

Philip Corner

So, are these friends of yours who made this  
AMERICA A PROPHECY ?

Yes, both of them are poets. They are good friends of mine, and one of them has been very much involved with the relationship between poetry and music.

JEROME ROTHENBERG

Ya, ya. We've played music with them and improvised. Ya, that whole business of ah AMERICA interested me about the idea between whether there is a separation between Europe and America, and.....

Ya, um that's the main problem. I just want to find out if it's harder to develop alternatives in Europe, and why it, it harder, and what makes the difference.

(Taking a deep breath.)

Like, like what I said just, ah the thing with the alternative, that it's very hard to get alternatives done

(Telephone ringing.)

in in Europe, because ah (ring) it's a very rigid system of historical-bounded institutions. (ring)

Ah hum.

And here the alternatives (ring) lay in the street. Is this true, or is this just an imaginary idea?

Well, it's true. But that doesn't mean that um ah there are no problems involved with that. In one sense I think that ah that creates as many problems as the alternative, the problem of freedom of choice and of meaning and of value and of possibility of success and ah with all the thing going around it's very easy to see it as garbage. So that it's very difficult to see things as valuable or to make things valuable or to present things as valuable.

Ya.

Just because of that. And I think that's a part of the problem. I tell ya, I was um very impressed with something that was very different, ah when I was in Europe this summer. And that is a certain sense of historical continuity, which..... I don't feel that we have here, which means that ..... (Yea, perhaps this is only a relatively superficial thing that I've seen, but it seems to have some kind of truth from what I can see of the European situation.)..... and that is that there may be a very difficult battle to fight, both for the individual just on the conceptual or creative plain, and then on the ah the cultural plain to get something new accepted.

Yes.

But there is a terrain in which that battle is fought. And that means that like people are interested in attacking it. And then you have to. You fight your battle, and people are interested in it, whereas here it may look like it's very easy and you do anything you want. But nobody pays any attention to it. And it goes up in smoke.

And I think that even with somebody...let's say like CAGE or you know or FELDMAN or BROWN or any of those people of that time who were fighting real battles and even had like a certain amount: of like notoriety and bad critical thing ..... I mean there was a crucial issue of like what your civilization was about. And HERE, it was just like, you know, you know, some nut doing some crazy thing like lots of nuts do a lot of crazy things. And because he hired a hall on Fifty-Seventh Street like you had to pay attention to it.

So the critic, you know, it was his job to go and write something about it. So he writes something bad. But there was no sense of like there was anything crucial, that this was a challenge to the civilization, that it had to be taken seriously as an issue. And so that means like in a way when the battle is won, like in Europe, then that becomes like part of the institution. Now maybe there's something bad with that too.....you know, like now STOCKHAUSEN is the latest BRAHMS, but.....

Yes, that's actually the problem now, that with eh what we call "new music" now is getting too institutionalized.....

Right.

so that the younger generation has to fight again

Right

against something what is called "new music". But HERE, what I think, here you have to, you CAN stamp out something from the earth with your own feet..... and, you know, you just become your own institution, but eh....

OOokay ah, in all, I'm hip to that. I spent my whole life doing that.

Doesn't it give more feeling of responsibility for what you're doing?

I don't know. That, I don't know..... Well, lots of different kinds of people are doing different kinds of things. And eh, some people are getting, you know, more or less support for different kinds of things. I think that the case of CAGE is quite interesting, because ah, on one hand he's become like extremely influential, extremely successful in a certain sense. But on the other hand, that's run parallel to the institutions. And a lot of people who haven't been nearly as influential or innovative or anything less have created a kind of American music, which has gotten more foundation grants, more eh money to support new orchestras and new groups performing it, and, and, and gotten trends from the universities to a much greater extent.

So there's like these two parallel streams. I know that to express a preference of one for the other on my part would simply be too, eh, be prejudiced. And I guess like eventually we'll have to see what survives and what doesn't. But I think the possibilities of doing a lot of different things exist here. And we've spent a lot of time doing things downtown, doing stuff like in somebody's loft, doing stuff for free. And maybe those possibilities don't exist so much in Europe..... that like here's just so much space, and you can just set out an announcement and put on a concert somewhere,

Ya, ya.

which I think is terrific. On the other hand, the um, not only the chance but the likelihood that a lot of this activity will attract very few people. Ah....of the very few people it attracts, none of them will be people like who have any access to media or anything like that..... if that concerns you at all, that you do it like for free. And the generosity of all the people like doing your stuff, which also may or may not make a difference. But it can be a very important factor in terms of working with people. And then that you work like absolutely disappears. You do it somewhere. And then you've done it. And that's ABSOLUTELY IT! You know.

Ya.

Now, that can be a very difficult thing to deal with, because if you say, "That's gonna be the sum total of my life. That is, there's no radiance from it, and it's just like um treating something basically for a party or for a small group of people, and there's no chance of influencing a .... larger thing, um .... That attitude can become a very negative one. Now, I think there are like two ways of dealing with it which I've tried to cultivate. And one is the knowledge that in fact the radiation from these kinds of things is much greater than you think. And' this is beginning to happen to me now, ah ten, fifteen years after the event, like a book will come out. Or somebody will form an archive or something about some kind of work which we did ten or fifteen years ago, which nobody ever knew about and was performed once for fifty people.

*Just appears above the ground.*

And then suddenly surfaces now as an historical event.

*Because it has possibly still the aura of the self-made, of the artist as the doer, not only the man sitting in his room and conceptual art, but the man who is connecting it with the people too.*

Right.

*This identity is functioning I think in America, but it's not functioning very good in Europe.*

It's not?

*Not very good. There in Cologne is one studio which is working very hard always on the zero point of income, you know on the zero point of existence, the FEEDBACK STUDIO. It's a real split between what you do. And then you have to give it to the institution and wait. And if you really wait, then you can lose, one moment you lose the responsibility for that what you've done. You know what I mean.*

Oh, absolutely, oh absolutely.

*The direct feedback is lacking.*

But I've made that choice for myself, and.....

*And this influences the pieces. It influences the pieces. The pieces get really more fixed, more rigid, more structured, because this feedback is not well organized.*

Yeah, but you know, I think that one has to fight certain battles in one's own soul. And I think that um.... I mean it may be true that there are certain terrains which are like more conducive for certain kinds of things, and certain kinds of things like MIGHT be a little bit more easy in New York or America or something like that. But I think that um there are a lot of people who have not been able to transcend the same kinds of difficulties in America. Ah, and I think that there are certain kinds of creative decisions that one has to make for oneself. And I think that that can't be too different, like no matter where you are.

Ah, there was the second thing I was gonna say, because in a way this business of doing something in a loft.... I mean I know that this exists in Europe too. It could have been MARY BAUERMEISTER'S loft, you know, or something kind of underground. And then eventually it surfaces, and it becomes historical and all that. And that's happened in Europe. That's happened with SATIE. That's happened with even the SCHOENBERG society was private "Aufuehrung" you know and that kind of thing.

Ah, but that in a way is like playing the same game. That is if you say, "This thing that I'm doing is gonna become historically significant and surface in ten or twenty years from now.. And then I'll be written up in books, and this and that and the other thing." Ah, I mean that can be gratifying when it happens, because it means you're not completely isolated and alone. And the past is still alive. But if you're really kind of basically preoccupied with that as a means of doing your work, then I think that's the same European trip.

Ya, that's true.

And we've certainly had a whole history of that kind of thing too. The twenties is full of embittered American composers who had unplayed scores piled up on their pianos. And you know CAGE tells a story about for instance one of the men he studied with. And he made a decision to make music. And that's a decision that I've made for myself too. That is, you can go another direction and say the important thing is the making of the music. The really important thing is the integrity of your activity. And that therefore you cultivate a kind of music which you CAN do at any time, and you try to make the best of whatever scene you're in.

hm

And I think then, that whether it's CAGE in Seattle or whether it's.... I mean New York happens to be a very good place....But I've found myself at various times in San Antonio, Texas, or other places like that, and there's always the possibility of doing SOMETHING. And I think that if you're really concerned with your integrity, then the success of it becomes less and less important. And the something you may do may get to the point in which it's making music like a live and real for just you.

And we have marvelous examples of that. I mean, THOREAU of course is one. And I think that that's very very important. And I really don't see that that's any different anywhere in the world. I mean, you can be in the middle of a cultural desert. And if you can say, "It's important for me to make it in my life," then you can kind of cultivate something in which you find a form which is appropriate for making it

real in your own life. And that, as I say, may be something which only exists for you, but has the possibility of existing for other people. And then, when the time is conducive, it does! And there's usually at least one other person that you can relate to.

*Just means to get rid of the attachment of having success or having the feedback,*

Right!

*and just losing the motivation of that what you're doing FOR this and this, ya.*

And I'm not trying to MINIMIZE the difficulties.

*And that's something like an ideal state. I mean there are very few people who really live this consequently.*

Yeah, but, oh I understand that.

*Oh, THOREAU, okay, THOREAU is a fantastic example for it.*

I'm not trying to minimize the difficulty of it, because I'm still living the difficulty. I'm by no means presenting myself as a thoroughly enlightened person, but I think that you can define the nature of your operation, define the nature of your work and your values by such an ideal. For instance, I ask myself, "Do I want to...Would I rather be successful, or not need success at all?" And for ME, it would, I'd rather have the second possibility. In other words, do I want to be famous, get a lot of grants, be played by major symphony orchestras, ah be the member of prestigious institutions and bla bla bla? OR do I want to be able, if necessary, to live music twenty-four hours a day, completely ALONE, by myself if necessary ?

And as far as I'm concerned, there's no question that that's the valuable choice.

*Ya. Ya. So just to ask you straight, how are you doing that?*

Alright. Um, I've um (sniff)..... well, I feel that I've been coming closer and closer and closer to doing that. And it comes out of the kind of activity that you were talking about, that is the downtown lofts, the kind of situations where you did something for a small group, and where you sent out whatever announcements there were, and you did these concerts, and that was the beginning of a kind of activity in which you said to yourself, "It's important to do art, create art, make art and offer art apart from whatever success that's gonna come from it." Now, at the beginning, let's say the fifties and sixties, there was a possibility of thinking of it as important in a historical sense, because it seemed new.

hm

I now regard that as a kind of seduction. That is, because it, at least that particular form of activity, could lead to a kind of disillusion. And now we still have the perpetuation of the same kind of thing that something else is new. So people are still saying, "Well, my new thing is better than your old thing," or something. And then you run around chasing after the latest new thing. Well, as far as I'm concerned, that's all nonsense. And what I realize now is that my attitude and that of a lot of other people at

the time were wrong.

And I think that people who have a similar attitude now in relationship to what is quote "new" are wrong. And that is that the phenomenon of "newness" or potential historical importance or attacking the old and all that was of no importance whatsoever. The only thing that was of importance was that you had something that you believed in, and you DID it.

Okay, so I think that since that time in my case, there's been a gradual attempt at purifying my own mind and my own attitudes of certain kinds of illusions, like one of which was the fact that I was creating something that was historically important, because it was new and revolutionary and bla-bla-bla and bla-bla-bla. And, in a way that's the way Zen helped me. It obviously helped CAGE in a completely different way. But to me the important thing was that attitude that you just cultivated things for what they were and you did them with a complete, full kind of integrity.

hm hm

And that led me into a kind of work and a kind of research which I think has kind of led me up to the present, which I'm still continuing, and paradoxically enough has been the basis of whatever success I've had. Yeah, and I've had a little bit.

Ya.

And I find that that's very, very strange.... that all of my quote "success", that is people becoming interested in me, even in this particular cast that you're here because CAGE sent me, sent you, ah CAGE'S interest in me comes one hundred percent out of the things that I did, out of this state of mind which was basically renouncing the need of having that kind of success. Because in the fifties, when I was just DYING to have DAVID TUDOR play a piece of mine, you know, and be part of that GROUP.... because at that time there WEREN'T a lot of people doing that kind of thing. You know, I came back from Europe saying, "I'm all alone in the world because I can't relate to STOCKHAUSEN. Can I relate to CAGE?" Yes I could, and I gradually got to be friends with him and everything else, and I was doing that kind of music, and there were very few of us, and I was very turned on by it. And I think I really did it because I really believed in it. And that was the only kind of music I could write. But I was like DESPERATE to you know be part of that group and be performed, and I WASN'T, you know.

hm

And the first thing that that did was make me desire to cultivate myself as a performer, that is not be at the mercy of finding willing pianists, violinists and everything else. So that I started studying the piano again, which I've continued to do, in order to play other people's music and play my own music and be able to give concerts wherever I was, and not be at the mercy of people who would or would not be willing to do that. Now, that me in a very, very long gradual path which ended up with working with dancers, working with theatre people, being involved with that ah so-called FLUXUS MOVEMENT, being involved in all sorts of things that had to do with making art in all of these kinds of circumstances where you didn't have the orthodox means.

So that in addition to my playing the piano, where I could play classics and play my own works which demanded a lot of expertise musicianship, I started cultivating a kind of activity which didn't need that. Take an instrument like the trombone, which I don't play so well. I would do things on it which I could do, and then cultivate certain kinds of things, and eventually do things with noises, with all that and work with people who were not musicians and do things with breathing and with activities, and the whole, you know, thing associated with happenings.

Now, where that's finally led me has been a kind of research in ELIMINATION. And that comes out of a kind of preoccupation with meditation. And I did get very much involved in meditation. And the first thing that I realized is that that puts you in a state of mind where nothing was necessary....which meant that you were absolutely free.

And because if you could consider silence an activity, as ? Wholly fulfilling, then you would no longer be in a state of compulsion in relationship to all the things that you might do as a musician, which does not mean a renunciation of anything, including getting grants, ha ha hiring professional musicians,

ya ya, ha, ya ya

going on tour and all that. But it means that you don't need them. And you can make them as an extension of a certain kind of center, eh when the opportunity is conducive to doing a large scale orchestra piece.

*It's just a shifting of the motivation.*

Right, and it seemed to me that one could understand let's say the significance of CAGE'S SILENCE piece in a very important way. Because in one sense it makes it more important, and in another sense it makes it less important. Because it really from a world perspective is not a very, is no big thing. What, four and a half minutes of silence? I mean people have experienced days of silence, but not in our culture, not in the concert hall. Or they've thought of it, in relationship to like finding God or some other kind of thing that was like encrusted around the experience to make it seem worthwhile. But in effect it's simply requesting a meditative state of mind turned towards the idea of sound. That's basically what it is.

Now, once you've realized that, you realize that you can work off that, and I think that's why other people have written other silent pieces. I've done several myself. And I don't think that there's any end to it. You see, I think that there's so much in a world so rich, that even within a small area like that everybody could write a silent piece. And they wouldn't duplicate each other.

Everyone could have a different fix on it, a different state of mind, a different attitude, a different mentality.

ya ya

And that's true of different things, too. You start from silence, and you start well like, "What else can I do?" And I felt....

*like changing the nature of bound from silence.*

yeah, or no, going from silence and now making sound come out of that same, that same attitude. So, I've been going through a process, which eh has been exploring the various things that one can do. So that one aspect of that was involved in the whole aspect with theater groups and happenings and things like that, because that's a kind of an uninhibited, unrational, undistilled type of dealing with the total flux, complexity, movement and richness of the world as an organic whole.

And it can lead to being very wild, to being very noisy, dealing with a very, great kind of complexity. And I think that's the other side of the CAGE scene, that's the other side of the chants, where it just becomes improvisation, but not improvisation within a kind of boundary, like a tune, like a series of harmonic changes, a Raga, a Tala, anything like that. It's like improvisation in the total complexity and flux of nature as a raw thing.

Ya.

That's ONE aspect of it. The OTHER aspect of it is a kind of process of distillation which approaches meditation by concentration and by simplification. So I've asked myself, and of course I've had you know leads from other cultural sources, like MANTRA is a kind of simplification of melody into an eternally competitive thing in which you no longer need to be titillated by variety. So that's One aspect. You recognize that in ah some so-called so-called "primitive" cultures and even to a certain extent in our contemporary popular culture, you have the same phenomenon used in relationship to rhythm. That is the intoxicating or even transcendent mentality that's generated by repetition of a particular kind of in this case PHYSICAL stimulation.

Ya.

And so I've taken that as a cue and tried to see how far you can go with that. And I've done that in the three areas of melody, harmony and rhythm. And I've got a whole series of pieces that we've been doing which are representing progressive stages of distillation of those particular elements. Now, the melody one is called "OM", which is borrowed from the Hindu thing. But I think that that's ah, it far transcends the particular doctrine or significance it has there. There's a universal thing in the fact that "OM" represents not only the full vowel spectrum, but it represents a progression from the back of the throat, through the mouth, and of the ultimate closing of the lips at the front. So it's really like a metaphor for the whole process of producing sound.

So I've been doing a lot of pieces which have single sustaining tones, and some of them are very very quiet and very distilled. Some of them admit participation, and some of them admit all sorts of irregularities or other things to enter in. And again I've found that like there are SO many different things that you can do just with the idea of a single sustained tone. I think ANYBODY could do that, and the whole question of doing something new or doing something original appears ridiculous.

It's in a way like if, if the culture is writing sonatas, I mean everybody in the culture is supposed to write a sonata. If the culture is doing fugues, writing or improvising fugues, then everybody in the culture is supposed to write a fugue. And nobody says, "Oh, you haven't done something original," because you're still writing fugues. And this is much more universal. I mean this is something that could be the basis of an eternal universal culture, that is the possibility of building things on the fundamental building blocks of sound, in this case melody. So WHY SHOULDN'T EVERYBODY DO A.....

*Ya, ya, ya, ya, that's okay, if, you go deep enough in, if you try to see similarities in different cultures, put them together, but only under the condition that you go deep enough, and not eh just scratch about the surface....*

Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, I don't mean borrowing an Indian mode or anything like that.

*Ya, there's certain DANGER in this aspect, that I see in "world music", of some people, that just put different styles together only on the surface aspects. It's very heavy to go deep enough to put it on the universal stage.*

Oh, I understand that, I understand that, but.....

*How do you realize it then?*

WELL, I'm not making any claims for what I'm doing. But I don't see that that problem is any different from the problem of relating to one's own past. I mean, how different is that from an academic state of mind?

HM

Basically it's simply academism transposed from history into geography. And if you approach it from a superficial point of view, that's what you're gonna get. It's something superficial. And I don't see that it's any easier or more or less dangerous to approach an imitation of any other culture than it is to approach an imitation of BACH or BEETHOVEN or anything or SCHOENBERG or anything from

the past... or anything that seems very avant-garde like right now, like whether it's STOCKHAUSEN, CAGE, or anybody else. If you approach it from that point of view, that you're simply conforming to a certain kind of a type, and you're approaching it very superficially, then you're gonna get the same kind of result. And I don't see that ah there's any greater DANGER in getting your inspiration from any place so-called exotic or far away than from getting it from right under your nose. That depends on YOU!

*Ya, I think.... Right, it depends on us, on ME. Eh what's difficult is to find the right motivation for it, I think the tight motivation eh which brings you close enough to the universal! stage of these different cultural events.*

I mean, I think I've gotten BEYOND that, because I think that this process first of all in a way is a very western process. It's a very intellectual-analytical process, which means I can, you know, bring it into my tradition. And

that means that by going through that process we've found on the way that certain things surface which occurred and were perfected and studied in various other parts of the world. Like the drone, or the pulse, you know.

Now for instance let's say in terms of rhythm, that kind of simplification ah leads you to the idea of a steady undifferentiated pulse. Now, that doesn't mean that every time that you're doing a steady pulse you're imitating American Indian music, or that you can't use it because you're ripping off American Indian music. It simply means that on the way to that discovery you have recognized that in fact some other culture had made that discovery.

*Ya, ya.*

And the same thing is true of the sustained tone. It's like the interest of the drone. You say, "Look, western music is so much involved in intellectual constructions and compressed time and dynamic changes and everything else. It doesn't have the patience to listen to something that's undifferentiated and unchanging.

Now you don't need oriental culture to do that. SATIE for instance had made the same discovery. So you recognize that and say, "Well, then, instead of expressing total unity by a series of chords which are always moving out of it, I want to express it by a ubiquitous presence....which means that that's tonal, which means that you've got a drone....which means that let's say you extend a perfectly western concept like the pedalpoint throughout the whole duration of a piece. And then you say, "Well, my God, there's a lot of music all over the world that's done that." It doesn't mean that you're ripping it off.

*Ya.*

And then you say, "Well, that's so interesting, that the harmony and the melody and everything else on top of it is disturbing." So, you gradually reduce it, and you gradually reduce it, and finally get to the point where you say that that single sustained tone without anything else going on, maybe with texture variations, maybe with color variations, maybe not even THAT.

You know, I don't know how far you can GO! Whether you can like just turn on the hum of a.... I mean, I haven't been able to get quite that far. But that's part of the research. And then you say, "My God, like that's not new either. There are yogis chanting, like they've known about that for thousands of years. And it doesn't mean that you're really like imitating them, but rather being inspired.

*Ya, so you see a new motivation basically as an artist to distillate ah layout material towards a quintessence of universal values.*

Right! I feel I'm doing a kind of a research, but a research which isn't certified by instruments, but is certified by one's consciousness. That's all I feel I'm doing.

*Ya, ya, so there is a subtraction of the ideas?*

What led me to this was to find something from which I could move into all sorts of various areas. That is, I felt like, as I think you seem

to be indicating, a lot of people in Europe are, ha, a lot of people in America too, hung up by restrictions which are not only in the external institutions; they're in your own mind! Because you've been very much influenced by all sorts of things. We try to be revolutionary, and we revolt within the framework of our own understanding. The very fact that we, no matter what we do, no matter how far out, or influenced by other ideas, if it's an original composition, it's a western thing. If it uses notation, and is transmitted by, even if it's free notation and admits all sorts of freedom and so, it's a western thing. I mean, there are like lots of limitations. If it, for instance, doesn't use the total spectrum and it uses like fixed pitches, even with, even with crazy tuning systems and so, it's a western thing.

So there are lots of things where people have tried to get out of the western mode and be revolutionary, where in fact they've only succeeded in being more western. And I think for instance the twelve tone thing is such a characteristic example of it. I mean it's supposed to have been such a revolutionary break with the past and the tonal system and everything. It accepted the tuning, they accepted all the intellectual premises.

And, and then you look at something like CAGE, who I would say has gone like as far in terms of breaking away from that as one possibly could within those premises. And, and I look at it, and I say, "It's still within the same premises." I mean, I notice for instance that CAGE is classified among classical music in our library, as opposed to rock, jazz or ethnic music....which I find as kind of interesting, and in one sense quite unjust, but in another sense quite just. Because even though he succeeded in transcending practically all of the MATERIAL basis for western music, in the tuning system and in all the modes of the sounds and in using noise and this, that and the other thing, he has not succeeded in transcending the intellectual or philosophical premise. And so that even though he's using chance, and even though 'he's trying to like make things not be based on taste, the whole thing basically IS based on a preconceived intellectual idea, which is a western premise.

As soon as you see that, you realize that any jazz musician, any pop musician, even if they're doing things that seem like very western and simple, you know they're using C-major scale and they're using I, IV, V chords, that the premise on which they're operating is so completely different.

*Could you describe it?*

WELL, it has something to do with, I think the relationship of the creator to the music, which has something to do with improvisation, which has something to do with the attitude that this is not first of all a fixed entity which is preserved in a score or so as an idea, certainly not one that can be claimed by any particular individual. That is, it's much more in a sense of like being in a process in time in which at each given moment an individual and ALL the individuals involved in it are making contributions which are based to a very large extent upon their own spontaneous awareness of what's going on. Now, I think that that's very very different as a premise.

*So, ya, I would like to get into this how to*

*balance then the western thought, how to replace and with which attitudes?*

WELL, I think, I think there's only one way to do that. And that is to not be afraid of this being influenced by Oriental cultures or so, or popular culture, and to enter into them as fully as possible. And in order to avoid the kind of attitude that we've also had in which you studied these other cultures from a western point of view, to challenge as much as possible the western frameworks. Which means, you know, basically that you have to be an avant-gardist also and basically revolutionary in spirit.

But you also have to be continually humble in terms of the limitations of your understanding, and knowing that your understanding of any of these cultures and the understanding of your OWN culture is very, very limited, is is is eh very,very bounded, and that it,in addition to any insights that you think that you might have, that you have to be open to wherever insights come from other people who are practicing these things or have a different slant on things. And THEN one can START trying. In other words, at least you accept as an ideal that you as an individual start from a zero point, which is NOT a representative of this civilization or of this culture or of anything else. And I think that's what you in a way mean by being an "Anfaenger".

And THEN you may recognize that in fact you can't escape being a German; you can't escape being an American; you can't escape being an Indian in 1975. But that you don't have to. And that's like not being bounded by that as a given, and certainly not you know standing up and saying, "I represent this great culture, and I'm a living manifestation of the bla-bla-bla."

You strive to start from where you are and open your mind as openly as possible to all sorts of various things, which means that you have to start listening and talking to people who listen too and cultivate an understanding of all sorts of things which you may think are beneath you. And that may be either these Oriental cultures or anything else or low-down popular AM radio kind of thing.

I think that one has to give some amount of time to all of these things and try. That doesn't mean that you will or you should be able to accept equally without evaluation everything you hear. But it means that you break down your own prejudices and preconceived limitations which are manifestations of your class position, your social position, your previous education. And you try to open your mind to that. Then when you do that, if possible....and this may be much easier in America to do this....

ya.

PLAY JAZZ. Hang out with jazz musicians. Play pop music. And people are doing this. And then try to integrate that with your other thing, and not try to say, "Oh, I'm reacting against Princeton University." Or, "I'm reacting against STOCKHAUSEN, and NOW I'm doing workers' music."

Or, "Now I'm doing....., and that's the only "in" thing. Instead of that, try to integrate all these various attitudes that come from various aspects of your work. And instead of what used to happen, somebody would like spend part of his time playing jazz in the bars and part of his time writing REAL MUSIC.

*GERTRUDE STEIN said, "People are the way their land and air is." And she was patriotic. What she meant is actually if you want to get rid of stylistic things that have become really rigid, then you have to think about where you are grounded, on which earth you are standing. Isn't that somehow contradictory to the aspect of whole world music?*

I don't think so. That's why I'm gonna say, I think that it could be misinterpreted as that. See, I don't mean that we can pretend that we're completely ubiquitous, that we're really "Anfaenger", that we start from nowhere, and

that our consciousnesses are unlimited. I don't believe that. And I think that on some level it will come back to you that you are in effect an American in 1975, or a German in... And some of those things are are not only inescapable but important.

And I've written some very militant things about American culture and the necessity of liberating it from Europe and this, that and the other thing. But what that means is that you're not in a system in which that becomes some kind of a compulsion. And that becomes some kind of a boundary, certainly not one in which you're in a province.



a difficult solo

now thinking back. from 1964.  
forward. 1975. when i first made  
this to any other next performance.

was played by trombone  
could be any thing.

what one must do for this is to set  
out a succession of "musical objects"  
in a way that nothing ever repeats.

(should have,  
probably, a score made up.  
Would, certainly, have been easier for me.)

must move then towards refinements — as the  
number of possible newnesses swiftly shrinks.

Example. a length and  
a pitch and  
a register and an intensity and  
a quality of sound and  
an evolution (maybe,  
of any of these)

followed by

This repeated <sup>the advantage</sup> of contrasting all  
would, necessarily, close the range of perceived  
contrasts towards a minimum ..... which

can be done but shouldn't so systematically  
because long before the end of that set of poss-  
ibilities comes the contrasting made possible by  
separating each factor and making of their  
combination the newness. Gradually this refines  
down ever more nicely — to this exact combination  
of exactly that with exactly that other thing, where  
every fine distinction of new exactness counts.

(see why it's so easy to lose track, go-  
ing just by improvised memory, after a while.)

The silences between them are, may become, one of the  
elements of consider-  
ed contrast. Or  
There is, obviously, no limit to it.

The lack of them,  
their placement so as  
to make groups of how  
many sounds together.  
A good means to make  
apparent, visible, understood,  
some part of the mental  
aspect of this — not detail so much  
as the idea..... are ranges of possibilities  
with forms such as their evolution:

A. 123 Goner

WOWUNUPO , (Grizzly Bear Hiding Place)

words taken from "Ishi, Biography of the Last Wild American Indian", written down by

nei thiz the s waying + "lay" <sup>not</sup> nd br  
not the s-o-f-t ping f bow. string  
not any other sound or move ment

In a darkened space, a quiet one, say these words with a sense  
(not too) of the music in them. Leave a time for their images  
to perform in the hearers' minds.

Philip Corner

Peace; Be Still. Be  
 wrapped in per-fect peace. be  
 wrapped in per-fect peace.  
 Be still - Per-fect Peace.  
 Per - fact Peace  
 Peace - per-fect peace  
 Peace - Be Still  
 Still Per - fact ;  
 per-fect, still, peace

This, the most complex, may be the most simple.

(I wanted to do one which would sing itself most naturally. The first 3 voices by ear.)

Add the others: just the next; or any numbers.

Public performance / meditation

Score projected, voice by voice.

support with instruments.

distribute registers, necessary transpositions - of course.

**PELLIE**



contemplating  
 waterfall  
**corner**