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MUSIC AND MYSTICISM,
RHYTHM AND FORM*A Blues Romance in 12 Parts*

ADAM RUDOLPH

GURUJI'S AMERICAN
TOMBSTONE*Mysticism*

Knowledge is freedom and the study of elements in sound is a path. Mysticism reaches beyond religion into creativity, which belongs to every human being. For the artist, mysticism is an attitude whose imperatives are the willingness to cultivate imagination and the courage to express what is discovered. For the creative musician, it also means research into the science of sound, which is the chemistry of the universe. Mystics and physicists alike know that all earthly creation is in fact star stuff, sub-atomic particles vibrating at various rates. Music speaks to us and transforms us through the medium and essence of what we ourselves are: vibration. The musical artist's invisible alchemy is to arrange these overtones as they move through time. Throughout the ages this art has been intimately intertwined with the mystic's path.

Imagination

Imagination suggests the existence of a divine spark in human beings. Its source, what William Blake called the Divine Imagination, is beyond rational apprehension. While it is a mystery as to whether it is received like a radio signal from the cosmos or dredged up from the murky oceanic depths of the unconscious, it appears to us through visions, dreams, inspirations, language, dialogue, fantasies, and contemplation. Creative imagination is our richest human legacy and birthright. It is a kind of beacon—a scout sent ahead that precedes us into history.

In the great mystical traditions of the world, inner and outer realities are reflections of one another. Similarly, any music one can imagine in the mind's ear already exists or has existed in its own unique interpretive design. The creative process begins with the inner ear, with the imagination. It continues with the manifestation of this inner audi-

tory experience in the vibrational spectrum; voice, instruments and human interaction enter the picture. If we can imagine it, we can play it. In this way, ideas lead the development of technique, which is a door to the space of freedom.

Dialogue

Any new musical language must be based on understanding existing music languages in their uniqueness and through their underlying universal principles. Just as the laws of physics simplify in the higher dimensions, so too do the elements of music unify as they transcend style and move towards essence.

When developed musical skills exist to serve an awakened being, a great potential is created. For this potential to manifest, compassion must inspire the artist to seek dialogue, a sharing of realization. When this intention allows communication between humans to occur, a cycle of enlightenment is created. In the Middle East this is called “Tarab”. The musician becomes a creative conduit, the musical instrument a voice and tool, and the listener an active partner in the creation of the transcendent state. In improvisational music, this circle expands to include interplay between musicians as dialogue. It is the mirror that reflects both group and individual states at the moment of creation, bringing us together in our most human being. With the arrival of the divine spark, improvisational music becomes a textless ecstatic dialogue vibrating open the door to the luminous moment.

Color and Motion

Through music, the essential unison—vibration—manifests as a duality: color and motion i.e. timbre and rhythm. The dialogue between color and motion is superimposed through the complex of space and time. All color in music is based on the overtones—earth moving to air and beyond. Attack, pitch, intonation, decay, texture and noise make for the quality of color in sound. Because of their especially complex overtone content, drums are the musical instrument most commonly used worldwide to induce trance. In some cultures string or gut is stretched across the drum skin to further complexify overtone content, adding shadow sounds of buzzing voices.

In India, Rasa describes the emotional color of a raga. Melodic shapes delineate tension and release, painting emotional timbre while orbiting out and then returning to the unitary sounding of Om. Many cultures use visual colors to manifest music ritual. The Gnawa of Morocco play a system of seven colors in their nightlong healing and trance ceremonies. Each “presence” or spirit is accompanied by a specific color, incense, rhythm and dance as it meets the ritual participants’ consciousness in ecstatic space and time.

Form

Even as nature is in a constant process of becoming, there is nothing in nature without form. Chaos contains the source, energy, and material that form is made of. Form itself is temporal, and rhythm is the world working through time. Sound is the soul of form and brings it to life from the inside out. Rhythm is the element of stability that not only gives life to music but also holds it together. It is implicit in every musical gesture.

Sonata-allegro, kriti, muwashshah, frevo, jo-hya-kyu, gending, and blues are but a few examples of the many traditional music forms found worldwide. For the improviser, phrasing in form is the greatest challenge. In order to navigate through form one must be able to generate phrasing and in order to phrase one must have a grasp of rhythm. The great improvisers have all been masters of rhythm.

Rhythm

There are as many rhythms in the world as there are stars in the sky. Every culture has dozens, if not thousands of rhythms. To these pulse beats and patterns, each person and musician brings his or her own sense of timing, breath and imagination. To be human is to embody this rhythmic infinity.

Human rhythm has, as both its source and manifestation, three aspects: language, dance and mathematics. Spoken language informs vocal and instrumental performance in a myriad of ways. The Yoruba language, which is tonal, can be spoken on the Iya drum. When North and South Indian music uses vocalized syllables to teach the drum language each spoken syllable corresponds to a particular drum stroke.

At the same time, creative and cultural movements of humans are

determinants of rhythmic phraseology. In many parts of the world drum language is a sonic manifestation of dance gesture. Call and response harkens to a practice before history, where music, dance and storytelling were one.

Numerologically, 2 (even) and 3 (odd) are the fundamental building blocks from which all existing rhythms are created; from the heartbeat to the most abstract. “Cyclic Verticalism” is a creative approach to developing phrasing and form through the combination and expansion of cycles and polyrhythms. Cycles of various lengths are built by using the additive concept of combining rhythm cells of 2’s and 3’s. (Figure 1.)

For example, 2 plus 3 yields a 5 beat cycle:

1	2	1	2	3	<i>Counted division</i>
x		x			<i>Accented pulses</i>
1	2	3	4	5	<i>Total pulses</i>

3 plus 2 plus 2 yields a 7 beat cycle:

1	2	3	1	2	1	2	<i>Counted division</i>
x			x		x		<i>Accented pulses</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>Total pulses</i>

Figure 1. Excerpt from *Pure Rhythm* by Adam Rudolph.

Verticalism references polyrhythms, whereby two or more rhythms are played simultaneously. A rhythm cell of an odd amount sounding at the same time as a rhythm cell of an even amount generates motion in sound. The fundamental polyrhythm is 3 against 2. (Figure 2.)

3 against 2 (6 total pulses):

1	2	3	4	5	6	
x		x		x		<i>3 duplet accents of the pulse</i>
x			x			<i>2 triplet accents of the pulse</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	

Figure 2. Excerpt from *Pure Rhythm* by Adam Rudolph.

The Dogon people of Mali call the even (2) element “Tolo” and ascribe to it female or yin energy. “Nya” is the odd (3), male or yang energy. They say: “Every rhythm has the two parts, often with complex interplay that suggest both a dialogue and union of male and female principles.”

Timbre and Tone

If that fundamental polymetric verticality of 3 against 2 was moving fast enough it would sound as the interval of the perfect 5th, the second overtone. The overtones, or harmonic series is the acoustic material that generates pitch, melody, harmony and what Edgar Varese termed “sound mass”. 20th century European music uses twelve tones and six intervals to generate melodic and harmonic materials. Joseph Schillinger, Yusef Lateef, Olivier Messiaen, and Nicolas Slominsky, to name but a few, published studies of creative permutations of these. In India it is twenty-two Srutis that describe the microtones between octaves. Pentatonic scales, made of the first five tones of the limitless spiral of 5ths, are found worldwide, especially among people who live close to nature.

Circularity

Non-linear thought informs the creative mind. Circular imagery is central to many mystical traditions, the Mandala being a well-known example. Depictions of the Tree of Life in Kabbalah, roundtable discussions, Whirling Dervishes, the shaman’s drum and stone Native American Medicine Wheels are but a few of many circular images found worldwide. The Kongo Cosmogram Yowa shows the sign of the cosmos and the continuity of human life (Figure 3). At the center is the Crossroads, the radial point of African cultural improvisation that has profoundly seeded so much American music.

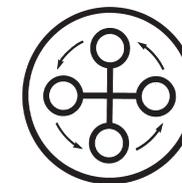


Figure 3. Yowa-Kongo Cosmogram.

Creatively applied in music, circular thought can open the mind to potentials of relationships not available to linear thinking or depiction. Circularity suggests possibilities of innovative notational semiotics that in turn can generate new musical syntax. John Coltrane's circle (Figure 4) shows a non-linear multiplicity of possible tone relationships.

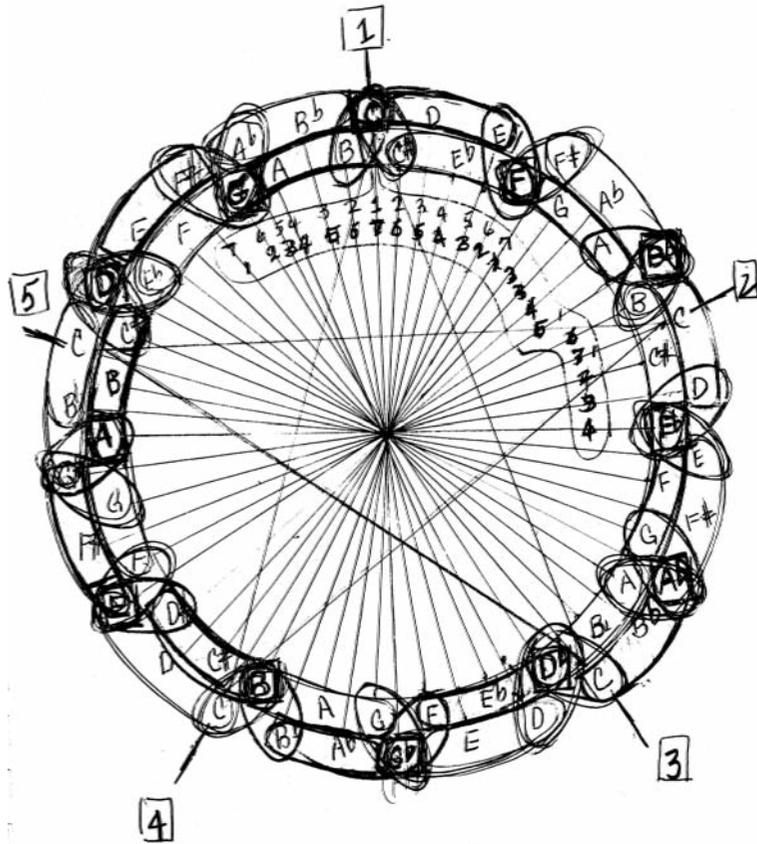


Figure 4. Drawing by John Coltrane given to Yusef Lateef 1960.

Since humans first observed the movements of the sun, moon, stars and the seasons, musicians have been responsive to cyclic phenomena in nature. Circular thought is central to many music cultures throughout the world. In a manner similar to the Coltrane diagram, this North Indian Tal Chakra drawing (Figure 5) shows the potentiality of multiple relationships, in this case between various rhythm cycles.

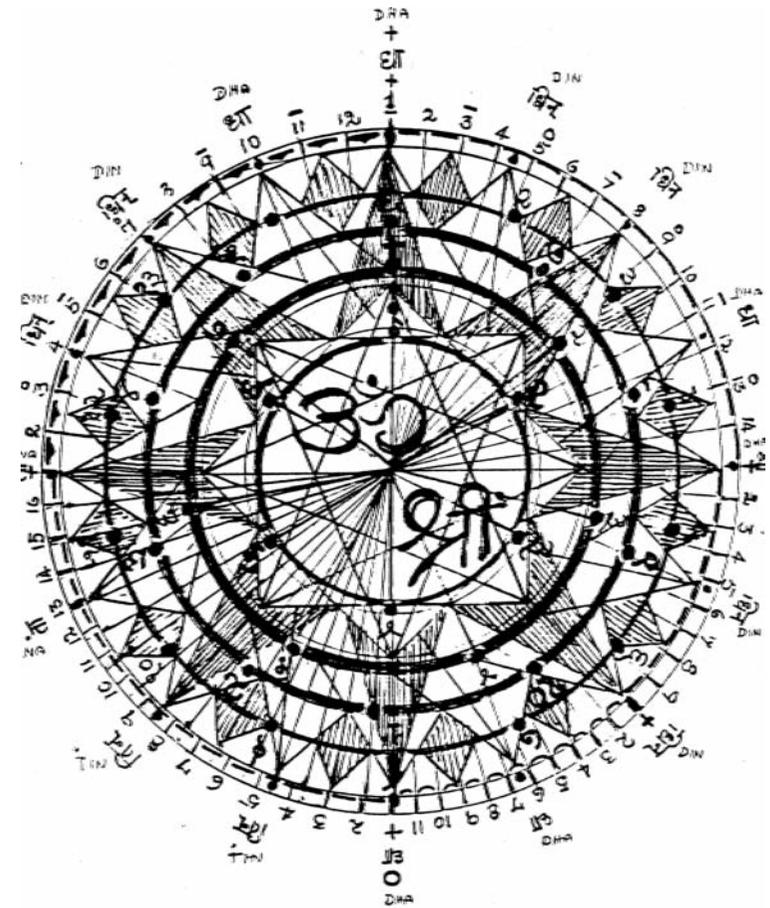


Figure 5. Tal Chakra by Pandit Tarant Rao given to Adam Rudolph 1981.

In each of these drawings the multiplicity of possible relationships of elements invites broad syntactical possibilities. Each offers the potential and openness that is essential for the improvisational practice central to both music cultures.

Weaving

Ostinatos of circularity is content distinct from the linearity of the practice of theme and development. Recurrent gestures are the events that generate time inside the circularity of musical form. This rhythmic weaving of space and motion is a common musical practice in the world. In Persian arts, the term "Dastgah" refers to both weaving patterns into

carpets and weaving modal melody in music. Mbuti Molimo ritual and Sundanese Jaipong music performance use what Miles Davis, describing his own music in 1973, called “thematic fibers.” A Nigerian cloth (Figure 6) depicts an elegantly danced weaving of threads in repeated patterns of rhythmic regularity and irregularity.

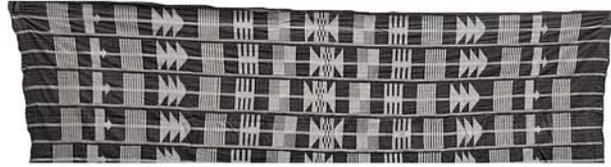


Figure 6. Nigerian Woven Fabric

As is common in much solo performance in Africa, the Ugandan Akogo (thumb piano) requires a synchronized patterned weaving of the left and right thumbs to play the music. As repeated motifs continually evolve and modify, the musician enters a mental state similar to contemplation of a Mandala. Whether performed by the individual or the collective, patterns of sonic fractal design create a momentum that over time becomes a Call. Miraculous in its evolution, the use of ancient highly refined signal patterns, manifest through instruments of particular overtone content, serves to open the door to the transcendent state. The Call is the invitation to move from observation to participation in the transcendence. Answering the Call is to join in the shared experience of the mystical lifting of the moment. It is what mystics describe as resonance; what the Surrealists named the Supreme Point.

The Inner Voice

Great improvisers are recognized in one note. They play their instrument as an amplifier of their inner voice. The Dogon have a word “mi” which means the inner spirit of the person expressed through the voice of the instrument. With creative action, the inner auditory vision is expressed as a unique human story through the development of musical language. Every human who uses a musical language tells us something about who they are in relation to their art and their life experiences. Musical sound is the revealing of the inner being. The master improviser drenches her/his art with the imper-

atives of life: spontaneity, initiative and surprise.

Emptiness

Improvisational music reflects an evolved cosmology that could be described as a celebration of the Eternal Now. It aims at the total elimination of subject/object through the expression of sound rhythms. First, in the stillness of Beginners Mind, we hear the silence. Now intention moves emptiness into the manifestation of form in sound. Starting from breath itself, each gesture creates the musical moment. The formless manifests a time element, a dimension, and a shape, the abstraction of which is conditioned by sound and motion. Each musical sound a human can make has a beginning, middle, and an end. There is a feeling of death with the end of each sound that implies transcendence.

The Heart

Music is a reflection of the heart’s evolution. It speaks to the inner being since it is itself of the inner being. Listening with the heart asks for a quieting of the mind which judges, filters, and compartmentalizes. It beckons us to lift out of temporal limitations, to open up to the deepest sentiment of our own being and allow our very essence to be touched. Communication through this invisible alchemy called music invites us to reach into ourselves, to seek to know ourselves and to fearlessly express that which we discover. It is a way of coming to know who we are as we exist in the universe and the universe that exists within us. Music is the language of the heart and it is a path to awakening. For those who are aware of the mysticism of sound, music is a profound means by which we share our most intimate and deep desire for universal consciousness.

GENESIS BREYER P-ORRIDGE first achieved recognition with the 1969 founding of COUM Transmissions, a confrontational performance collective heavily influenced by Dada, which was later transformed into the band Throbbing Gristle. (P-Orridge would, in 1981, found the ground-breaking band, Psychic TV.) In the early 1970s, P-Orridge met William S. Burroughs, who introduced h/er to Brion Gysin, marking the beginning of a seminal and influential collaborative relationship. The supremely Dadaist practice of the “cut-up” technique of the early 20th century Surrealists s/he learned from them would influence P-Orridge throughout h/er career and remains an integral element of h/er work. P-Orridge was an early participator in Fluxus and Mail Art, applying the theories of John Cage exchanging works with Ray Johnson among others. P-Orridge later began an occultist practice influenced by the theories of the artist Austin Osman Spare. The “sigils” they performed explored the relationship between the conscious and unconscious self through magical techniques such as automatic writing, drawing and actions. In the 1990s, P-Orridge began a collaboration with the performance artist Lady Jaye Breyer—deconstructing the fiction of self. Influenced again by “cut-up” techniques they applied the strategy of “cutting-up” to their own bodies, in an effort to merge their two identities, through plastic surgery, hormone therapy, cross-dressing and altered behavior, into a single, “pandrogynous” character, “BREYER P-ORRIDGE.” (Although Lady Jaye passed away in 2007, the project continues with Genesis embodying the entirety of BREYER P-ORRIDGE.)

Genesis Breyer P-Orridge

Californian TERRY RILEY, whose career has spanned five decades, is one of the most influential composers and performers in contemporary music. His work *In C* changed the course of music after 1964. It introduced a new approach to tonality and new structural principles that projected kaleidoscopic, psychedelic atmospheres, representing a striking departure from the then established musical direction of the mid 20th century. An imaginative improviser, his recordings such as *A Rainbow in Curved Air* and *Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band*, with their driving kinetic rhythms, sent waves across the contemporary music world as well as into the territories of rock and jazz. His jazz inflected piano improvisations incorporate elements of western classical music as well various latin and world music flavors. Of particular note is his twenty-six year association with his music Guru, legendary Indian vocalist, Pandit Pran Nath. Riley appeared as accompanist in hundreds of concerts with the great Master and continues today to give concerts of Indian Classical Music as an adjunct to his own work in contemporary music. Terry has written for orchestra, choir, string quartet, saxophone quartet, guitar, piano and various chamber music combinations and his work has been performed on virtually every continent. Terry has collaborated with some of the great names of our era, including Chet Baker, La Monte Young, George Brooks, Zakir Hussein, Krishna Bhatt, Kronos Quartet, Michael McClure, Stefano Scodanibbio, John Cale and more recently his son, Gyan Riley. His most recent work, *SolTier-raLuna* for two guitars, violin and Orchestra had its premiere in March 2008. Terry played his first pipe organ concert to a sold out audience at Disney Hall in May of

2008, introducing *The Universal Bridge*, a work especially commissioned for that evening. He christened the gigantic Disney Hall pipe organ “Hurricane Mama.”

Born in 1955, handdrummer, percussionist, composer, multi-instrumentalist and improviser ADAM RUDOLPH grew up in the Hyde Park area of the Southside of Chicago. From an early age he was exposed to the live music performances of the great artists who lived nearby. As a teenager, Rudolph started playing hand drums in local streets and parks and soon apprenticed with elders of African American improvised music. He performed regularly in Chicago with Fred Anderson and in Detroit with the Contemporary Jazz Quintet. In 1973 Rudolph played on his first record date with Maulawi Nururidin and with the CJQ at the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz festival. In 1977 he lived and studied in Ghana, where he experienced trance ceremonies. In his travels throughout West Africa he saw how music can come from a cosmological grounding beyond music itself and can also be about something beyond music itself. In 1978 he lived in Don Cherry’s house in the Swedish countryside. Cherry inspired him to start composing and showed him about Ornette Coleman’s concept and the connection of music to nature. Rudolph is known as one the early innovators of what is now called “World Music”. In 1978 he and Gambian Kora player Jali Foday Musa Suso co-founded The Mandingo Griot Society, one of the first bands to combine African and American music. In 1988, he recorded the first fusion of American and Gnawa music with Sintir player and singer Hassan Hakmoun. Rudolph intensely studied North Indian tabla for over fifteen years with Pandit Taranath Rao. He learned hundreds of drum compositions and about how music is a form of Yoga—the unity of mind, body and spirit. In 1988 Rudolph began his association with Yusef Lateef, with whom he has recorded over fifteen albums including several of their large ensemble collaborations. Lateef introduced Rudolph to the inspirational practice of Autophysiopsychic Music—“that which comes from one’s spiritual, physical and emotional self”. Rudolph still performs worldwide with Dr. Lateef in ensembles ranging from their acclaimed duo concerts to appearances as guest soloist with the Koln, Atlanta and Detroit symphony orchestras. Over the past twenty-five years Rudolph has developed a unique syncretic approach to hand drumming in creative collaborations with outstanding artists of cross-cultural and improvised music, including Jon Hassel, L. Shankar, Joseph Bowie, and Wadada Leo Smith among others. He has released over a dozen recordings on his own Meta Records label documenting his compositions for various size ensembles as well as his collaborations with artists such as Sam Rivers, Omar Sosa, and Pharaoh Sanders. Currently Rudolph composes for his groups Adam Rudolph’s Moving Pictures quartet and octet, Hu: Vibrational trio, and Go: Organic Orchestra, a fifteen to fifty-piece ensemble for which he has developed an original music notation and conducting system. He has taught and conducted hundreds of musicians in the Go: Organic Orchestra concept in both North America and Europe. Rudolph recently premiered his opera *The Dreamer*, based on the text of Friedrich Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*. He also performs as half of the Wildflowers Duo with Butoh dance innovator Oguri. Rudolph has recently had his rhythm repository and methodology book, *Pure Rhythm* published by Advance Music, Ger-

Adam Rudolph

many. He has performed at festivals and concerts throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Japan, appeared on numerous albums and released over twenty recordings as a leader. He has received grants and compositional commissions from the Rockefeller Foundation, Chamber Music America, Meet the Composer, Mary Flagler Cary Trust, the NEA, Arts International, Durfee Foundation and American Composers Forum.

DAVID CHAIM SMITH 1964: born in Queens, NYC. 1980–1982: Philosophy and art history at Queens College. 1982–1986: BFA in drawing at Rhode Island School of Design. 1988–1989: MFA in drawing at Columbia University. 1990: Beginning of intensive study of alchemy and Western Esoteric Qabalah. 1990–1997: Ritual work and study with several western occult orders. 1997: Visual art suspended in favor of practical mysticism. 1997–1998: Residence at Crazy Cloud Hermitage. 1998–2006: Immersion in Chassidic mysticism and traditional Hebrew Kabbalah with several teachers. 2007: Innovation of a set of graphic keys based on the 13th century mystical text *Maayin HaChochmah*. With these symbolic constructs image making is resumed after a ten year hiatus from visual art.

David Chaim Smith

Trey Spruance

David Toop

TREY SPRUANCE is a California based composer, multi-instrumentalist and producer, leader of Secret Chiefs 3, member of defunct Mr. Bungle. Nietzschean reactionary angst from exposure to redneck town of youth led to overzealous immersion in music and philosophy (and an aversion to western Christendom). Once in San Francisco in the beginning of the 1990s, appropriate psychic and social adjustments began. Education and participation in some of the more inscrutable elements of the SF underground at that time, with its mysterious and often humble but completely insane personages, inspired much creativity and soul searching. Truth-seeking (albeit disjointed and anarchistic) arrived in seed-form by 1993, and led to nearly two decades of deeply intensive studies in Hermetic and Islamic Philosophies. Eventually these studies began to crystallize into something substantial and musically applicable. On embracing of non-ET tonality (not “microtonality” but modal concepts owing much to Hellenic musical Philosophy), and also non-subdivided rhythm, an unmistakable musical overlap with Philosophy resulted in a “synergy” that has maintained a steady direction and output. The music is often mistaken as avant garde, but is really just situated consistently in a tension between ancient and modern ideas, eastern and western concepts etc. Moved to the mountains in 2000. For over a decade compositional goals have reflected a rigorous “home-schooled” kind of quasi-quadrivium (*Book M*, *Book of Horizons*, etc.) that walks the line of aforementioned tensions. Now entering third year of being an Eastern Orthodox Christian wannabe layperson, who at this point is just trying to not become the next Rasputin, Simon Magus or Judas.

DAVID TOOP is a musician/composer, author and curator. He studied fine art and graphic design, then in 1971–2 took part in the first improvisation workshops led by jazz drummer John Stevens. Having played improvised music since the beginning of the 1970s with musicians such as Paul Burwell, Steve Beresford, Max

Eastley, Hugh Davies, Terry Day, Peter Cusack, Sally Potter and Lol Coxhill, he also recorded shamanistic ceremonies in Amazonas and appeared on Top Of The Pops with the Flying Lizards. Musicians he has worked with include Brian Eno, John Zorn, Prince Far I, Jon Hassell, Derek Bailey, Talvin Singh, Evan Parker, Scanner, Ivor Cutler, Akio Suzuki, Haco, Rhodri Davies, Jin Hi Kim and Alasdair Roberts, and collaborated with artists such as theatre director/actor Steven Berkoff, Japanese Butoh dancer Mitsutaka Ishii, sound poet Bob Cobbing and visual artist John Latham. His first album, *New and Rediscovered Musical Instruments*, was released on Brian Eno’s Obscure label in 1975; since 1995 he has released eight solo albums, including *Screen Ceremonies*, *Black Chamber* and *Sound Body*. Four books have been published, currently translated into seven languages: *Rap Attack*, *Ocean of Sound*, *Exotica* (a winner of the 21st annual American Books Awards for 2000), and *Haunted Weather*. As a critic and essayist he has written for many publications, including *The Wire*, *The Face*, *The Times* and *Leonardo Music Journal*. In 2000, he curated *Sonic Boom*, the UK’s largest ever exhibition of sound art, at the Hayward Gallery, London, and in 2005 curated *Playing John Cage* for Arnolfini Bristol. His sound works have been exhibited in Beijing’s Zhongshan Park, Tokyo ICC and the National Gallery, London. His most recent book *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of the Listener*—will be published in summer 2010. He is currently composing a chamber opera, *Star-shaped Biscuit*, for Aldeburgh Music.

Rabbi GREG WALL is a saxophonist and composer who is equally fluent in both jazz and world music. He has performed and recorded with his own ensembles Later Prophets, Greg Wall Trio, Hasidic New Wave, The Wall/London Band and Greg Wall’s Unity Orchestra as well as with Neshama Carlebach, the Hi-Tops and many others. Greg has made many session appearances for record dates and film scores and performs his own music regularly at top venues and major festivals throughout North America and Europe. Since 1999 he has collaborated with the Carolyn Dorfman Dance company, resulting in many commissioned dance scores. Most recent projects include the Unity Orchestra, a pan cultural ensemble featuring 8 musicians from five continents, and *Ha’Orot*, a musical setting of the mystical poetry of legendary Rabbi Rav Kook. Greg is the Rabbi of the 6th Street shul in New York’s East Village.

Greg Wall

PETER LAMBORN WILSON (b. 1945) is an American political writer, essayist, and poet, known for first proposing the concept of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), based on a historical review of pirate utopias.

**Peter Lamborn
Wilson**

z’ev

Z’EV text/sound artist, composer, sound sculptor, poet and mystic. He is perhaps best known for his performances of acoustic phenomena produced through catacoustic (reflected sound-based) percussion. In 1978 he met Haitian Hougun Rico Joves and was initiated into Vou-Dun drumming. Employed as a researcher for the Society for the Preservation of Occult Consciousness he received initiations into the Western Ceremonial Tradition. In 1979 he began his studies with Rabbi J. Winston,