may not have otherwise considered. In my case anyway, I began to consider what it might mean to take a Marxist or, more specifically in Cardew's case, Maoist, stance towards the creative act in general and creative music-making in particular. As these ideas developed in my own thought they played no small part in the eventual emergence of Collective Autonomy as a philosophical ground for creative exchange.

¹⁶ Lukas Foss, *Baroque Variations*. John Cage, *Concerto For Prepared Piano & Orchestra*. Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. Lukas Foss. (vinyl, Nonesuch H-71202). This publication includes very informative sleeve-notes.

¹⁷ Arnold Schoenberg, *The Book Of The Hanging Gardens*, Op. 15. Franz Schubert, *Songs*. Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Gilbert Kalish, piano. (vinyl, Nonesuch H-71320).

¹⁸ Iannis Xenakis, *Anaktoria* (1969), *Morsima-Amorsima* (1956-62). (vinyl, Classic évolution 920217).

¹⁹ Albert Ayler. See note 5 above.

²⁰ Cecil Taylor. Inter alia: *Conquistador* (vinyl, Blue Note BST 84260); *Unit Structures* (vinyl, Blue Note BST 84237); *New York City R & B* (vinyl, CBS S-64723); *Cecil Taylor: Innovation* (vinyl, Freedom FLP 40106); *Spring Of Two Blue-J's* (Unit Core Records – Taylor's independent label).

²¹ John Coltrane. Inter alia: *Live At The Village Vanguard Again!* (vinyl, Impulse A-9124); *Expression* (vinyl, Impulse A-9120); *Interstellar Space* (vinyl, Impulse ASD-9277); *Meditations* (vinyl, Impulse A-9110); and *Sun Ship* (vinyl, Impulse AS-9211). It would be difficult to imagine any person engaged with music today (especially if from the cultural environs encompassing Euro-America and the West in general) who has not been profoundly touched by John Coltrane. His spirit reaches way beyond idioms, genres, styles, and/or categories, to touch the infinite source.

²² Anthony Braxton: the first Braxton I became familiar with was the *CIRCLE Paris-Concert* which, in addition to Braxton, included Chick Corea, piano; David Holland, acoustic bass; and Barry Altschul, drums. (vinyl, ECM 1018/19 ST). This recording made a huge impact on me, especially as its familiarity increased – best put succinctly in perhaps these terms: songs/tunes as frameworks to/for interpretive excursions into creative freedom. Braxton's playing, as with Altschul's, too, blew me away. I heard in them the dichotomy between discipline and freedom-of-expression brought into delicate balance, over and over again ...as continuum. Ultimately, it proved to be Braxton who held my focus. This is, in no way whatsoever, to denigrate the contributions from the other players. There is some truly astounding music played by all participants. But there seemed to me to be something in Braxton's approach that would take one further afield, and, in him, I felt this to be 'natural'. I think his later development bears this out, though here is not the place to elaborate. Suffice to say just now that for me, Braxton has stood as a beacon: confirmation that jazz, as a source, bears unlimited potential if and only if it is not fettered to a tradition but rather draws from it respectfully while unfolding its infinite multi-directional threads on a creative trajectory.

Also, *Anthony Braxton/Derek Bailey Duo* (vinyl, EMANEM 601).

²³ Alice Coltrane. Inter alia: *World Galaxy – Alice Coltrane With Strings* (vinyl, Impulse AS-9218). This, together with her other late-'60s early-'70s recordings, several of which have long gone missing (one loans with enthusiasm, never to see the bird return to its nest!), opened up for me, territory I was destined for (the spiritual) and would certainly have arrived at but perhaps not until sometime later than was the case. There is absolutely nothing in the music of Alice Coltrane that is not inspired and powered by spiritual forces. It's unquestionably replete with devotion. And this is as true regarding her time with John as it is after his passing. Other titles I had (now have on CD) included: *A Monastic Trio* (Impulse A-9156); *Universal Consciousness* (Impulse AS-9210); and *Journey In Satchidananda* (Impulse IMPD-228).

²⁴ Sun Ra, *The Heliocentric Worlds Of Sun Ra* vol. 1 (vinyl, ESP - Disk STL-5514); *The Heliocentric Worlds Of Sun Ra* vol. 2 (vinyl, ESP - Disk 1017); *Sun Ra « NUTS DE LA FONDATION MAEGHT »* volume 1 (Shandar 83-505).

²⁵ Pharoah Sanders. Inter alia: *Wisdom Through Music* (vinyl, Impulse AS-9233); *Jewels Of Thought* (vinyl, Impulse AS-9190); *Izipo Zam (My Gifts)* (vinyl, Strata-East SES-19733).

²⁶ The Jazz composer's Orchestra - Music Composed and Conducted by Michael Mantler (JCOA Records 1001/2); *Escalator Over The Hill - a chronotransduction by Carla Bley and Paul Haines* (JCOA Records).

²⁷ TRELOAR, Phil, written in Kangaroo Valley while camping there, 1976.

²⁸ The premiere performance of *Primal Communication* in 1976 was a studio rendering of the work and not, strictly speaking, a performance – as is often the case with studio recordings, it was recorded in sections and edited together later. The recording was made at the ABC studios in Forbes Street, King's Cross, Sydney, Australia, produced by Cleon Dennis, recorded by Jose Gabby – who also functioned as a production assistant – then subsequently broadcast. The performers included Bernie McGann, alto saxophone; Ned Sutherland, guitar; Ron Philpott, electric bass; Graham Ruckley, acoustic bass; Chuck Yates, electric piano; and myself, drums. A small string section – 2 violins, viola, and cello – was included as well as 2 extra percussion players, Laurie Thompson and Rick Miller. Composer/arranger, Bill Motzing, conducted where necessary and, prior to the session, was a great help to me with regard writing for the strings. Graham Ruckley and Ron Philpott played the melody (maintained in *version two*) at the opening of the "Work", with Ruckley playing arco acoustic bass and Philpott playing picked electric bass.

²⁹ In 1981 I established EXPANSIONS, the first of my performance initiatives designed specifically for rendering original compositions. I terminated the band early in 1982 so as to focus on the composition course I'd entered at New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, under the astute guidance of Dr. Graham Hair. EXPANSIONS performed *Primal Communication* in its second incarnation several times. The performers who contributed to EXPANSIONS were: Roger Frampton, piano and saxophones; Mike Bukovsky, trumpet; Dale Barlow, tenor saxophone and piccolo; Steve Elphick, acoustic bass; Tony Hobbs, saxophones; Lloyd Swanton, acoustic bass; Carlinhos Goncalves, percussion; and James Easton, electronics.

³⁰ YOUNG, Julian. *Friedrich Nietzsche - A Philosophical Biography*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 267. It's worth pointing out that at the time of his writing *Human, All-Too-Human* (completed early in 1878, (p. 241) and appeared in May of that year, (p. 273)), Nietzsche was making a turn from his commitment to a 'Dionysian' outlook—that which transcends concepts and is 'sublime', as it were (see the discussion at p. 128 and *passim*)—to an 'Apollonian' view—more down here on the ground; the more "world-affirming work of communal gathering" (p. 131)—and this, it would seem, in his relentless attempt to establish for himself and, through his work, a panorama of the human condition that works for the affirmation of life for all. Art, for Nietzsche, would play a crucial role in his working out of this relationship and the potential-bearing, balanced perspective embraced by it.

³¹ SALOMÉ, Lou. *Nietzsche*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988, p. 74. Julian Young, too, makes reference to this page, though citing a different passage.

³² CONZE, Edward, trans. *Buddhist Wisdom Books : containing The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra*. London: George Allen & Unwin, second ed. 1975.

NB: It's important to point out that although this book was in my possession I'd read little more than its cover and the Preface. This was not due to disinterest but rather an inability on my part to even begin to understand its content. Thus, it was not until 1984 that Buddhism would begin to enter my life in a more overt way. Nonetheless, it's reasonable to say that this book did plant a seed.

³³ HEIDEGGER, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Albert Hofstadter, trans. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1975.

NB: As with the observation made in the preceding note, so too with this book by Heidegger. However, it is true that I found more to relate to initially in *Poetry, Language, Thought* than I'd been able to manage with either *The Diamond Sutra* or *The Heart Sutra*. Heidegger discusses extensively in this text the notion of 'truth'; a concept that, through its introduction with the arrival of Primal Communication, had already entered my realm of thinking and which I'd taken on board as a serious element in the pursuit of creative endeavor.

³⁴ WOJTOWICZ, Amanda and HURST, David. *Feeling to Thought Residency*. PRESS, PRESS: Winter, 1988, p. 31.

³⁵ For these four citations, see WOJTOWICZ, Amanda and HURST, David. *Feeling to Thought Residency*. PRESS, PRESS: Winter, 1988, p. 31.

³⁶ Document held in my private collection.

³⁷ The date I stated in the liner-notes which accompany the CD, June 28, 1988, is not correct. I've mistakenly stated June 28 in various other publications as well. The correct date for this performance is June 21, 1988.

³⁸ These three citations are from documents held in my private collection.

³⁹ Arts Journal Blog - Jazz Beyond Jazz: Howard Mandel's Urban Improvisation, *Anthony Braxton's new music at Wesleyan & Roulette*. Posted October 9, 2011. Accessed February 26, 2012. <http://www.artsjournal.com/jazzbeyondjazz/2011/10/anthony-braxtons-new-music-at-wesleyan-roulette.html>

⁴⁰ One need only consider his *9 Compositions (IRIDIUM) 2006* (2007 Firchouse 12 Records: FH12-04-03-001 – 9 CDs + a DVD – www.firchouse12.com) to gain an inkling as to the enormous substance of his work, in this particular case, Braxton's Ghost Trance Music (GTM). This, in fact, barely touches the tip of the Braxton iceberg (or perhaps a tile on the roof of his hot house!). Braxton's GTM began life in 1995, inspired by the Ghost Dance Music of Native Americans, and fueled by his vision to create a "melody that doesn't end". For more on this see the 50 page booklet that accompanies this 9-CD set and from Braxton himself, the accompanying DVD from round the 03:00 minute point.

⁴¹ Reviewing a performance by EXPANSIONS, December 9, 1981, the critic, Eric Myers observed: "This concert confirms that Phil Treloar has struck out on a highly original course in Australian music. Though utilizing the language of American jazz, his music is increasingly an authentic expression of the experience of being Australian. If we are to have jazz music in this country which is the outgrowth of our own culture, we have to look to musicians like Treloar and his colleagues." See, *JAZZ – The Australian Contemporary Music Magazine*, February, 1982, Vol. 2 No. 7. Ed. Eric Myers. Publisher: Peter Brendle.

⁴² A key to the way in which Braxton views this potential to share without loss of integrity for either himself or the particular source he engages, is his concept of 'restructuralism'. I'll not attempt here even an overview of this fairly convoluted idea, but the word, 'continuum', is one he uses frequently in relation to it as is the word, 'cycle'. He says: "There's a big distinction between a given restructuralist cycle, or the information that manifests itself in that cycle, and how human beings decide to use it." He says that "master [stylists] are the ones who did not simply take without giving, who didn't just play Charlie Parker's language and do nothing to it." This seeming oversimplification bears out an underlying component crucial to Braxton's thinking: that vitality, in any given continuum, derives from input and that this input is a challenge to the cultural order and serves as it's motivating force. That is to say, it subverts reification inherent to the status quo mind-set. See for these citations, Graham LOCK, *Forces In Motion: The Music and Thoughts of Anthony Braxton*. Da Capo Press, p. 163.

⁴³ I don't consider Primal Communication to be a particularly complex form of this structuring. The re-write of 1988, following in the footsteps of the 1976 inception, was made at a time when the development of these structural ideas and the sorts of relationships they bore vis-à-vis Collective Autonomy was still in its early stages and thus, to some extent, I was still exploring the terrain in more general terms. The 1988 incarnation was to greatly clarify this terrain, opening it up to a wider range of potential and deeper penetration into cultural implications as these might be expressed in the pursuit of creative exchanges.

⁴⁴ Each of these I'll refer to in the analysis that follows as A ~ I and the subdivision of segments, where applicable, as A.1., A.2., and so on.

⁴⁵ As this bridging material is, for the most part, no more than just that – bearing, for example, no long-range structural implications – it will be of no benefit with regard the present analysis to expand on this any further.

⁴⁶ The rendering of *Primal Communication: version two – for improvising quartet and string orchestra* as heard on the CD, *Of Other Narratives* volume 3, is from the performance recorded by the ABC at University Centre, University of Tasmania, Tuesday, June 21, 1988. The members of Feeling to Thought (the improvising quartet) are: David Ades, alto saxophone; Mark Simmonds, tenor saxophone; Steve Elphick, acoustic bass; and myself, Phil Treloar, drum-set. The string orchestra, comprising entirely of students enrolled at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, numbered in the vicinity of twenty players, conducted and directed by Christian Wojtowicz. The Feeling to Thought residency included rigorous rehearsal time during which the members of Feeling to Thought interacted with the students extensively. This involved, together with Wojtowicz, careful attention in 'section rehearsals' to the performance of the orchestral parts which are anything but easy to render. Christian Wojtowicz's exceptional musicianship and extensive experience as a cellist in repertoire and contemporary music was the key to solving most performance difficulties. His conducting and direction, as can be witnessed from the recording, made for an exciting performance, accurately rendered, with boundless heart, and clear understanding regarding the intersection that juxtaposes notated composition and improvisation.

⁴⁷ Forthwith, reference to the String Orchestra will be denoted as 'the orchestra' while reference to the improvising quartet will be denoted as 'the quartet'.

⁴⁸ Examples 3 through 6 have been taken from the conductor's score used in the performance at the University of Tasmania on Tuesday, June 21, 1988.

⁴⁹ The hexachord under discussion is a unique instance. I'll not expand too much here. However, a close look at the top four lines **in the first bar only** of Ex. 6 will reveal the chromatic gamut in four construals: 1., the top two lines, 2., the third and fourth lines, 3., the four lines, quavers 1 ~ 3, and finally, 4., the four lines, quavers 4 ~ 6.

⁵⁰ By 'better equipped' I mean more aware, with higher, more developed consciousness. And due to the traditional course of composition study and my own philosophical research, I was better prepared intellectually. In short, I had acquired some vision and a perspective of greater balance between the intellectual and the intuitive.

⁵¹ For instance: the dominant cycle material in segment B, the secondary dominant implications of the bass pattern in segment D, or the unique-characteristic hexachord as mentioned in the notes on segment F.

⁵² For example: there is no first and second subject to establish a dialectic, as would be the case with a conventional sonata form – tonal, a-tonal, or otherwise – and where the discussion would give rise to some kind of inexorable conclusion.