YASUNAO TONE
Noise Media Language

With contributions by Robert Ashley,
Dasha Dekleva William Marotti,
Federico Marulanda, Hans Ulrich Obrist,
and Achim Wollscheid.

Digital music, performative technologies, and interventionist sound installation all come to the fore in the visionary work of Yasunao Tone. Since the early 1960s Tone has charted a vigilantly unique conceptual and aesthetic territory. Operating on the fringes of the Japanese art scene throughout the sixties as part of the avant-garde performance group Ongaku and the conceptual interventionist collective Hi Red Center, then as part of Fluxus, composing "events" and improvisational music, as well as compositions for Merce Cunningham's Dance Company (alongside John Cage), a member of Team Random (the first computer art group organized in Japan), Tone's work is unabashedly avant-garde. A recent recipient of the Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica Prize in Digital Music, Tone continues today to spearhead a radical approach to artistic methods, engaging questions of noise, language, and systems of representation through the manipulation of digital mechanisms. Emphatically individual, politically suggestive, conceptually specific, Tone stands as an exemplary figure engaged in a progressively contemporary project.

Forming the fourth volume in the Critical Ear series, "Yasunao Tone - Noise Media Language" catalogues the artist's career through documentation of seminal projects, and raises pertinent issues related to digital media, computer-based art, and musical strategies. With contributions by Robert Ashley, Dasha Dekleva, William Marotti, Federico Marulanda and Achim Wollscheid, and an interview with the artist by Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Yasunao Tone - Noise Media Language" is an indispensable monograph on this enigmatic artist.

With accompanying audio CD including

Anagram for Strings (1961)
Lyrictron for Flute (1988)
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Blue Bird (1998)
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Poem number 4516 of Musica Simulacra (1996-2004)

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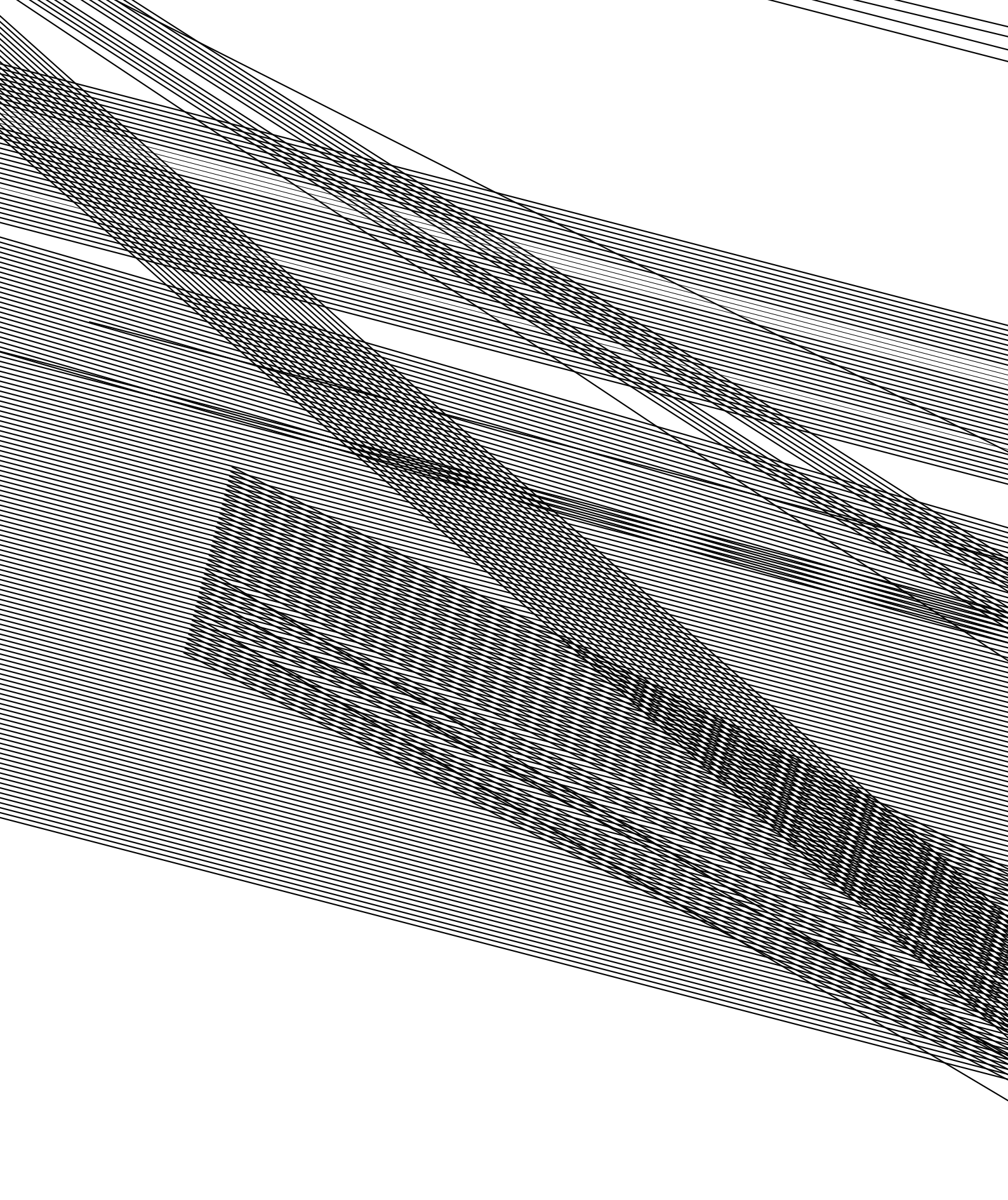

YASUNAO TONE

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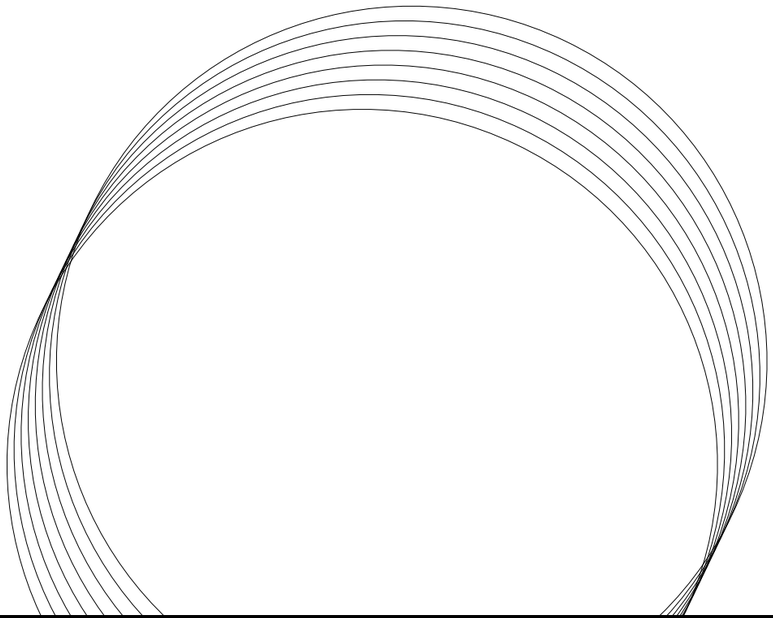
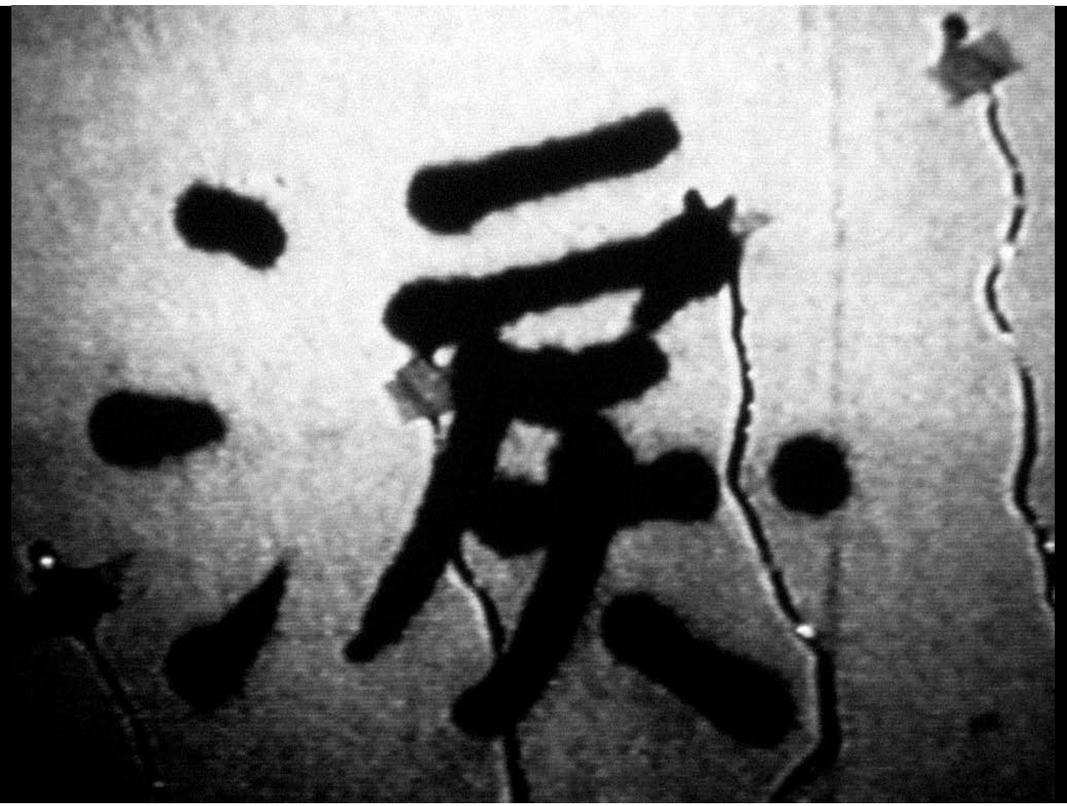


Around point zero
Introduction by Achim Wollscheid

WHAT IS so striking about Yasunao Tone's work is that it is both free and hermetic – because it has no reference. It's not presenting, it is present. It is not made to tell you something. It is not something. It just is. Therefore to write an introduction runs the risk to be trapped in paradox – how can I suggest paths into a territory that's meant to be without boundaries? How can I focus (on issues, topics, specificities) if the work intends to dissipate? How can I follow, when the artist does by no means want to direct?
Let's just suppose we are already inside, not in the middle, because there is none, just strolling around while the clarity of Yasunao Tone's work reveals the paradox we are in and highlights its different shades and peculiarities. To be within a paradoxical state – that's the feeling I suppose we get when we actually listen to his works.
We, being caught in a net of care, consideration and compromise must listen to pieces that intend to become (well, do they actually intend? Maybe they just become) this one action, this one time and this one place.
They focus, but they do not insist. Strangely enough this happens not in spite, but because there seems to be no preferred material or sound quality and likewise no prominent method applied to the different sonic states.

So to say, there is no carrier (no material, no mother) and nothing that's being carried (like a prototypical compositional procedure) – instead we witness or (even better) become part of a practice. A doing that does not pretend to do or needs to speak anything else than the sounds just uttered. We can sense a total deliverance within this practice which is, in turn, delivered to us. How can we react? Interact? Much could be said about the difference between a live reception and a listening through loudspeakers or headphones. This (and all the important things to be said about space) put aside – and just referring to what's delivered through the CD coming with this book: in a way it makes us travel. We travel along, no more attached to that one time line that defines "now" as the border between "after" and "before" – like a frame shifted across a succession of more or less linked events. Just opposite to this we travel within a range that I'd call "point zero," a focus (or

should I say an activator?) consuming all bordering time. It's a curious travel, because it happens on the spot, albeit the spot keeps transforming: both the sound and us within it. Thus – speaking about intentions as concluded from effects – I assume that Yasunao Tone's urge to create presence is twofold.
To actually experience the transformations within point zero another, second presence is needed – our personal zero points, each of them different and specific. Not quite unlike Barnett Newman's attempts to achieve presence in a space through a picture that transforms into a space of presence for the onlooker, Tone's focused sonic space creates (and demands) an inter–subjective counterpart – our respective points of action. These points are required because they keep us in active equilibrium with the piece on one hand and (at the same time or later on) serve as a blueprint to consider our actions in the so called "real." How do we do things? To what extent do we actually allow the real to become real? Do we actually understand? Who is speaking? How would the artist circumscribe this point? There is a suggestion. After a lecture of his, I asked "Yasunao what are you good for?" and he said – "Maybe I'm a good noise."

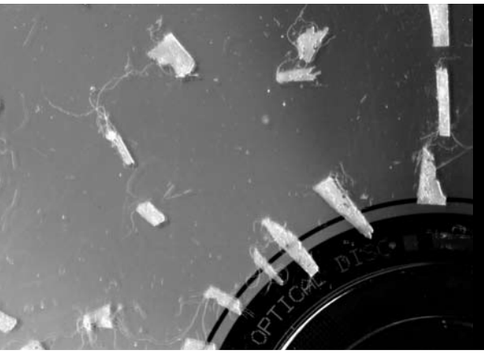


Yasunao Tone performing
“Molecular Music” (1982–85),
rehearsal at his studio, circa 1990.
Photo by Hiro Ihara
(previous page)

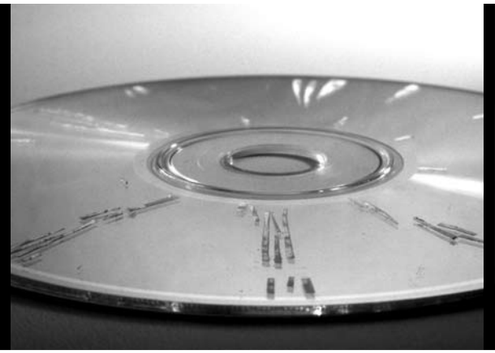
Photo from video documentation,
“Molecular Music” (1982–85)

Yasunao Tone performing
Wounded Manyoshu and (jo)HN,
"Warmup 2 series" at P.S.1,
Long Island City, NY, Sep. 4, 1999
Photo © by Gerard Malanga

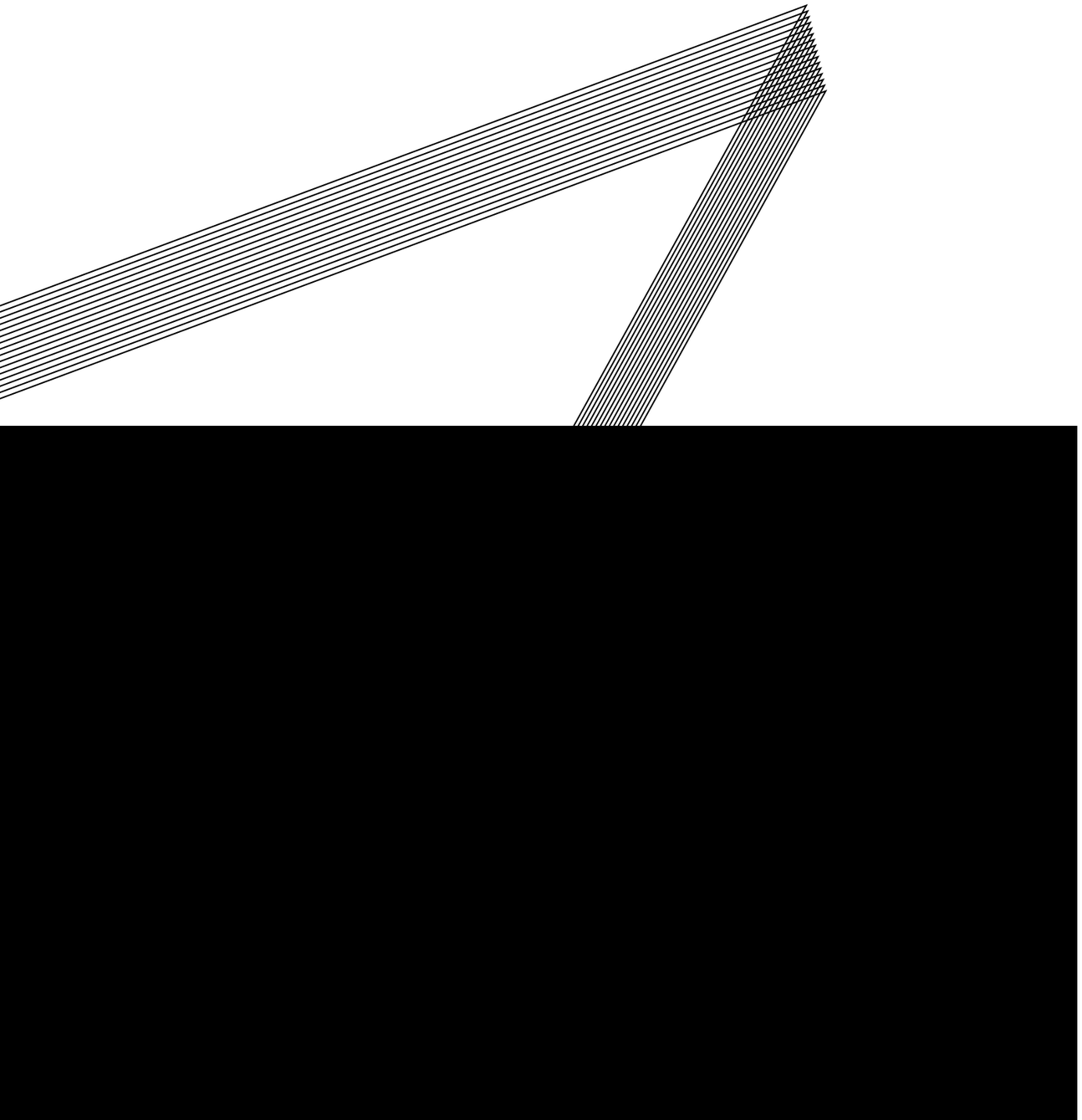
Yasunao Tone performing Wounded Man'yo,
Duo concert with Stephen Vitiello, in "Pulse,"
a digitally inspired performance series,
Whitney Museum of American Art at
Phillip Morris, New York, NY, April 5, 2001
Photo © by Paula Court



Prepared CD
Photo by © Gary McCraw



Yasunao Tone performing
"Wounded Man'yo 2000"
Encounter show, Tokyo Opera City,
January 21, 2001
Photo by © Kiyoshi Takashima



Sounding the Everyday:
the Music group[1] and
Yasunao Tone's early work
by William A. Marotti

"The marvelous must be made by all,
and not by one alone."
Louis Aragon, "Challenge to Art"

YASUNAO TONE'S[2] early works encompass a bewildering variety of experiments in writing, art, composition and performance. While we can also identify within these works the first signs of his life – long interests in signification, sound, process and temporality, I propose to frame several within their moment of production – the explosive, playful exploration of art, politics and the everyday world in a time of mass protests and political transformations from the late 1950s through the 1960s – to recognize Tone's distinct contributions and participation within this insurgent cultural productivity.

Briefly stated, this time period charts the take-off point for Japan's "high-growth economics" and the entrenchment of single-party rule, a rule strategically represented as beneficently guaranteeing growth's material rewards and consequent national prestige. And although growth returned Japan to regional and global prominence, it was as a nation born anew, one whose economic prosperity marked its departure from its recent past as inflictor and sufferer of violence, occupation, and hardship. Domestically, after the strikes and huge demonstrations leading up to the revision and renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty ("Anpo") in June of 1960, the state's embrace of high-growth economics and a new "low posture" defused the protests with an ostensibly non-confrontational, non-military national program promising material benefits for all: "income doubling" within the decade. The fact that this economic recovery and prosperity was directly linked to America's Cold War posture and post-1945 Asian wars did not blunt its effectiveness in diverting opposition and gaining widespread support for government policies.[3]

1. I am departing from the conventional rendering of the group's title as either "Group Music" or "Group Ongaku" for several reasons set forth later in the article.

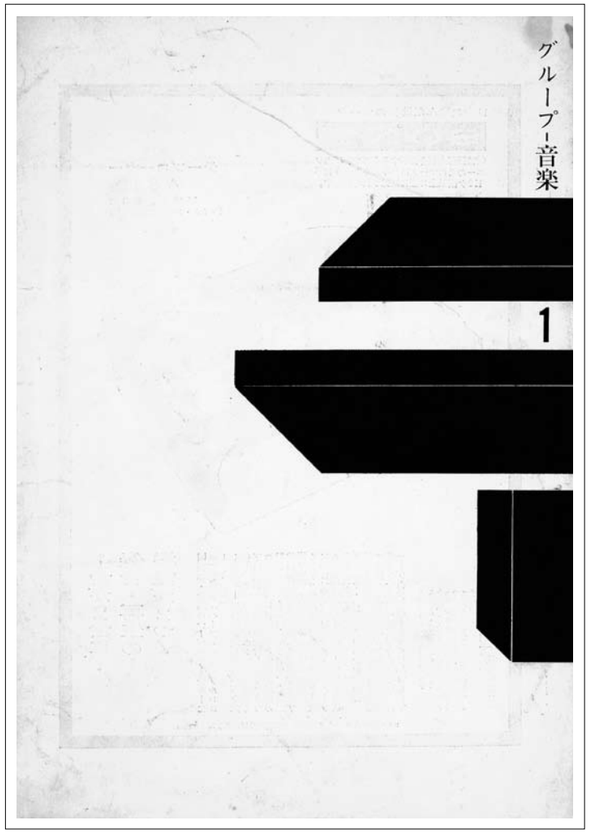
2. Tone is the family name and Yasunao his given name. The name order is reversed from the Japanese for consistency within this volume.

3. Japan's initial economic recovery was through multi-billion dollar procurements from the Korean War, as well as the American efforts to safeguard Japan's Asian hinterland, a major contributing cause for escalating American involvement in Vietnam (ultimately yielding an additional several billion dollars for the Japanese economy). See Michael Schaller, *Altered States: The United States and Japan Since the Occupation* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1997).

In 1956, the White Paper on the Economy proclaimed that the "end of the postwar" had been marked by the economic shift from mere enthusiastic recovery, now achieved, to a sober program of modernization and stable growth – one that would entail a variety of shared "burdens." The takeoff of the economy and the advent of postwar mass culture in the fifties wrought tremendous changes in the everyday lives of millions of Japanese. Its myriad virtues were proclaimed by a hitherto unparalleled surge in advertising, while joint corporate and governmental efforts such as the New Life Movement mobilized citizens, especially housewives, to manage its more troublesome effects (simultaneously representing them as manageable on the family and local level).[4] Events such as the imperial wedding of 1959 and the associated celebration of the crown prince and princess's middle-class, nuclear family lifestyles, fused state, nation, imperial family, and mass culture together within a consumer present apparently immune from troubling historical connections. Thus, when the ruling party made its guarantee of material well-being the centerpiece of its political legitimacy in mid-1960, it moved onto a terrain already highly managed and depoliticized.

What does this have to do with art and music? This same time period marks a remarkably productive period for avant-garde production and performance; Tone's activities fit within a wide diversity of experiments notable for their insistent disregard of formal conventions in the shared attempt to explore, interact with, and transform quotidian actuality. Individually and in groups, artists attempted to step beyond conventionalities to investigate the concrete structures and practices of the everyday world: its forms and sounds, its debris (relics of the economic expansion), its transforming lived spaces, and, at its base, the human body and its gestures, habits, and excesses. In Tone's case, his entry into this developing avant-garde scene in Japan came through a developing interest in the historical avant-garde that was first realized in practice via his participation in the collective improvisational work of the Music group.

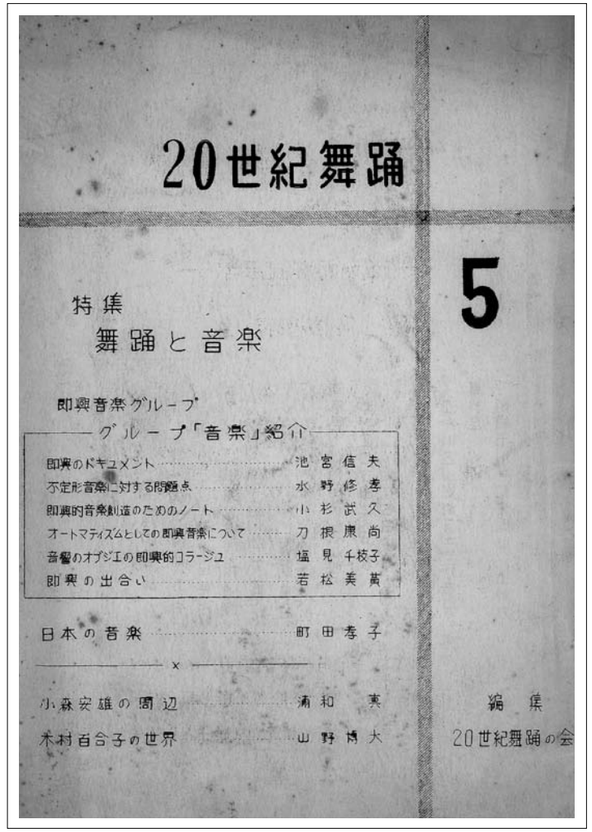
And while this sort of work was informed by (and participated in) international artistic and musical trends such as Concrete Music, Cage's experiments, Pollock's action painting, Art autre/Art informel and its creation of a local "sensation,"[5] the avant-garde focus on the everyday world simultaneously inflected it with the particular, complex political relevance of that world for Japan ca. 1960. Its representation dominated by affirmative advertising,



Cover,
"Group Ongaku,"
Issue # 1, 1961

4. Simon Partner, *Assembled in Japan: Electrical Goods and the Making of the Japanese Consumer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Takeda Hiroko, *The Political Economy of Reproduction in Japan: Between Nation-State and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2005). As scholars such as Takabatake Michitoshi have pointed out, the limitations of neighborhood activism made protest emerging from them highly co-optable, contributing to the dissolution of protest following the Anpo protests. Takabatake Michitoshi, "Citizen's Movements: Organizing the Spontaneous," in J. Victor Koschmann, ed. *Authority and the Individual in Japan* (Tokyo: Univ. of Tokyo Press, 1978), 189-199.

5. The phrase is Takiguchi Shûzo's. See Yoshida Yoshie, *Kaitaigeki no maku orite-roku jû nendai zen'ei bijutsushi,* (Tokyo: Zoukeisha, 1982) 73.



Cover
" 20 seiki Buyou,"
Issue #5, 1960

light journalism, and semi–governmental management, everyday life presented a potentially high stakes venue for artistic investigation – particularly one concerned with bringing out "actuality" and rejecting convention, hierarchy, management, and domination. It was paradoxically centered by the state as a depoliticizing focal point for politics, all the while remaining directly linked to a cold war military alliance with the United States that determined the form by which Japan would renew and continue its historical relationships with Asia. Although the art that engaged with this everyday world typically adopted a playful, rather than trenchantly critical, character – at least initially – the particular attractiveness of such play to the artists involved must be understood in part as partaking in the political charge inherent to such investigations. For Tone and his compatriots, however, such politics were inherent to their musical project.

Engagement with the Historic Avant-Garde

Yasunao Tone's path into this particular nexus of art and performance both echoes and departs from the routes of many of his contemporaries and future collaborators. Tone's engagement with the historic avant-garde and modernist movements, including Surrealism, was nurtured and expanded through contact with its original participants and commentators. His high-school interests in Japanese avant-garde poetry and prose of the 1920s and 1930s expanded into a broad interest in modernist works of the interwar period after entering the Literature program at Chiba National University (1953- 1957).

Tone especially recollects the influence of Assistant Professor Shigenobu Tsuneyoshi and instructor Kurita Isamu. At the university, Shigenobu led Tone and other students in a two-year ongoing project of translating Blanchot's *La Part du feu,* and lectured on *L'Espace littéraire*.[6] Kurita and Tone met informally on numerous occasions, during which Kurita elaborated upon aspects of as-yet-untranslated works by Bataille, particularly his anthropological reflections, "general economy," and "philosophy of expenditure."[7] Kurita in turn introduced Tone to the contemporary active critics and poets of his own generation, including Ôoka Makoto, Tôno Yoshiaki,[8] and Iijima Kôichi. Meanwhile, Tone continued to seek out copies of prewar avant-garde journals such as "Shi to Shiron,"

6. Shigenobu's translation of the former was published in 1958.

7. Yasunao Tone, interview by author, 17 January 2006; personal communication with author, 2 February 2006.

8. Credited for reviving the hotly debated term, "anti-art" (*hangeijutsu*), through his March 2, 1960 review in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* of works at the 12th Yomiuri Independent exhibition in Tokyo.

"Ge.Gjgjgam.Prrr.Gjmgem," "Bara•Majutsu•Gakusetsu," and "Fukuikutaru Kafu-yo," hunting down the traces of a suppressed Japanese avant-garde, including the work of Murayama Tomoyoshi and his associated group, Mavo.[9] His wide-ranging studies culminated in a graduation thesis on the Japanese Surrealists, for which Tone conducted interviews with some of the principals of the early twentieth-century avant-garde, including Kitazono Katsue (1902-78),[10] Takiguchi Shûzô (1903-79), Kihara Kôichi (1922-79), and Yamanaka Sansei (1905-77).[11] In considering domestic participation in international Surrealism, Tone still especially recalls Takiguchi's comment during the interview that "we tried to be as faithful as possible to Breton's doctrine, which, he confessed, was a mistake."[12] By the time of his graduation in 1957, Tone was immersed in a set of debates on art, criticism, and the historic avant-garde at the very moment of their transformation in both practice and criticism. He had also notably reached this position principally through a serious and sustained engagement with the work of an indigenous avant-garde, reflecting historically on their own complex mediations and participation in an at-once local and international twentieth-century relation of art and politics.

The Politics of Improvisation

Tone's subsequent path, ostensibly from literature to music, is in fact broader and more complex. It must be viewed within the broad-based theoretical rejection of formal boundaries, genres, and other commonplace assumptions across the entire field of artistic endeavor that particularly marked the late-50s and early 60s art scene. Yet the specificity of Tone's artistic development illustrates the multiplicity of distinct theoretical and practical paths leading to participation within what was nonetheless a shared conversation across art forms and practices.

To attempt a conceptual and performative link between poetry and music was to risk at least a certain culturalist presumption of their unity, as classical poetry in Japanese[13] is understood as poems/songs, or uta. Within the poetic avant-garde, the performance of Kitazono Katsue's work at the time perhaps exemplified a further mis-step along the path between poetry and music: in the late 1950s his works were recited to musical accompaniment in an operatic style (much to Kitazono's annoyance).[14] Tone's path emerged neither out of culturalism nor direct assimilation, but rather from his specific understandings of the politics and productivity inherent in poetic and musical innovation.

Mizuno Shûko, Tone's classmate from Chiba National University, had gone on to enter Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, or Geidai, and had been improvising with fellow musicology classmate Kosugi Takehisa, in what Tone describes as a "kind of dialog on cello and violin." After playing him a tape from these sessions, Kosugi invited Tone to join them, unprejudiced and in fact utterly unmindful of Tone's degree of musical training – which was then nonexistent. This gesture by Kosugi in itself had a deep impact upon Tone as a realization in practice of a leveling impulse he subscribed to theoretically. Tone bought a saxophone from Kosugi, purchased a Sony open reel tape recorder, and began participating.[15] Also joining the collective were Shiomi Chieko, Tsuge Gen'ichi, and Tojima Mikio of the Musicology Program – which addressed historical, theoretical, philosophical and ethnomusicological perspectives on music – and Tanno Yumiko of the Vocal Music program. Tone was the only non-student member. Mizuno's home provided a key venue for some of their earliest group improvisational efforts.

Their experiments were further encouraged and facilitated by the young ethnomusicologist, Koizumi Fumio:[16] after joining the Geidai faculty part-time in September of 1959, he gave the performers the run of the ethnomusicology studio and its collections of instruments – an incomparable venue within which improvisation could encompass a "music" that freely crossed from orchestral to ethnic instruments, technology, and daily objects, melding sound production from devices associated with vastly different forms of sonic practices.[17] Tone recalls that they carried on such improvisations at the studio daily from mid-1958.[18] Geidai itself was becoming a center for experimental practices and rethinking of artistic boundaries: for example, incorporating experts in science, and, in music, continuing the investigations into ethnomusicology that yielded the studio's treasure trove of instruments from around the world. For the group's performers, each of these instruments embodied different potentials, freedoms, and critical potentials. The different "ethnic" instruments were each bound to a complex performance tradition outside of a western orchestral frame – and thus provided a variety of rich alternatives to the latter's conceptual dominance of music with its particular, narrow, and oppressive systematicity. Such perspectives in

9. In English, see Gennifer Weisenfeld's *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde*, 1905-1931 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Tone also recalls Murayama's other claim to fame: his prewar Ninja pulp serials, which might be credited with the later boom in Ninja-related works post-WWII.

10. Especially notable as Kitazono has only a single published interview from his long career.

11. Tone's best friend had chosen Hori Tatsuo's work for a thesis topic, and, as Hori had been influenced by Philippe Soupault (with Breton and Aragon, one of the three founders of the magazine, *Littérature*, in 1919), was thus able to write on Soupault as well, while still satisfying the Japanese Literature concentration. Realizing that such a strategy would allow for additional latitude to take up broader research in his thesis, Tone cast about for a suitable topic. He later reflected, "I struck on the idea of doing a literary history of Japanese Surrealism, and perhaps with that all of my preferences to date were born (laughs)." Yasunao Tone, unpublished interview by Takashima Naoyuki and Shimazaki Tsutomu, Oiso, 1991.

12. Yasunao Tone, personal communication with author, 24 January 2006. Takiguchi was a key translator and critical interlocutor of Breton in Japan. Miryam Sas more charitably describes Takiguchi's complex negotiations with Breton as "[m]oving toward and away from Breton at once..." Sas, *Fault Lines* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 120.

13. Such as the Man'yoshû, later explored by Tone in his work. We might also look to the connection with the Chinese Shijing, or Book of Songs/Odes.

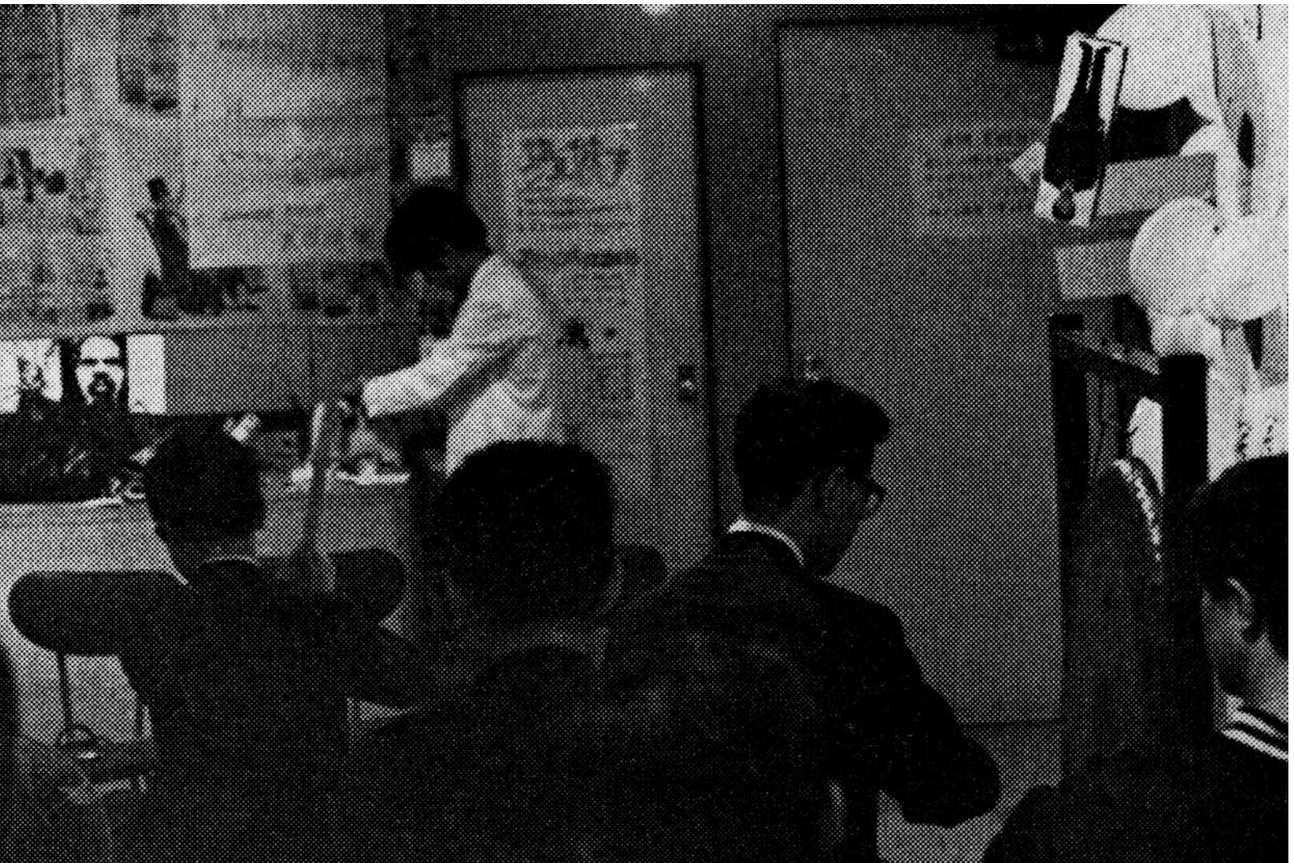
14. "Kitasono Katue's Sole Interview, Yû 8 (1975)," translated in Solt, "Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue (1902-1978)" (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 1989), 767-8.

15. "Interview: Yasunao Tone," *Revue et Corrigée,* no. 46 (6-15), 7; *Yasunao Tone*, (Nagoya: Aichi Geijutsu Bunka Center, 2001.

16. Koizumi was an expert at the time in both South Indian and Japanese traditional music forms. He joined the Geidai faculty full-time in April of 1960.

17. Such positive support made a deep impression on Tone, especially Koizumi's kindness in giving the group free reign in the studio amongst its valuable instruments. Yasunao Tone, interview by author, 17 January 2006. Mizuno's home was the other principal rehearsal space.

18. Yasunao Tone, unpublished interview by Takashima Naoyuki and Shimazaki Tsutomu, Oiso, 1991.



Toshi Ichiyanagi (second from left)
and Yasaunao Tone (standing, in white jacket)
playing "400 for Henry Flynt" by La Monte Young
at Fluxus Week, Tokyo Fluxus festival,
Crystal Gallery, Tokyo, Sept. 8- 14, 1965,
Quartery "Gendai Bijutsu," P.57, # 7, 1965

turn also allowed the group to explore simultaneously the European classical instruments in the studio, but with a newfound sense of freedom from orchestral tradition and a renewed interest in the sonic possibilities of these instruments. They found pleasure in exploring, for example, the sonic capabilities of stringed instruments, by playing them against the grain – either through bringing in techniques from other performance traditions, or even in a literal sense, by playing their wooden parts.

Tone's retrospective sense is that at the time, music was an art form acutely lagging behind its contemporaries, a "ghetto" of stultifying formal conventions; its hidebound nature thus promised an attractively wide range of possibilities for transformative practice. Tone and Kosugi were especially critical of the contemporary formalistic experimentations in music in the 1950s (in particular, play with dodecaphony and varieties of serial music), their paucity in comparison to contemporary innovations in the visual arts, and their sterility in comparison to ethnomusicology's revelations of alternative, richer practices to be found in gamelan and in the music of India. Tone recalls reflecting on this situation at the time, and wondering, "why must we bear such things in the age of Pollock?"[19] Visual arts were indeed the reference point for avant-garde transformation, particularly Pollock, whose name acted as a kind of shorthand for a range of action-experimentation that Tone saw as compatible in spirit with the critical contrasts derived from ethnomusicology.

Attention to contemporary international avant-gardism, ethnographic perspectives, and an engagement with a historical avant-garde as conceptual reference points broadly typified the contemporary surge of avant-garde activity in Japan in its simultaneous impetus from both international developments and its own local eclecticism. As reflected in their early writings, the group perceived themselves as musical innovators in the company of others, both local and internationally based, making similar efforts in a variety of artistic and performance areas – efforts which ultimately aimed at producing art that would throw off conventional and genre constraints to better grasp reality. Indeed, Tone's first essay on the group's activities, from August of 1960, advances considerable claims of progress in this direction, describing the group's "chance encounter" with "an experiment concerning an absolutely new music."[20] The key to this achievement, according to Tone's essay, was the group's pursuit, and perhaps even realization, of automatism. In automatism we in turn find the origin of the group's name, and identify, for Tone, its potent political aspirations.

19. "Interview," *Revue et Corrigée*, no. 46, 7; Yasunao Tone, interview by author, 17 January 2006.
20. Yasunao Tone, "Ôtomatizumu to shite no sokkyôongaku nit suite," *Nijû seiki buyô*, no. 5 (August 20, 1960), 15.
21. The event, held on September 26, 1960, was sponsored by Nijû seiki buyô no kai, a group of critics and directors. In addition to the newly named Music group, the event featured Wakamatsu Miki, Tsuda Nobuaki, Ishizaki Midori, Yokoi Atsuko, Sugata Keiko, Nara Kamiya, Aoi Yôko, Ichikawa Akira, Fujî Kô, and the Kuni Chiya Dancers.

This first essay of Tone's, and the group's adoption of a name, were both occasioned in August of 1960 by a special introduction in the fifth issue of Nijû seiki buyô [20th Century Dance] in anticipation of the group's performance at the "Nijû seiki buyô no kai" event the following month at the Kuni Chiya Dance Institute.[21] The group had performed publicly for the first time the previous year, in support of the Kuni Chiya Dancers at the Toshima Kôkaidô in Ikebukuro – but without a name. The connection with the dance world had arisen from Mizuno's part-time job, accompanying the Kuni Chiya Dancers on piano.[22] Kuni Chiya had generously allowed the group use of the rehearsal space for their improvisations during the dancers' rehearsals, and through this connection arose the opportunity to make a larger, public debut.[23]

While the group had been improvising together since the previous year, Tone's essay, "On Improvised Music as Automatism," specified a more recent origin for the practice that defined the group's activities: "In May of 1960 the members of our group chanced to encounter [sôgû shita] an experiment concerning an absolutely new music. It was an improvisational work of *musique concrète* done collectively."[24] Tone's earnest description of this encounter captures his passionate desire to bring to humanity, through a new music, a discovery as momentous as Surrealism's practice of automatic writing. It also locates his and the group's project within a diverse avant-garde involved in exploring and transforming the world of the actual, the world of the everyday.

Tone indicated that their works' divergence from prior forms of *musique concrète* rested on two procedural refinements: "our adoption of improvisation within *musique concrète,* and our recording of the actual sound without the addition of any mechanical processing to preserve the purity of the spontaneous method..."

Both aspects were vital, however, to creating and preserving the twin aspects of their momentous discovery. First, according to Tone, group improvisation might escape egotism and humanism in seeking "to attain the universality of automatism, Jung's Collective Unconscious at the base of each Personal Unconscious."[26]

Here, Tone proclaimed their desire to realize, sonically, nothing less than the Surrealist quest for what Blanchot called "the revelation of the real functioning of thought by automatic writing."[27] They would simultaneously avoid the perils of egotism, which would often lose rapport with the characteristics of the materials and "descend into mere ornament."[28] The materials for their sound works could instead lead them to true sonic materiality: "...our

22. Kuni Chiya was of the Neue Tanz school of dance; her husband was in the upper ranks of the Socialist Party.
23. Our retrospective view of this activity must not reduce it into the confines of genre. Tone emphasizes that this was not an interaction between musicians and dancer, but rather, according to the group's conception and practice, one between artistic productions that both featured visual and sonic components in their performance. Yasunao Tone, interview by author, 17 January 2006.
24. "*Gutai ongaku,*" rubied as "*myûjiku konkurêto.*" Tone, "Ôtomatizumu to shite...," 15.
25. Idem.
26. Tone, "Ôtomatizumu to shite...," 16.
27. Blanchot, "Reflections on Surrealism," *in The Work of Fire,* trans. Charlotte Mandell, 92.
28. Tone, "Ôtomatizumu to shite...," 16, quoting Tono Yoshiaki's criticism of Miro's pure spontaneous method.

pure spontaneous method was no simple improvised performance, but rather a utilitarian improvisational musical performance based on *musique concrète,* concrete sounds [gutaiteki na onkyô]."[29] Freed of egotism through group improvisation, the performers in turn could encounter the pure materiality of sounds – in fact, a second, unconscious world of things. This could then be preserved on tape, without further manipulation, as a successfully realized work.

Tone's essay asserts their unprejudiced approach to sound-emitting materials in a simple list of everyday items whose order equalizes and disregards classic distinctions between musical and non-musical objects:
" ...we prepared a variety of materials for music concrète for recording onto the tape. Numerous items such as drum cans, washtubs, water jugs, forks, plates, hangers, metal and wood dolls, a vacuum, 'Go' stones, cups, radio, gardening reference books, a wall clock, cello, a rubber ball, an alto saxophone, prepared piano, etc. were readied as sound sources."[30] His description of their pivotal May, 1960 improvised interactions with these "sound sources" asserts their deep spontaneity, as an encounter between a universalized mind moved by the actuality of things:

> Once we started the tape to make a recording, the innumerable sound materials arranged before us strangely and intensely impressed us with a sonic image. Our improvisational performance then began completely spontaneously. And thus, these innumerable emitted sounds that in everyday life go unnoticed or are recognized only out of necessity made us feel as if with the movement and collision of the materials themselves, the items cancelled themselves out, and we could grasp their materialized unconscious breath.[31]

29. Idem.
30. Tone, "Ôtomatizumu to shite...," 15.
31. Idem.

Tone explicitly identifies the historical antecedent for this discovery:

> In this manner our first experimental work was completed, but we at once noticed that it was a method analogous to that defined in the first Manifesto of Surrealism: '[Surrealism, n. Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express –] verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner, the actual functioning of thought….Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.' We were excited by this discovery, and decided to continue it consciously. And so our second work, "Automatism No. 1" was completed.[32]

Tone goes on to compare their methods directly to those of the collaborative work by Soupault and Breton, "Les champs magnetiques" (The Magnetic Fields) – the first product, according to Breton, of their marathon sessions of automatic writing, and hence the first Surrealist work. The very title, "Automatism No. 1" – that is, the first automatism – implies this relationship (with an additional pun supplied by the means for the work's creation and preservation: literally, by magnetic fields, i.e. magnetic tape recording).[33] All of these parallels, quotations and examples mark the essay with Tone's aspiration to share in an analogous program of discovery and creation – a pretension closely related to the group's decision, that very month, to name the collective the Music group [*gurûpu ongaku*].
Tone's identification of the original practice of automatic writing as the historical analog of the group's musical practice, and the group's designation of their second, intentionally-produced improvised work as "Automatism No. 1," both speak to the gravity with which they regarded their activities – but this was a seriousness that emerged from, and was bound up with, a playful exploration of sonic possibilities. This serious play in the service of investigating actuality – closely associated with a complex but ultimately liberational politics – places the group squarely within a broader contemporary avant-garde community in Japan.[34]
The group's choice of name in August of 1960, however, sought to ground their current practice as succeeding to, as well as revising, the politics of a famous historical avant-garde.

32. Idem. The work may be heard on Group ONGAKU, "Automatism (ôtomatizumu)", *music of group ONGAKU,* Hear Sound Art Library 002, 1996.
33. Tone, "Ôtomatizumu to shite...," 16; André Breton, *Conversations: the Autobiography of Surrealism,* trans. Mark Polizzotti (New York: Marlowe and Co., 1993), 43.
34. See William Marotti, "Political aesthetics: activism, everyday life, and Art's Object in 1960s Japan," *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies* (forthcoming).

In his essay, "Reflections on Surrealism," Maurice Blanchot considered the continuing legacy and potentials of the Surrealist movement from a post-WWII perspective – in which it was seemingly at once everywhere and nowhere. At Chiba National University, this had been the first essay from *La Part du feu* Tone translated in Professor Shigenobu's class. Blanchot argues that the automatic message was Surrealism's "central discovery," one in which the freeing of words is bound directly to the possibility of human emancipation. Its politics was inextricably bound to the aspirations of Marxism, and amounted to a kind of alternative materialism:

> ...[L]anguage disappears as an instrument, but only because it has become subject...
> When surrealists speak of 'freeing' words, of treating them other than as little servants, it is a veritable social revindication they have in view. There are men and a class of men that others think of as instruments and elements of exchange: in both cases, freedom, the possibility for man to be the subject, is called directly into question... On one hand, in automatic writing... the word and my freedom are now no more than one... But on another side, this freedom of words means that words become free for themselves: ...words have their own spontaneity.[35]

Blanchot's complex argument expounds upon Surrealism's simultaneous banishment of prior literature and art while persistently resorting to literary and artistic means, insisting that its political commitment and freedom were indissociable from those means – and those means, from revolutionary politics.
Tone himself has spoken of the extent to which he felt dogged in the 1950s by the dominance in criticism of a kind of reductive materialism, one that, for example, disparaged the better indigenous Surrealist works for their frivolity, and lack of "value as thought" [*shisôsei*] – that is, their lack of weighty engagement with the conventionally-identified issues for political criticism.[36] In fine arts this desire for immediate, tangible political commitment was manifested in the artistic preference for Socialist Realist work, and in literature, in a decline in critical popularity of much of the work of the interwar modernists (as well as a dismissal of the centrality of Freud's insights to Surrealism).[37] Tone's response had been to gravitate to that which had been devalued, gaining an interest in issues of language and repetition – for example, in the works of Gertrude Stein – that would

35. Blanchot, "Reflections," 88, emphasis added.
36. Yasunao Tone, unpublished interview by Takashima Naoyuki and Shimazaki Tsutomu, Oiso, 1991.
37. Tone criticized the post-WWII reception of Surrealism, and in particular, the work of members of the Surrealism Study Group (including Tôno Yoshiaki, Ôoka Makoto, Iijima Kôichi, and several others, all Tokyo University graduates roughly five years older than Tone), for neglecting-by intent or by ignorance-the centrality of Freud to Surrealism. Tone had attempted to join the group in the late 1950s, but was refused admission.
38. As Tone puts it, "The best stuff was disparaged, called frivolous, without value as thought. So I thought I'd like to become frivolous." By the same token, while Tone had political concerns, he disliked literature that got too "political"– that wore its politics cheaply. Yasunao Tone, unpublished interview by Takashima Naoyuki and Shimazaki Tsutomu, Oiso, 1991.

both become lifelong, and lead through Surrealism on to an increasing appreciation for Dada.[38] By the time of the group's adopting of their name, we can see a synthesis in Tone's writing by which the group's practice is related to a politics of culture, one authorized through the practices of a historical avant-garde (including not only the Surrealists, but a broad range of related explorations, including the Surrealism-related ethnographic considerations of Michel Leiris and Georges Bataille). The continuing attraction and relevance of such historical practices, in turn, and their productive potential once reconfigured, may well have been mediated and strengthened for Tone by his encounters with arguments such as Blanchot's.
In Blanchot's essay, automatism's potential "emancipation of words" posits the indissociability of human emancipation and language, where "my freedom" is bound to that of words acting for themselves, words given over to their own sensual spontaneity. Blanchot's analysis gave political weight and validity to the kind of investigative play with language, composition, improvisation and sound that continued to attract Tone's interest. Such valorization would have been reinforced by Shigenobu's confiding to Tone of his disappointment in the other students' appreciation of automatic writing: he both echoed Blanchot's supreme valuation of the practice and intimated that Tone had achieved an initiate's perspective – a compliment that Tone still recalled nearly four decades afterwards.[39]
The first three chapters of "Les champs magnetiques" had been published in 1919 in the pages of *Littérature* [Literature], the magazine founded that spring by Aragon, Soupault, and Breton. When Tone proposed to name their collective the Music group, he had this historic magazine's title in mind.[40] The group's adoption of the name, Music, asserts the same combination of antiphrasis and urgent supplantation, humiliation and liberation, which Breton, Aragon, and Soupault entitled their magazine, in which nascent Surrealist and Dada works appeared side by side.[41] In *Littérature,* "literature" was to be mocked, but also freed, via new writings generated by new procedures such as the automatic message. When the editors posed their survey question – why do you write? – as a "trap" to bait contemporary authors (whose answers were printed "in order of mediocrity") the question nonetheless remained central to their own enterprise, and was bound up with the question of method.[42] Blanchot's essay emphasized the urgent seriousness behind the more obvious mocking, antiphrasical relationship to literature evident in both the magazine's title and the notorious survey's question: "We remember that the first

39. Yasunao Tone, personal communication, 5 December 2005; *Revue et Corrigée*, no. 46, 7.
40. Tone added "group" to avoid the confusion that might result from referring to the group as just "music" [ongaku] (Japanese permits no capitalization). Yasunao Tone, interview by author, 17 January 2006; Yasunao Tone, unpublished interview by Takashima Naoyuki and Shimazaki Tsutomu, Oiso, 1991.
It is for this reason that I have abandoned the common practice of referring to the group as "Group Ongaku" (or "group ONGAKU," as on their HEAR sound art library cd) as the non-translation of the Japanese word for music, *ongaku*, obscures this central relationship to Music as a whole.
41. Breton stresses the contemporaneousness of Dada and Surrealist practice in this formative period, as evidenced within this and other magazines ca. 1919-20. Breton, *Conversations*, 44. The magazine's title was by Valéry, in ironic quotation of the last line of "Art Poétique" by Verlaine: "And all the rest is literature." Breton, *Conversations*, 34.
42. Breton, *Conversations*, 43.

journal of those who were going to become surrealists was called *Literature*. Nor was this ironic."[43] As Blanchot argued, "Words are free, and perhaps they can free us; one has only to follow them, to abandon oneself to them, to place all the resources of invention and memory at their service." In the magazine, writing would continue, urgently, but "literature" could not remain as it had been constituted: it needed to be rethought at the deepest levels. No poetry after Auschwitz, proclaimed Adorno; but earlier, for Breton and his compatriots, no literature after WWI.

For Tone, asserting the deeply analogical relationship between the Music group's and that of the formative years of the Surrealists did not mean a simple repetition of this historical gesture. For Blanchot, our freedom was bound to that of words. With the Music group, Tone and his compatriots would free not words, however, but sounds and things. As his 1960 text asserts, their procedures could reveal the "materialized unconscious breath" of the items of the everyday world, the hushed whispers of things speaking their secrets. Freed of "egotism," "electronic manipulations," the assumptions of the traditional categories and very definition of music, their practice would encounter the "concrete," the "true" through a "spontaneous," "utilitarian," "pure" improvisational encounter with sound objects. Tone's descriptive vocabulary resonates with the desire to penetrate to the true nature of things without the abstract mediation of formalistic materialism, and without the limits of traditional artistic and musical procedures and without genre boundaries. In this they joined in the contemporary quest to investigate actuality through art.

Having developed through an ethnomusicologically-informed improvisational practice of instrumental tradition-leveling in the Geidai studios, the group's practice now aspired to complete and move beyond the original project of *musique concrète,* to "have you see the true form of the *objet sonore* in which the degrees of transparency and opacity, dampness and hardness resound within the tempest of immediacy [*chokusetsusei*]."[44] "*Objet sonore*" [sound object] derived from a certain European conceptual vocabulary, in which a given sounding body could produce a variety of sonic objects; in contrast to the presumed invariability of a note, the sound object would be linked to time and location.[45] Here, Tone speaks of it as revelatory of the "tempest" of the immediate,

43. Blanchot, "Reflections...," 90.
43. Blanchot, "Reflections...," 90.
44. Tone, "Ôtomatizumu to shite...," 16. Tone explicitly speaks of their aspiration to go beyond Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry's practices of *musique concrète.*
45. The note is abstract. As Tone wrote in 1961, "[t]he pure musical note - it is not sound, but rather the concept of sound [oto no gainen] itself. That is because it is nothing but a point in a coordinate system. Compared to the sounds of the natural world that encloses us, it is like a deformed pet animal that we have made over the years." Yasunao Tone, "Han'ongaku no hô e," *Gurûpu ongaku I* (concert program), Sôgetsu Kaikan Hall, September 15, 1961.

a messenger bearing secrets of a non-static world of actuality. In this way, Tone's concept of their actions brought the notion of an objet sonore into a wider set of discourses and practices in the contemporary avant-garde concerning the "objet," in which the gesture of setting any item forth – be it a well-formed work, found object, installation, or even the artist's performing body itself – was to call for a radical scrutiny of the item in question. Such tactics were notable particularly among the young artists involved with the yearly, anarchic art exhibition, the Yomiuri Indėpendant; the members of group Music had myriad connections with these artists. Particularly in the case of Tone and Kosugi, these sorts of resonances in the group's practice would lead to a continuing expansion of their own work to join with these broader experiments. Thus, while divergences among group members would lead to the Music group's fragmentation, both Kosugi and Tone would submit works for this exhibition, beginning with Tone in 1962. I will close with a brief examination of this work, which demonstrates Tone's particular route within this expanding field of avant-garde investigation and provocation.

Tone at the Yomiuri Indėpendant: *Objet* and Immediacy

Tone was close to a number of artists prominent at the Yomiuri Indėpendant exhibitions; in addition to visiting the exhibitions themselves from around 1960 onwards, he spent time with Neo Dada during their gatherings at Yoshimura Masunobu's atelier, the "White House," in Shinjuku, and was invited to participate in a number of subsequent events. Tone and Kosugi in particular became notable for their participation in a wide range of artistic practices and events, epitomizing the tendency at the time for avant-garde activity to disregard prior practical and genre-based separations, combining in new, productive experimental forms.

In 1962, Tone made his first submission in the Yomiuri Indėpendant exhibition, "Têpu rekôdâ" [Tape Recorder], a piece that went through several evolutions before its final form. Tone had initially thought to submit a reel to reel tape machine (this was before the days of small, portable recording and playback devices), but, losing his nerve, painted the device in the hopes of its being more readily accepted. Dissatisfied with this, he then engulfed

the entire device in a large white cloth bag of Kosugi's, and, with a thirty to forty minute endless loop tape loaded into the device, submitted the exhibit as a "sculpture."[46] Tone would go daily to the exhibition and switch on the machine which, hidden within the cloth, would produce intermittent, curious sounds.[47] The title of the piece gave away the nature of the joke, if read (the presence of a hidden tape recorder that made a shapeless lump of a cloth bag produce sound), but the work itself assumed a shape similar to many partially or fully concealed *objets* designed to provoke curiosity and further interrogation. Tone's innovation to the practice of *objet* at the exhibition was to integrate sound into the work, and while other exhibits that year were sound-emitting, Tone's was perhaps the first to make its sonic component the very focus of the attention the *objet* commanded.[48]

Tone's official submission for the final exhibition in 1963, "Something Happened," though little-remarked upon in print, presented a truly uncanny *objet*.[49] While other artists presented works that literally extended out into the everyday world, Tone's brought the everyday world into the museum.[50] With the assistance of a friend on the staff of the *Yomiuri Shinbun,* Tone was able to get a stereotype mold [shikei] for the newspaper printed on the opening day of the exhibition.[51] Tone then poured plaster into the mold to produce a solid plaster version of that day's paper.[52] He then entered this work the same day, again as a sculpture. Viewers were then greeted by the strange sight of a work that somehow, despite its rock-solid form, reproduced that most impermanent but eminently topical of printed items, the newspaper of the day. The page reproduced by Tone featured an article on the exhibition itself, further heightening the work's paradoxical topicality. Events were fixed in stone – or rather, plaster – and, by the same token, the artwork was able to achieve ultimate topicality, to achieve the speed necessary to grasp the fleeting moment of the everyday. Without sound, the work "spoke" to the events in progress in its very location – as yet another form of Tone's investigation of "immediacy" through its objets.

46. Seki Shin'ichi, *Nihon andepandan ten: Zenkiroku* 1949-1963 (Tokyo: Sôbisha, 1993), 253. All exhibits had to be submitted under conventional categories, no matter how bizarre their form. Thus Kazakura Shô's 1962 submission, "sairen" [Siren], for example, a wall-mounted air-siren that would inflate and blow an attached plastic bag around with its fan when switched on, was entered as a "painting." Ibid, 250.

47. The tape, unfortunately, was stolen during the course of the exhibition, from which point the work became silent. Yasunao Tone, unpublished interview by Takashima Naoyuki and Shimazaki Tsutomu, Ôiso, 1991.

48. Takiguchi Shûzô, reflecting on Tone's piece in the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, commented that "Finally, the art museum has produced sound." Takiguchi Shûzô, "'Sakuhin' no kiki: dai jûsankai yomiuri andepandanten," in *Korekushon Takiguchi Shûzô 7*, ed. Ôoka Makoto (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1992) 431.

49. The name was in English. Seki, *Nihon andepandan ten*, 268. Tone also participated in the unofficial stunt of the "miniature restaurant" with Akasegawa Genpei, Kosugi, Nakanishi, Tanikawa Kôichi, and Kazakura Shô. See *Akasegawa Genpei, Ima ya akushon aru nomi! 'Yomiuri andepandan' to iu genshô* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shôbô, 1985), 196-7.Tone did notice Jasper Johns appreciating his work; this was the year that Johns proclaimed the Yomiuri Indépendant "the liveliest group performance in the world." "Interview," *Revue et Corrigée*, no. 46, 8.

Experiments in Agitation

During the same time period that the members of group Music were composing "Automatism No. 1," Japan was erupting in ever-larger demonstrations in opposition to the revision and renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (Anpo). All of the group members participated in the demonstrations in different capacities, though Tone, since he was no longer a student, lacked a ready entry to the highly organized and self-segregated protest groups.[53] As a group, however, the members of the collective staged a little-marked and little-remembered event that nonetheless speaks to their self-understanding of the political potentials of their work during this crucially formative period.

While the Anpo protests filled the streets by the Diet and by the Prime Minister's residence, the members of the collective took their distinctive experiments in improvisation and performance to the streets. They had been in the habit of borrowing the light van from Tone's family business (Gosan'ya Shôji) to conduct private improvised tailgate performances in different locations – for themselves alone – but on this occasion, according to Tone, they all climbed into the van and, with Tone at the wheel, rode through the streets performing their distinctive music. Lacking loudspeakers, their performance ebbed and flowed unnoticed and unheard by other drivers, distant demonstrators, or residents as the van sped along the streets. As fusions of art and political action go, this would seem to have been a fairly unproductive experiment.[54] Yet to understand the ways in which this action made sense is to return us to the complex world of art, politics, and the everyday world from which many of Tone's lifelong interests and experiments originate.

If the likelihood of the performance's having immediate effects was minimal, it nonetheless marks an attempt to conduct politics directly out of artistic performance: not as an adjunct to protest, nor through the conventional forms of agit-prop, but rather, through the political potentials of their practice itself. It also testifies to the group's consciousness of those potentials during this key, formative period. On the one hand, the action makes some sort of sense as protest only if one appreciates their aspirations of the moment: to fulfill a political legacy inherited from the historical avant-garde.[55] On the other, their attempt to bring their art into contact with the movement

50. These works included Takamatsu Jirô's "Himo" [Cord], to which a line was attached extending the work through the museum and all the way to nearby Ueno station, and Nakanishi Natsuyuki's "Kurippu wa kakuhan kôdô o shuchô suru" ["Clothespins assert agitating action"], where clothespins were either picked up or attached to passersby. See Marotti, "Political Aesthetics."

51. This was the actual mold used to generate the plates for printing the paper.

52. Tone had planned to produce one of these for each day of the exhibition, but it turned out to be too much trouble to repeat the gag. Yasunao Tone, interview by author, 17 January 2006.

53. He did join the protest by cultural workers a day or two after the June 15, 1960 death of Kanba Michiko, in which the famous television star, Hongô Jun (son of stage actor Hongô Shin), purportedly screamed "murderers!" at the charging riot police. Yasunao Tone, personal communication with author, 2 February 2006.

54. "It doesn't [really] sound like a protest. On the highway, people don't pay attention, so it's not very effective (laughs)." Yasunao Tone, interview by author, 17 January 2006.

55. As Tone reflected, "If someone had asked us then we probably could have explained much more clearly, but now it's so remote..." Yasunao Tone, interview with the author, 17 January 2006.

within the city's expanding arteries – where economic change was bringing about massive transformations in life and work patterns – joined with a broader tendency to investigate and interact with the spaces of daily life.

Two years later, Yasunao Tone and fellow Music group member Kosugi Takehisa engaged in a related experiment in bringing their techniques into direct contact with the everyday world through improvisational action. Again, the venue was a space of commuting and circulation central to the contemporary transformations in daily life in the capital, but one allowing for a real possibility of interaction: the circular Yamanote-sen train line ringing central Tokyo. In this 1962 event, artists carrying strange art objects boarded Tokyo's central circular subway line, the Yamanote, put on white face paint, and proceeded to improvise ritualistic happenings in the train cars and in extended performances on station platforms. Separately from the main group of artists (which included Tone's friend, Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Takamatsu Jirô, and Kawani Hiroshi), Tone and Kosugi arrived with mobile tape players and boarded the trains. Tone and Kosugi were to have joined with the main group when it made its way to a rendezvous at the Ikebukuro station, but Nakanishi's nerves gave out at Ueno, bringing about a premature end for the main group's activities. Tone and Kosugi on their own completed a circumnavigation of the system, interposing sound and the train environment.[56]

The planning for the event anticipated the possibility of their improvisatory actions having direct effects upon the other commuters, the involuntary witnesses to the event. The manifesto for the event imagined possibilities for the "agitation" of its witnesses, using a physics-influenced vocabulary of voids, aggregates, molecular attraction, and agitation – much as Tone had in his 1960 essay, and again in "Han'ongaku no hô e," his note in the September, 1961 program brochure for the Music group's performance at Sôgetsu Kaikan Hall.[57] Seeking a way to describe their intentions outside of conventional artistic notions, Tone and the other artists conceptualized their art's potential to explore and interact with the everyday world through a scientific, albeit imaginative, account of concrete actuality.

56. The details of their actions remain unclear, even in Tone's memory. He vaguely remembers recording and playing train noises, but it is unclear whether a suitable portable recording device existed at the time. Tone suspects that they used a radio in some way. Yasunao Tone, personal communication to author, 5 August 2005.

57. See Yasunao Tone, "Han'ongaku no hô e," in *Gurûpu ongaku I* (concert program), Sôgetsu Kaikan Hall, September 15, 1961. Akasegawa Genpei's early writings and contemporaneous works (such as his wrapping pieces) also feature a similar recourse to scientific language and procedures - as do those of a number of associated artists.

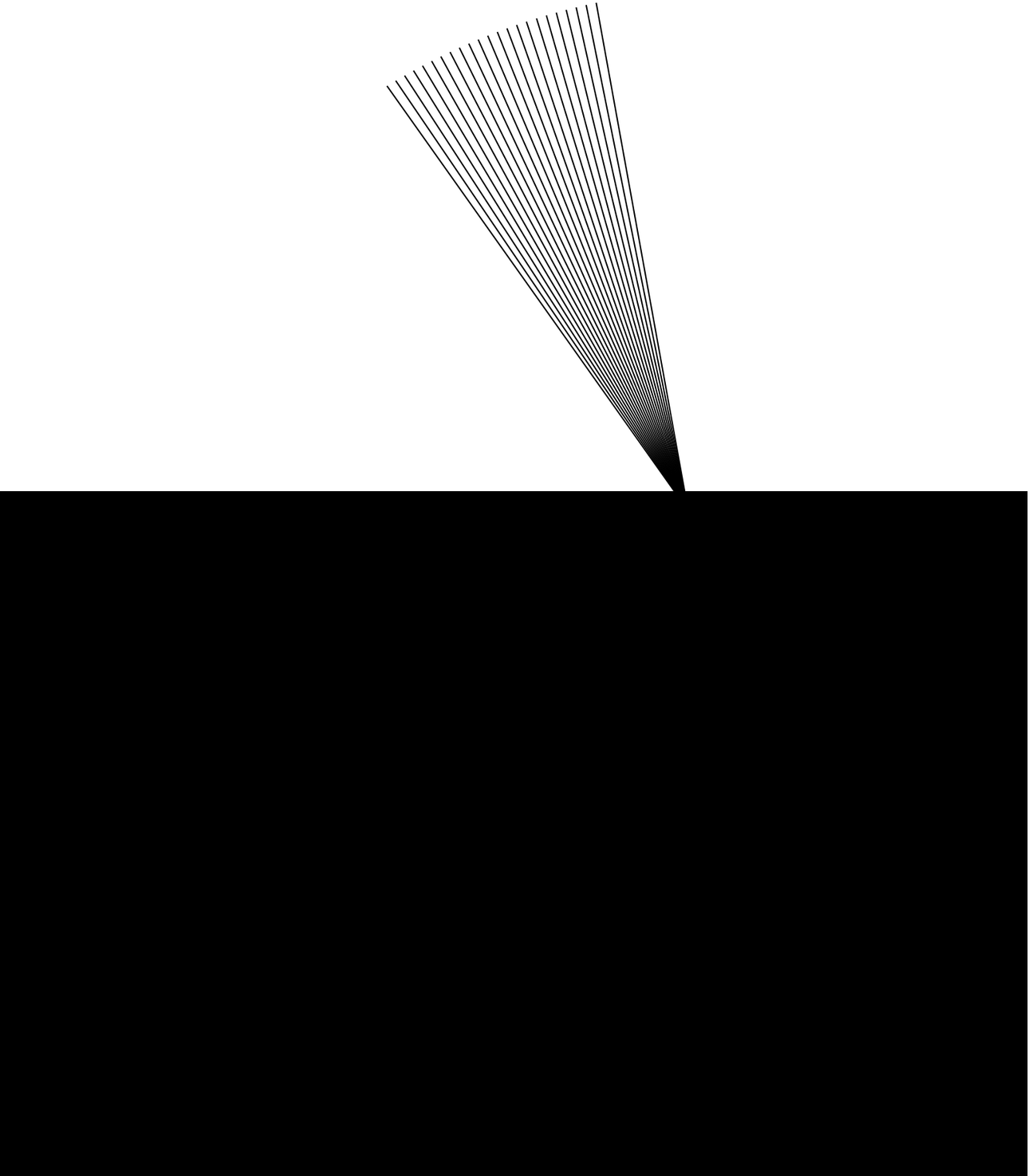
Subsequent to the performance, round-table discussions in late 1962 with Kawani Hiroshi and Imaizumi Yoshihiko, the editors of the radical art magazine, *Image* [*Keishô*], and artists Akasegawa Genpei and Kinoshita Shin led to the theoretical foregrounding of the anarchism-associated concept of "direct action" [chokusetsu kôdô] in their artistic practice itself as it expanded into intensified, critical and provocative engagement with everyday life – including Akasegawa's 1000-yen project.[58] When Akasegawa was prosecuted, Tone became an active member of the supporting discussion group, and testified for the defense at trial. While Akasegawa was ultimately convicted, Tone's testimony led to a subsequent escalation in his own critical and theoretical writings: it is from this point that Tone came into his own as a critic.[59]

Conclusion

Tone is one of a number of artists in Japan and elsewhere who, in the 1960s, working across forms and genres, created a kind of investigative art practice and innovative aesthetic oppositionality. While his work also remains ground-breaking as art and music, returning to Tone's route into artistic performance reveals his distinctive contribution to an insurgent avant-garde. The issues such work raises not only add to our understanding of the particular politics of culture in Japan in the 1960s, but also open out onto the global stage, illuminating aspects of the 1960s as a global moment. Like many of his contemporaries, Tone drew upon historical and current avant-garde theory and practice (including both Euro-American and domestic work) and enlivened it within a specific Japanese context. His work demonstrates how the artistic and political are inseparably bound, especially in moments of crisis. If one of the products of his early experimentation has been a long, fruitful, and distinguished career as an artist, performer, and critic, we can also appreciate its particular origins: Tone's distinct route into the broader forms of artistic and political action of the global 1960s.

58. See "Chokusetsu kôdô no kizashi: hitotsu no jikkenrei nit suite," *Keishô* 7 (February, 1963), 15-23, and "Chokusetsu kôdô no kizashi II" *Keishô* 8 (June, 1963), 1-18.

59. Yasunao Tone, personal communication with the author, 2 February 2006 (confirming an observation by Kawani Hiroshi in *Bijutsu Techô*). The writing also was what made Tone finally financially independent from his family.

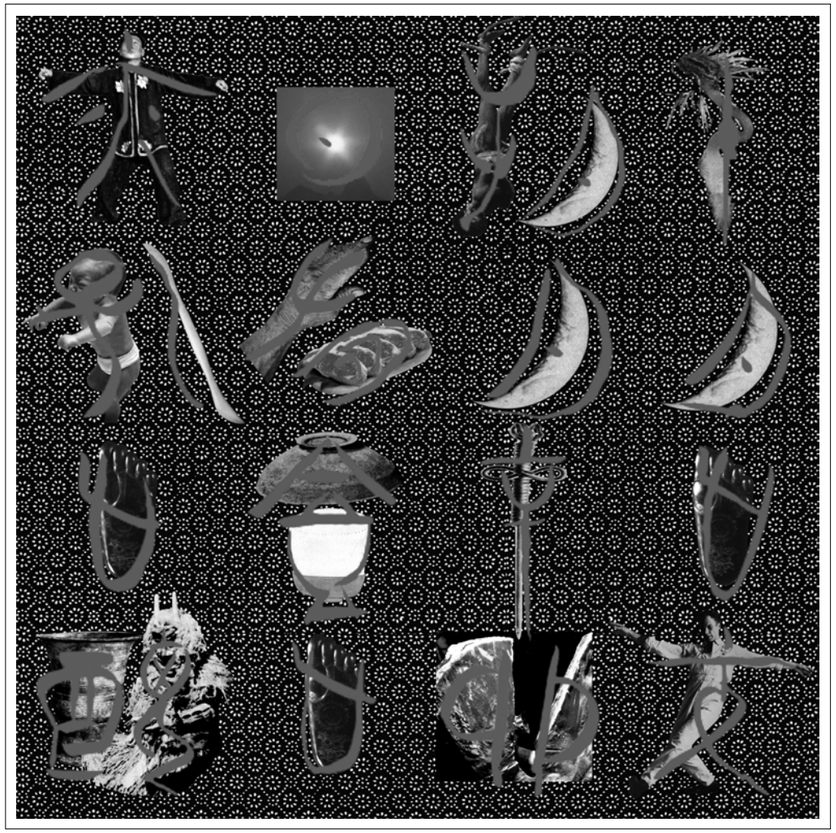


Musica Iconologos
Robert Ashley
March 25, 1993

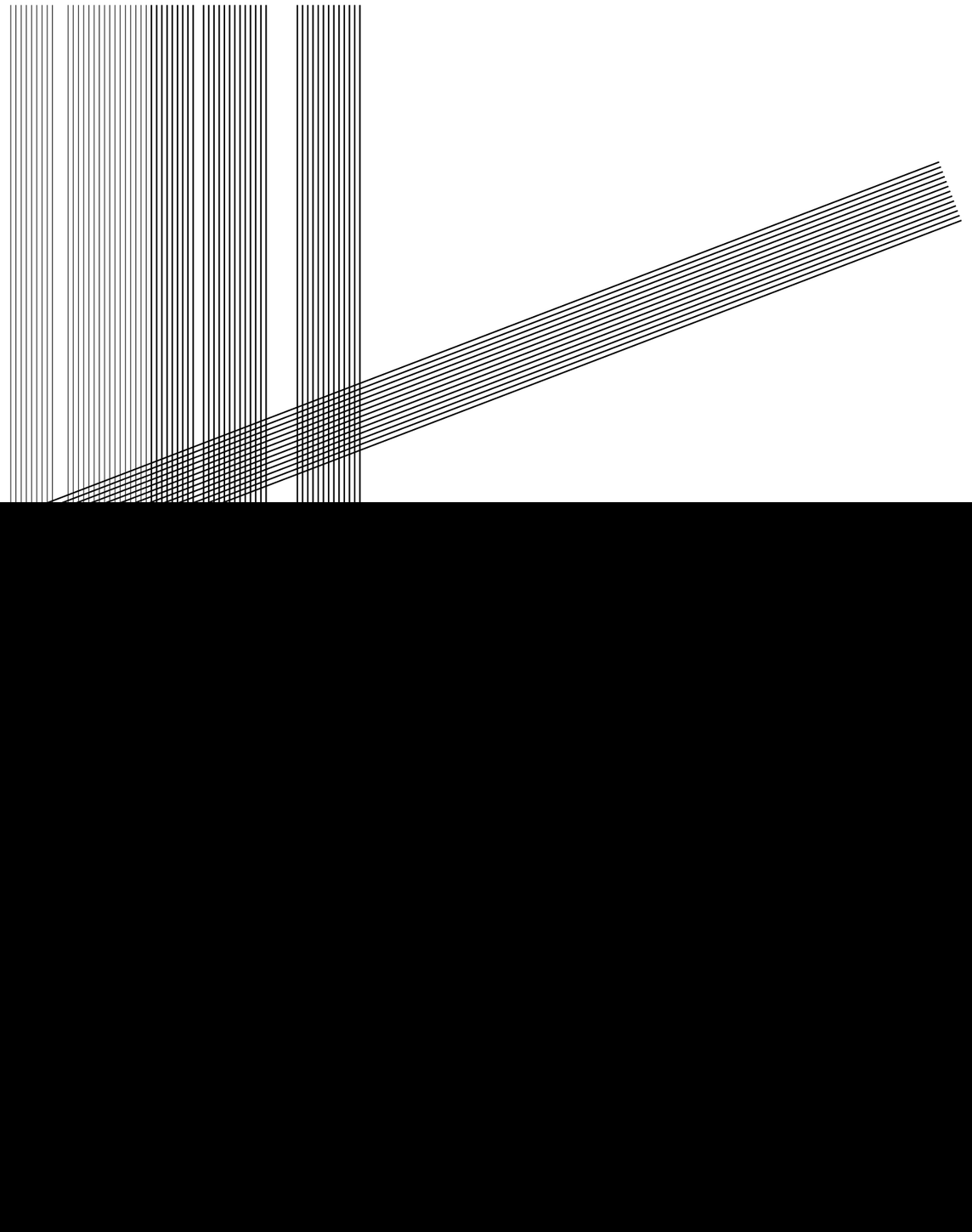
THE PICTURE of the music – the "notation" – is what the music sounds like, and, if there is to be a picture, the picture comes first. The composer learns early on that the notion is naive that he/she makes the music as sound (in the mind or in the instrument) and then makes a picture of it – unless the music in the mind or in the instrument conforms to pictures that have already been worked out. This has been the main concern and one of the most disturbing discoveries of this century. What to do then? Change the music in the mind to make it conform to the language of existing pictures? Or make a new picture language and, on faith, accept the music that the picture produces?
How peculiar that intuition should take this form of obedience. In MUSICA ICONOLOGOS Yasunao Tone accepts his obedience in a manner that would make his spiritual mentors, the unknowable (to me, if not to Yasunao Tone) scholar monks of ancient Chinese philosophy and the French structuralists of our time, proud. The picture is everything.
No person could imagine what sounds the pictures that are the notation of MUSICA ICONOLOGOS will produce.

In compositions prior to MUSICA ICONOLOGOS Tone studied many methods of "translating" images (specifically, things seen) to sounds, but for the most part the images in those compositions had been, first, translated into some form of machine-behavior. Examples: in *Music for Two CD players* the laser patterns on the surface of a compact disc are "rearranged" by the composer in performance (Rauschenberg erases de Kooning) and a new pattern of sounds from the CD is heard; in *Lyrictron for Flute* the letter-images in an archive of letter-images (a text) are arranged by communications from a flutist in performance and computer software translates that arrangement into a musical "form," a macro-arrangement of sound from the computer; in *Molecular Music* light-sensors arranged by the composer on the surface of a projection screen interpret (in any degree of detail, depending on the number of sensors used and depending on the complexity of the image) the visual form (template) of a projected image and send that information to sound-producing instruments. MUSICA ICONOLOGOS uses the most detailed analysis of the image that is available to us, the pixel resolution of the video image, and so the randomness-factor in the match of signifier to sound, which is the

playful element in the performance versions of the three compositions described above (and which is the decisive value-element in almost any notation, including the most traditional – what does the picture mean? and can it be "played"?) is not characteristic of this composition. In MUSICA ICONOLOGOS the sound is an encoded description of the picture in utmost detail. In the mythical future (or today) somebody can translate the sounds of this compact disc back into pictures. That research would produce pictures of *photographs* that Tone has chosen to "depict" the series of Chinese characters from which the sounds of the compositions on the compact disc are derived. ("Jiao Liao Fruits" is made from 44 characters. "Solar Eclipse in October" is made from 262 characters.) What we are hearing is not the picture of a Chinese *character* (a form of writing that we might recognize as Chinese), but the picture of Tone's interpretation of that character in photo-images from our visual experience. Tone has "translated" the Chinese character for us, not into words (which obviously would be inappropriate), but into its signifier, both in its form (its visual template) and in its literal trace as a word or combination of signs in the Chinese language. The result is a music of startling accuracy and purity. The mind of the listener shifts into a mode of interpretation of sound and absolute belief in meaning that rarely occurs (perhaps never can occur) in the concert hall, but that always occurs when, for instance, we overhear persons speaking in a language we don't speak. That shift will occur whether or not the listener has read these remarks or has any other knowledge of the technique of the composition. It is one of the deepest things in us. MUSICA ICONOLOGOS invokes a mode of musical thinking that I have not experienced before.



Solar Eclipse in October, Group show
Ear as Eye: Drawings by Sound Artists,
Los Angeles Contemporary
Space Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA,
Feb. 27 - Mar. 23, 1997



In Parallel
by Dasha Dekleva

IN AN INTERVIEW, Yasunao Tone explained: "In playing on the limits of music, I obtain a thing like a film, or a painting, or a dance. From the beginning, I had a transversal approach to media."[1]
This approach has made Tone a versatile figure whose oeuvre eludes linearity and, sometimes, ready visibility. Nuances that historically and conceptually situate Tone as a composer and performer are revealed gradually through many projects created between various media, as well as through numerous collaborations with other artists and musicians. Presented here is a certain trajectory drawn from a much longer list of multifaceted activities. It focuses on a background that informs Tone's more recent endeavors and was guided by the revelation of several little-known episodes that the artist shared via phone conversations and correspondence.
Imagine a dance performance that starts with a splash of water from somewhere above, followed by another splash falling from a different direction. A raincoat-clad performer-musician moves about the stage, pursuing the shifting gushes of water, which he tries to intercept with a bucket on top of his head. These gushes can no longer be termed musical accompaniment because they exceed playing a merely supplementary function.

Tone, who also acted as a performer of *Catch Water Music* during its 1965 premiere in Tokyo, conceived this composition. He was stationed in the balcony overhanging the stage and surrounded by buckets of water that he proceeded to empty onto the stage with thrusts in unpredictable direction and timing. Water here became the carrier of music as much as of dance; this audible, visual, and tactile medium prompted stage activity, its sounds modified by the performer's catch-miss choreography. It caused resulting activities to enter its fluid composition

1. Yasunao Tone, interview by Michel Henritzi, *Revue & Corrigée* 46 (December 2000), 9.

in turn – such as the sound of the running performer's steps, and whatever incidental sounds Tone's movement of buckets added. It was a strikingly haptic intermedia performance in which a dispersive element affected a seamless fusion of the interplay of senses.

This collaboration with Tatsumi Hijikata and his Ankoku Butoh dance troupe – one of the most radical artistic movements in postwar Japan – is one instance in a series of collaborations with various avant-garde artists that followed Tone's emergence on the scene of experimental music. His initiation into musical performance occurred when he joined Shuko Mizuno and Takehisa Kosugi's improvisational duo; along with Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, they formed Group Ongaku ("Music Group") in August 1960. Joined by other occasional members, they practiced in the ethnomusicology department at the Tokyo University of the Arts, which housed a large array of available Eastern and Western instruments. Their improvisational approach soon expanded to include any object to generate sounds, effectively conjoining the notion of readymade with Surrealist automatism and an action process in the spirit of Jackson Pollock's action painting. Pollock's vibrant method resonated among the Japanese avant-garde groups; many perceived in it a fresh approach for propelling the unadventurous state of Japanese art toward authentic, relevant, cross-cultural forms of expression.

From around the mid-1950s through the early 1960s, thinking in terms of action – the process of doing as opposed to the end result – opened up traditional artistic forms to innovation and experimentation with an emphasis on spatiotemporal experience. This included those who took their actions outdoors – as Neo-Dadaists who took their message to the streets, or Group Ongaku performing in such unconventional locales as the pier in Tokyo Bay, inside a car on a highway, or at friends' homes. Significantly, perceiving their music in terms of action was a decisive moment – described by Shiomi, for instance, as the moment when she realized that she "was performing an action of tossing keys, not playing keys to make sound."[2] For Kosugi, sound object as action furthermore displaced the need for sonicity; rather, a potentially soundless action, such as opening a window, was an equally significant element of a live musical performance, itself essentially always a mixture of aural and visual intake.[3] This kind of understanding propelled Shiomi, Kosugi, and Tone toward explorations of event scores that allied them closely with Fluxus artists and practices at this time. Recognized by both contemporary music and art avant-gardes through attendance and in press, Ongaku members quickly established connections with other experimental artists. The group's first formal concert, "Improvisation and Sound *Objet*," was at Sogetsu Art Center in September 1961, where Tone premiered his pieces for piano and magnetic tape. In the following year, he became engaged in over a dozen projects. These included several productions with dance groups, a debut "one-man show," a series of events performed with Kosugi, a happening on a Tokyo commuter train with Hi-Red Center members, an experimental film presentation, his first sound installation at the influential Yomiuri Indépendant, and his earliest graphic score, *Anagram for Strings*, which was performed during the inaugural 1962 Fluxus festival on a European tour.

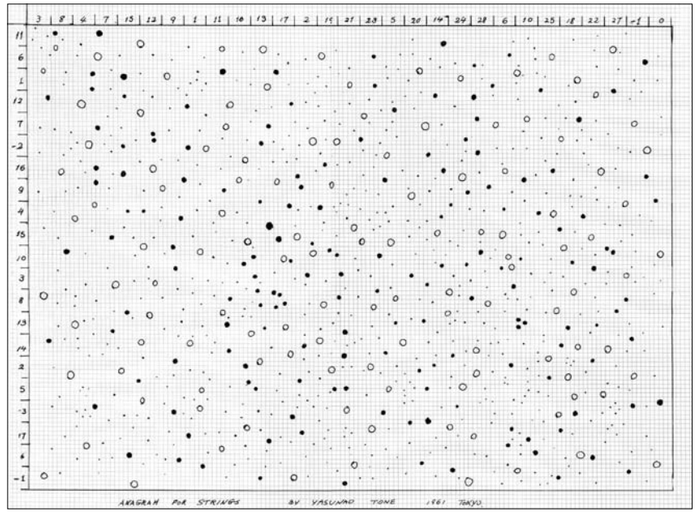
Historically, the surge of Tone's activity specifically, and avant-garde art in Japan generally, must be seen against the backdrop of the country's enormous economic and social transformations following the war. This surge must also be viewed in the context of the contemporaneous political unrest and great public demonstrations surrounding the 1960 renewal of the U.S. - Japan Security Treaty, collectively referred to as the *Anpo* crisis. Even if the work itself was not overtly political, the climate it embraced became a catalyst for change. For Tone, the opportunities for experimenting between or alongside various media precisely embodied this impetus.

2. Mieko Shiomi, quoted by David T Doris in "Zen Vaudeville: A Medi(t)ation in the Margins of Fluxus," *The Fluxus Reader*, Ken Friedman, ed. (Chicester, West Sussex; New York: Academy Editions, 1998; reprinted 1999), 110
3. Ibid.

Performing a score

Tone's first solo concert in February 1962 was titled *One-man Show by Composer*. The self-curated program consisted of an evening of varied musical pieces. Many were composed by Tone and performed by invited participants; a few were composed by others and performed by Tone. The show was intentionally presented in the space recently evacuated by Minami Gallery; assisting performers sat on straw mats spread on the floor.

Tone composed and prepared the 15 featured pieces in two prolific months, during which time he adopted the open-ended form of graphic notations that are usually interpreted through visual cues and written instructions. The score for *Anagram for Strings* (performed here prior to entering Fluxus annals) is populated with small white and black circles and dots, and with random whole numbers (positive and negative) along top and left edges. The realization of the piece involves drawing a line across the score and using basic arithmetic calculations that determine how a series of downward glissandos is to be performed.
Tone's *Music for Every Painting in the World* presented a simple, playful inversion of a musical act that consisted of backlit musical instruments whose silent shadows were cast onto large sheets of paper covering the walls. Several of his early electronic music pieces were also performed; at the time Tone referred to them as *musique concrète*.



Anagaram for strings
Instructions

1. Play downward glissando(i) only.

2. Draw an oblique line from left to right and play the oblique line intersects with the circles and dots.

3. See the point of intersection, then, where the horizontal figure is larger than vertical figure, play the number of the balance.
Where the vertical figure is larger than the horizontal figure, play the total number of both figures.

- ○ White circles denote long glissandi.
- ● Black circles denote medium long glissandi.
- • Dots denote short glissandi.

4. The piece may be played by any string instruments capable of making glissandi and any combination of string instruments.

One of the participants in the show was Toshi Ichiyanagi, who had recently returned from New York after attending John Cage's classes at the New School for Social Research. Ichiyanagi may have introduced graphic notations to Tone, given that New York-based composers Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, and Cage were inventing these scores in the 1950s . At that time, graphic scores gave room to sounds of the already fully expanded field of musical materiality (excluded from the conventional notational system), and were also a tactic for displacing the hierarchy of composer and performer by opening the work to a multiplicity of interpretations. The fact that these often purely visual scores renewed a dialogue between the ear and the eye, made them especially appealing to artists exploring the terrain of intermedia. Their versatility has been indispensable for Tone, particularly as a

means of transcoding written characters. Another example of Tone's early graphic score is seen in *Clapping Piece* (March 1962), a work that straddles an uncommon passage from performing an act to performing a notation. The score's enticing design is based on a Japanese family crest pattern seen "normally on the shoulder of a formal kimono. It is called *Nashi no sin* – meaning pear's core."[4] Intended for a group of performers who use their hands as instruments, the score's systematic rendition calls for a conductor employing the circle rotation technique (executed with an outstretched arm stopping at quarter points) according to which performers time their reading-enactment of the score. Yet the score only comes into play for performers individually once they become unable to maintain the first set of instructions: "Clap evenly and incessantly (not to attempt making rhythm)." This aspect of the work, both in its instructional brevity and in the foregrounding of a minimal, repetitive gesture, resembles certain qualities of event scores – a quintessential "form" for many composers and artists associated with early Fluxus.[5] The performative meaning of event scores can often (sometimes only) be grasped or imagined through reading. In other cases, their meaning does not become fully apparent unless one tries to perform what may at first seem boring, mundane, simplistic, or nonsensical tasks. Many Fluxus members were musicians and Fluxus had a penchant for performance activities, and so event scores offered an effective hybrid structure used to extend musical processes, if not so much new artistic aural practices, as Douglas Kahn noted, proposing further:

> ...Thus, the historically earlier question of What sounds? receded in Fluxus and was replaced with questions such as Whether sounds? Or Where are sounds in time and space, in relation to the objects and actions that produce them? Or What constitutes the singularity of "a sound"?[6]

These questions echo explorations by Group Ongaku; individual members embraced event score structure, but it was an intuitively shared direction. Tone's *Smooth Event* (1963) is typical of these explorations in its task – and music-oriented nature. He has performed it differently using radio, electric guitar, or contact microphone wrapped in his shirt. "Smooth wrinkles on any shirt or a sheet, anything made of cloth, inside of which contains anything [that] is able to make sound, such as a radio, any instrument or even an instrumental player. Performer may use ironing or anything to smooth the clothing."[7]

4. Email correspondence from Yasunao Tone, July 24, 2005.
5. Along with Ichiyanagi, Yoko Ono's and Nam June Paik's extended stays in Tokyo - 1962-64 and 1963-64, respectively - created links with Fluxus. Tone participated in Ono's May 1962 performance and Paik's later performances at Sogetsu Art Center. John Cage and David Tudor also held their debut concerts for Tokyo audiences there in October of 1962.
6. Douglas Kahn, "The Latest: Fluxus and Music," *In the Sprit of Fluxus* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993), 104.
7. Email correspondence from Yasunao Tone, July 16, 2005.

Yasunao Tone performing his
"Smooth Event"(1963),
Just Above Midtown/Dwontown gallery,
New York, Jan. 21 1983

Performing a circumstance

The term *intermedia* circulated in Tokyo by May 1967, when Tone organized, performed, and participated in a panel discussion using that term at Runami Gallery. Although Tone was not specifically aware of its origins until years later, the term's sudden emergence ricocheted from a 1966 essay by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins.[8]
And though the intermedia approach encompassed sensibilities underlying Fluxus works, it was clearly broader in scope and was, as Higgins mentioned, a phenomenon with a persistent history – yet one that was particularly relevant for contemporary arts. Without recourse to the Tokyo discussion, Ina Blom's interpretation provides a useful orientation point:

> ...As a term, "intermedia" was designed to cover those instances where the artist did not simply combine different artistic media, but worked against the grain of any categorial organisations by means of strategies of displacement. In contrast to the term "multimedia", "intermedia" did not denote a formal identification but rather a strategic intent or a performative. Then the medial aspect of the work could be described in terms of *transmedia*: that is, as an agent of change or transcoding...[9]

In significant ways, Japanese avant-garde groups actively pursued and anticipated such strategies of displacement. These began with the Gutai Art Association of Osaka-Kobe region in the mid-1950s and extended to numerous Tokyo groups – including members of Group Ongaku, Ankoku Butoh, and Hi-Red Center.[10]
Not surprisingly, the three Ongaku members who became associated with Fluxus (Kosugi, Shiomi, Tone) jointly organized the Intermedia Arts Festival in January 1969. On this occasion, Tone premiered *TV is a chewing gum for eyes* (title borrows a Frank Lloyd Wright epigram) for which he prepared film footage showing four people talking about television. The film, with sound, was projected during the performance above the same four individuals now sitting in chairs; the chairs formed a boxing ring-like square, surrounded by the audience. Once again, live on stage, the quadruplet was asked to discuss the subject of television. Suspended in mid-air was a toy cable car with a wireless microphone attached to it. As it circulated inside the square, the live voices came in and out of audibility, forming a discontinuous narrative, adding to the filmed talk and juggling the audience's aural attention. Television's gripping, numbing hold, as suggested in the title, thus achieved a transcoding, with a contrary effect. Here, the mechanisms that inhibit a viewer's capacity to receive and respond perceptually were rendered palpable through the ear, while the visual elements similarly unfolded on multiple levels: projected, spatial, kinetic.
The buzzing toy car-instrument – significantly imparting a pop sensibility unafraid of metaphoric implications – was a core mediator tying together the layered performance structure, where conceptual foundation hinged fully on experiencing the work. Tone's tendency toward more conceptually oriented work comes through another curatorial intervention in 1964. As Reiko Tomii pointed out, the local, cultural, and historically specific contexts framing the project carried important nuances. Particularly under question was the function of exhibition systems, accentuated when Yomiuri Indépendant, a newspaper-sponsored non-jury exhibition established in 1949 – that "had become the principle forum of anti-Art" – was suddenly terminated in 1964. In response, Tone staged *Jury Event: Tone-Prize Exhibition*:[11]

> ...To lend his enterprise an official aura, Tone assembled an impressive panel of jurors, including Yoko Ono, the Butoh dancer Hijikata Tatsumi, and the critic Tagikuchi Shuzo, who would each give a prize. He then placed an ad in a music magazine and drafted an application form. Yet he undermined the jury framework by awarding his namesake prize to every entry, essentially turning the exhibition into an independent...[12]

Hi-Red Center, with core members Takamatsu Jiro and Akasegawa Genpei, added a further spin to the project with an entry for *Cleaning Event,* a contribution conceived in reaction to the government's restrictive measures (the latter veiled under the preparations for the Tokyo Olympics that year). Ironically, the event took place in a busy Tokyo center about two weeks after the games had started. Participants, including Tone, wore white lab coats and surgical masks, and proceeded to clean a city street for several hours with materials that carried their subversive message: naphthalene, insecticides, metal polish, wire brush, sand paper, etc.

8. Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," *Something Else Newsletter I*, no. I (1966); reprinted in *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 18-21.
9. Ina Blom, "Boredom and Oblivion," *Fluxus Reader,* 65.
10. Hi Red Center associates often performed in public spaces (e.g., commuter train) and their work confronted social and political circumstances. In 1964 they received sudden media attention because of Akasegawa Genpei's *Model 1,000-Yen Note Incident* that involved a criminal investigation followed by a legal order and a guilty verdict. Yasunao Tone drafted the text on which the opening trial statement was based. See Reiko Tomii, "Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan," *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin,* 1950s-1980s (New York: The Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 20-22. A comparison of the concept 'intermedia' with the added meaning the term '*objet*' acquired in the Japanese context is revealing: "...Interest in *objet* in postwar Japanese avant-garde art stylistically paralleled interest in "combine," "assemblage," and "junk art" in the West. The single most important difference lies in the fact that the word "*objet*" came to signify a genre rather than a means of expression in Japan. In *ikebana* and ceramics, the concept of *objet* played an indispensable role in updating these centuries-old media. In the context of the Anti-Art tendencies from the late fifties to the sixties, *objet* was favored as a kind of art form outside of the accepted forms of painting and sculpture..." Excerpted from "Glossary" compiled by Reiko Tomii, *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky by Alexandra Munroe* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 397.
11. Reiko Tomii, "Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan," *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (New York: The Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 20.
12. Ibid.

Cleaning Event by Hi-Red center
realized by Yasunao Tone with
co-operation by Allan Kaprow,
in Multi Performance '72,
3 day performance festival at Cal Arts,
California Institute of Arts in CA 1972.

Photo by Shinobu Kanda

Five months after his arrival to the United States in June 1972, Yasunao Tone modified Hi-Red Center's *Cleaning Event* – subsumed under *Jury Event*, he "had it" – for an altogether different occasion when visiting Cal Arts in Los Angeles. He was asked to help motivate sufficient student participation for a project conceived by Shoji Miyasaka, also a student there. Tone then joined forces with Allan Kaprow, who was teaching at Cal Arts, and they organized Multi-Performance '72, a weekend structured around two simultaneous events and Miyasaka's *"A" Festival*. On the first day, participants were invited to gather on campus, where Tone gave succinct instructions for this *Cleaning Event*: "Participants have to clean their circumstances." Concurrently, *Delivery Event* consisted of cleaning up a campus field and extended to a frame factory nearby; the swept, raked, and picked up materials, for the most part leaves and twigs, were placed inside paper bags. Tone recalls that there were between 4500-5000 bags, each imprinted with Hi-Red Center's exclamation mark symbol on one side and the word "revolution" on the other. These were delivered to the hill where *"A" Festival* then took place. Here the participants first dug a large "A" pattern – each trench about 100 feet long – and filled them with *Delivery Event* packages over the course of two days, culminating in a burning fire. Afterwards, the hole was refilled with soil and seeds were planted – returning the "A" pattern to nature. (Tone explained that Miyasaka was inspired by a Kyoto summer festival during which a large character meaning "big" is dug on a hillside to contain a fire-burning ritual.) An unexpected twist to the project occurred when somebody informed the police that possibly dangerous revolutionary activities were taking place, based on observed torches, cans of kerosene, and a banner inscribed "Revolution." At some point during the extensive *Delivery Event*, a police helicopter started hovering above the participants. Everything was diplomatically explained to law enforcement and worked out in the end, although it did entail firemen's presence during the successful festival burning – and their eventual on-duty decision to expedite the fire's self-consummation.

Performing the phenomena

For several years prior, Tone had been the advisory editor for *Bijutsu Techo*, Japan's leading art magazine, and had worked on an anthology of Japanese avant-garde art activities of the 1960s. The entire project (50 Years of Avantgarde in Japan 1916-1968, A Chronology) was published in two special issues in 1972. Subsequently, traveling abroad presented Tone with a chance for much-needed replenishment. After an initial stay in San Francisco and a trip to France, Tone arrived in New York as intended. But what was to be a temporary break from Tokyo ended up becoming a full resettlement. Shortly upon his arrival, he participated in the 10th Annual Avant-Garde Festival. The Festivals, organized by Charlotte Moorman from 1963 to 1980, were originally one-day events featuring avant-garde music. They grew over time to include numerous artists and all forms of art. Fluxus presence was strong throughout (Moorman was loosely associated with the group), but the Festivals really created a broad sense of community among New York artists and *in situ* communion with the public at large. They were always staged in unusual locations, which contributed to their optimistically chaotic presentations.

In 1973, the Festival took place at Grand Central Station, for which Tone planned two performances. One unrealized piece intended to take advantage of the Doppler effect, to be produced by singing participants from two trains moving in opposite directions – but no trains were moving at the allotted time. The second piece, *One Day Wittgenstein...*, was inspired by a story Tone found in Norman Malcolm's memoir about the titular philosopher mentor and friend. It is a humorous moment in the account because it describes an instance when Wittgenstein, the tireless deconstructionist of logos, performed a dance-like reenactment of our immediate solar system with his walking companions; Tone adapted the following excerpt to instruct a group of volunteers:

.

> ...Once after supper, Wittgenstein, my wife and I went for a walk on Midsummer Common. We talked about the movements of the bodies of the solar system. It occurred to Wittgenstein that the three of us should represent the movements of the sun, earth, and moon, relative to one another. My wife was the sun and maintained a steady pace across the meadow; I was the earth and circled her at a trot. Wittgenstein took the most strenuous part of all, the moon, and ran around me while I circled my wife. Wittgenstein entered into this game with great enthusiasm and seriousness, shouting instructions at us as he ran. He became quite breathless and dizzy with exhaustion.[13]

Varied, synchronized rotations reappeared in *Clockwork Video* (1974), an experimental mixed media score created for Merce Cunningham's dance company. For this first and typically open-ended collaboration, Tone decided to use three video cameras installed on handmade turntables set to turn at different speeds the way clock hands do. The assemblies were mounted on the studio's mirrored wall while recording the dance performance: one camera panned at the rate of a full rotation a minute; the second camera, like a clock's long hand, made one rotation per hour; and the last moved slowly, making a single rotation in twelve hours. The video recordings were broadcast simultaneously on three monitors on stage. Real-time sounds picked up by pointed "shotgun" microphones added to the idiosyncratic relationship with the space; images of dancers were captured at different points – with cameras either facing the studio stage or its reflections in mirrors.
Clockwork Video fit the way Cunningham intentionally invited non-relational, chance encounters with one's body as much as with the stage environment and music. As Tone described this and future collaborations: "My music doesn't have any connection with dance. It's a relation without relation, which is part of Cunningham's philosophy."[14] The freedom of this approach allowed radically independent forms to coexist uniquely in unrehearsed performance, with both ends of the collaboration opening up equally new ground. Cunningham's position in this sense corresponded to the nonhierarchical, co-authorship logic of graphic notations.
Tone's affinity for randomness and his forward-looking experimentation with technology contributed to a consistently unconventional approach to music and produced a fertile and dynamic interstice in turn.

13. Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958; reprint 1978), 51-52.
14. Yasunao Tone, *Revue & Corrigée* 46, 10.

The longest-running score, one that became part of Merce Cunningham Dance Company's repertory in *Roadrunners,* was *Geography and Music*. Performed from 1979 to 1987, the piece incorporates readings from selected entries found in a late 10th-century Chinese encyclopedia. Tone discovered its rare, exhaustive volumes at the Columbia College library – freely accessible, to his surprise. For *Geography and Music* he culled some 15 accounts from the encyclopedia; they had been written down as genuine, empirical descriptions of foreign places and people but now read like fantastic and humorous narratives, reminiscent of Jorge Luis Borges' stories about imaginary beings. Instructions for reading the text, the specified sound system design, and the accompanying music add important dimensions to the performance of the piece, from which this excerpt is taken:

> In an eastern sea dwell Ocean Men. They are five to six feet tall and resemble human beings. Each one has a face like that of a beautiful woman, but lacks feet. Their skin has the shimmer of jade with no characteristic scales. The hair on this skin is of five different colors, each hair about one inch long. The hair on their head is similar to a horse tail and grows to about five feet. Sexual organs are identical in the male and female. Old widowers and widows are the most easily captured among the group. All the Ocean Men are friendly to man and have never been known to attack man.[15]

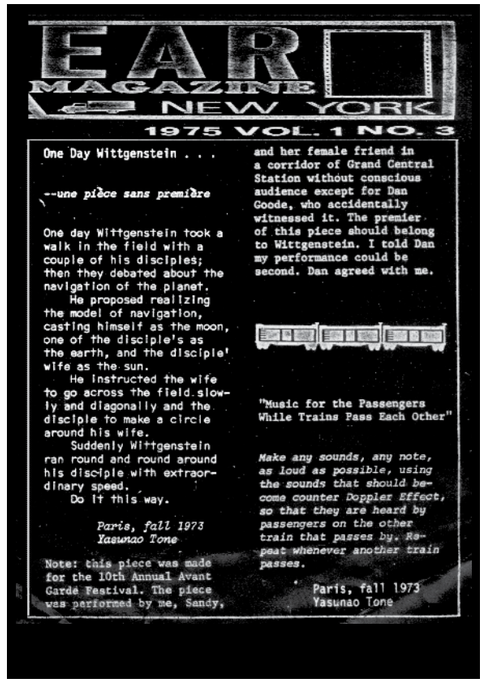
The selection and translation of these entries follows a turning point in Tone's career, which was initiated by his study of ancient Chinese characters. Several years earlier, in 1976, he performed *Voice and Phenomenon* at the Experimental Intermedia Foundation. Held at Phill Niblock's loft in New York, it marked the beginning of related compositional and performance processes, including the ambitious *Man'yo-shu* project. Here for the first time, Tone superimposed images over Chinese characters to represent their pictographic origins. The final multi-sensory presentation began with selected poems from the Tang dynasty, a period considered the golden age of Chinese poetry. After much meticulous grammatical and etymological research, Tone had looked for illustrative images in books and magazines, tapping into a kind of collective image memory (some of which was inevitably filtered through ever-popular *National Geographic* magazines photos).

15. Yasunao Tone, "Geography and Music for Amplified String Music and Text," *Conjunctions*, no. 28, Bard College (1997), 275. A mini-CD with a recording of a 1983 realization with text read by John Cage and Takehisa Kosugi was released in 2000 by Ashiya City Museum of Art & History / Aichi Arts & Culture Center (with catalog in Japanese).

Tone performed his reading of the Chinese original to a prepared film where the images were sequenced to match the poetic text and to guide the pace of reading, with corresponding characters also visible. Susanne Fletcher followed with the reading of English translation in the same way. In the second part, Tone first drew the poems in standard kanji and then in ancient characters. The process of his calligraphy writing was shown on a video monitor. This time, color slides of images were superimposed to visually align with ancient calligraphic forms, thereby superficially revealing the inherent, deeper interaction between visuality and a writing system.

The focus of this performance was grammatological and largely reflected on the unconscious pictorial origins of written language – though the poetic and artistic appreciation of the gestural and vocal convergence throughout the long history of Chinese calligraphy was not precluded. However, in a counterpoint to this rich tradition, Tone's use of generic images was a significant reversal. The transposed images essentially superseded the normal visualizing processes, unleashed in this case through a reading of poetic text. This was done precisely in order to expose the sensorial basis that underlies writing and the formation of concepts. As such, the performance exemplified the experiential dimension of language-based art that was intentionally excluded from conceptual art practices during that period. Tone's use of written language situates his work notably and consistently apart from the correlated body-mind divide in this respect.[16] Rather, he points toward a loss of information that comes with perceptual detachment, which he made more radically implicit in *Man'yo-shu* project.
The fact that the vision-centered paradigm has historically dominated Western thought only adds to the complexity of his undertaking. This paradigm places a privileged figure over ground, which is not unlike seeing-reading a written character long disconnected from its pictorial origins that allowed for a different type of perceptual interplay and meaning. These correspondences show how Tone's conceptual methodology remains fundamentally rooted in the multi-sensory, bodily, and participatory aspects of his earlier work. Conversely, this same rooting always anticipated changes in technology and motivated him to explore ways to displace its default logic. By conjoining language, image, sound, music, and performance, Tone's work has resolutely kept an edge that remains ahead of increasingly entwined media.

16. See Hannah Higgins's discussion of concept art in contrast with conceptual art in "Experience in Context," *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 114-121.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1975 VOL. 1 NO. 3

One Day Wittgenstein . . .

--*une pièce sans première*

One day Wittgenstein took a walk in the field with a couple of his disciples; then they debated about the navigation of the planet.
He proposed realizing the model of navigation, casting himself as the moon, one of the disciple's as the earth, and the disciple' wife as the sun.
He instructed the wife to go across the field slowly and diagonally and the disciple to make a circle around his wife.
Suddenly Wittgenstein ran round and round around his disciple with extraordinary speed.
Do it this way.

Paris, fall 1973
Yasunao Tone

Note: this piece was made for the 10th Annual Avant Garde Festival. The piece was performed by me, Sandy, and her female friend in a corridor of Grand Central Station without conscious audience except for Dan Goode, who accidentally witnessed it. The premier of this piece should belong to Wittgenstein. I told Dan my performance could be second. Dan agreed with me.

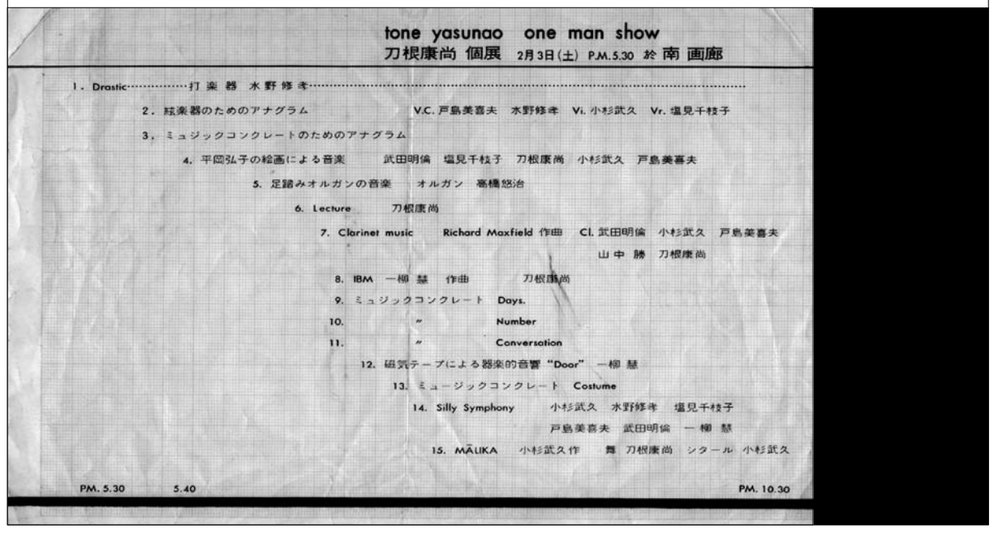
"Music for the Passengers While Trains Pass Each Other"

Make any sounds, any note, as loud as possible, using the sounds that should become counter Doppler Effect, so that they are heard by passengers on the other train that passes by. Repeat whenever another train passes.

Paris, fall 1973
Yasunao Tone

The instructions for "One day Wittgenstein...," in the Ear Magazine New York, Vol. 1 No.3, 1975

Program for
"Yasunao Tone, One Man
Show by Composer,"
Minami Gallery, Tokyo, Feb. 3, 1962



tone yasunao one man show
刀根康尚 個展 2月3日(土) P.M.5.30 於 南 画廊

1. Drastic……打楽器 水野修孝……

2. 結束器のためのアナグラム V.C. 戸島美喜夫 水野修孝 Vi. 小杉武久 Vr. 塩見千枝子

3. ミュジックコンクレートのためのアナグラム

4. 平岡弘子の絵画による音楽 武田明倫 塩見千枝子 刀根康尚 小杉武久 戸島美喜夫

5. 足踏みオルガンの音楽 オルガン 高橋悠治

6. Lecture 刀根康尚

7. Clarinet music Richard Maxfield 作曲 Cl. 武田明倫 小杉武久 戸島美喜夫
山中 勝 刀根康尚

8. IBM 一柳 慧 作曲 刀根康尚

9. ミュジックコンクレート Days.

10. 〃 Number

11. 〃 Conversation

12. 磁気テープによる器楽的音響 "Door" 一柳 慧

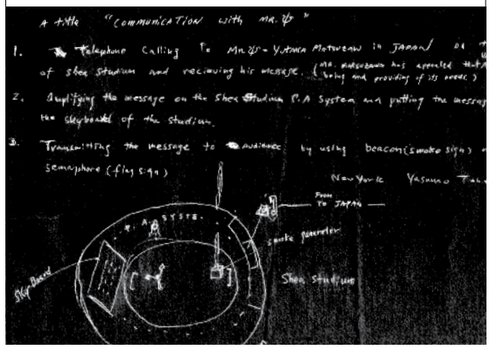
13. ミュージックコンクレート Costume

14. Silly Symphony 小杉武久 水野修孝 塩見千枝子
戸島美喜夫 武田明倫 一柳 慧

15. MĀLIKA 小杉武久作 舞 刀根康尚 シクール 小杉武久

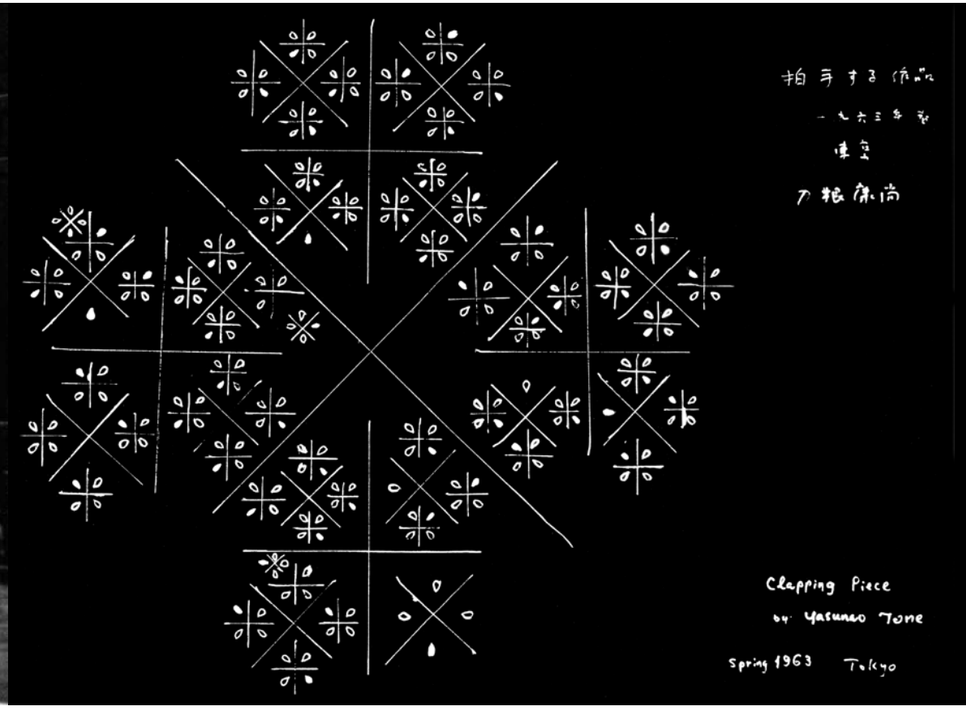
PM. 5.30 5.40 PM. 10.30

Photos and the diagram,
11th Annual Avantgarde Festival
"Communication with Mr. ψ "
at Shea Studium, in Queens,
NY, Nov. 16, 1974



"Clapping piece" (1963),
Yasunao Tone - conductor, performers -
Robert Ashley (first from right)
with his graduate students in Mills
"Repetition and Structure,"
Mills College, Oakland, CA, Nov. 4, 1972
Photo by Osamu Konno.

Illustration. Nashi no shin,
Japanese family crest
(next page on top)



Tone putting an award ribbon on
to a work, "Tone Prize Exhibition" (1964), Naiqua
Gallery, Tokyo, 1964
Photo by © Minoru Hirata

"Floating Sotoba" at the passenger
terminal ship pier 92 in the
15th Annual Avantgarde Festival
New York, NY July 20
Photo by © J. Bekaert
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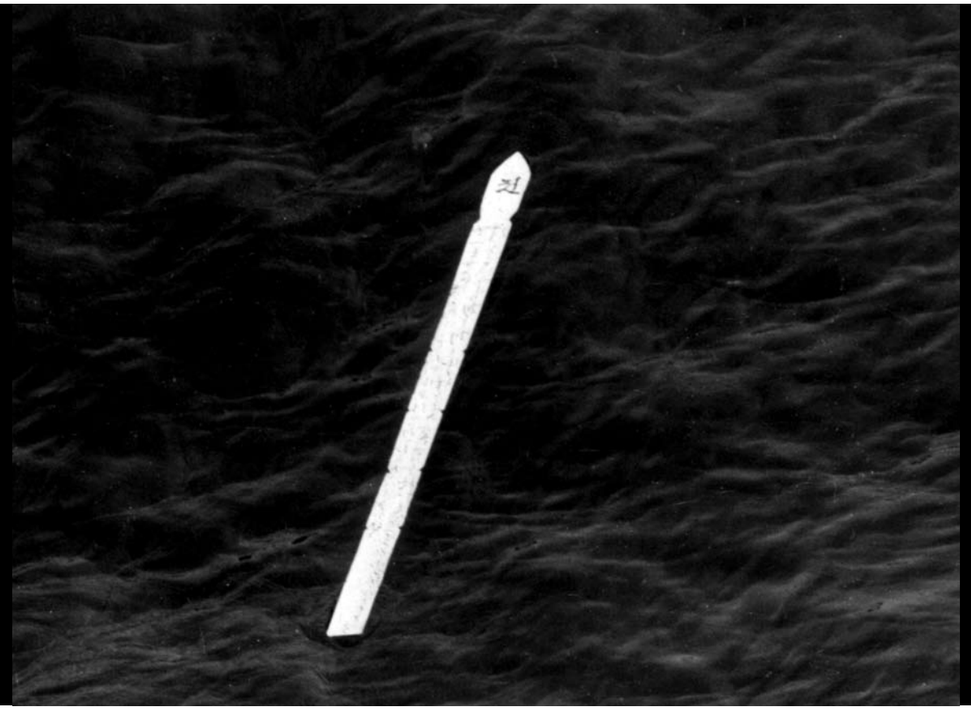


"Clockwork Video," photo 1, rehearsing dancers
and a video camera and a shotgun mike
on the turntable moves round like clock hands (front)
and photo 2, a dancer with TV monitors on the stage,
a music for Cunningham' "Event #82" and "Event #83,"
with Merce Cunningham company Cunningham Studio,
New York, NY, Feb. 9-10, 1974

Interview with Yasunao Tone
by Hans Ulrich Obrist
at Yokohama Triennale in August, 2001

HUO_ I wanted to begin at the beginning and ask you about these first jobs you had, after graduating Chiba University, because you came from literature; this whole series of interviews is very much about interdisciplinarity, and I am very interested to know how you came from literature to music.

YT_ Well, I studied Japanese literature and my thesis was on Dada and Surrealism. Then, I already had some interest in contemporary music, since the NHK (national broadcasting network) had a considerable contemporary music program in the mid-fifties. Also, I was interested in avant-garde art and avant-garde poetry. That naturally made me inclined to choose Dada and Surrealism as a subject for my thesis. I went to many contemporary music concerts where I saw a classmate Shuko Mizuno quite often. After graduation Mizuno, who was enrolled at Tokyo College of Art and Music, introduced his new classmate Takehisa Kosugi to me sometime in1957.

HUO_ Whom I met in Paris.

YT_ Oh you did. So, we became very close friends and after a while Kosugi and Mizuno started a sort of improvisational music duo. They asked me to join them, along with other students. That became Group Ongaku later. We thought then that our improvisational performance could be a form of Automatic Writing.

HUO_ Automatic Writing? That was in the 50s?

YT_ Yes, in a sense that the drip painting of Jackson Pollock was a form of Automatic Writing. I thought we were doing action painting in music. On top of that most of us were ethnomusicology students and that made me think we were successors to the anthropological Surrealists and also members College de Sociologie, such as Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris, because ethnomusicology has a common ground with anthropology in studying different cultures. I once let Kosugi borrow a book by Lucien Lévy-Brühl[1] called *Primitive Mentality*, which he devoured and never returned to me. It may sound surprising we were thinking our improvisation in terms of Surrealism in the late 50s, but I don't consider Surrealism only in terms of the orthodox Surrealism of Breton, but more in terms of a kind of research on humanity. Besides, the anthropologist Surrealists were precursors to post-structuralist thinkers, such as Gilles Deleuze, which has been of interest to me. In addition, Jacques Lacan was also a Surrealist.

HUO_ Who were the influential figures at the time? Was John Cage an influence?

YT_ No, I don't think we were able to listen to John Cage until 1962, the year he came to Japan, because there was no such thing as a John Cage record yet. But, we knew about Cage, especially his silent piano piece *4'33,"* but only through word of mouth. When I heard about the piece I thought "Wow!" In terms of influence in the late 50s I think artists such as Pollock, Willem De Kooning, Robert Rauschenburg and Jasper Johns were more influential because at least we could see their art in Japanese art magazines at the time, but we could not hear Cage's music.

HUO_ Was your research into Dada an influence?

1. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939) was a French philosopher, psychologist, and ethnologist. He was professor at the Sorbonne from 1899 and editor of the Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger. Particularly known for his research on the mentality of preliterate peoples, he wrote numerous studies, including How Natives Think (1910, tr. 1926), Primitive Mentality (1922, tr. 1923), and Primitives and the Supernatural (1931, tr. 1935).

YT_ Yes, I was pretty much thinking about Dada, and the idea for naming our group, Ongaku, meaning "music" was taken from the *Littérature*, the name of Dadaist magazine. I thought about Duchamp first though, and Erik Satie though there was no way to listen to his music. In terms of influence, I thought how were we able to realize the ideas of Dada like "état dame" or ready-made objects in a form of sound. For instance, the question I posited then was that could Duchamp's Paris air or Urinal be translated into musical performance. This led us to use everyday objects as instruments.

HUO_ And was music interesting?

YT_ Well, not western classical music, but music in a broader sense. Kosugi, for instance, wrote a piece heavily influenced by Noh music. We were interested in everything, for instance, Indian music. Ravi Shankar came to Japan in 1959. We were also very interested in Jazz, such as Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy. I personally was interested in many forms of Kabuki music. In that way we worked with Western classical music by relativizing it with various ethnic music. Most of the musicians we knew didn't see the outside, but we were always looking outside music.

HUO_ So you made the field broader?

YT_ Yes, in some sense.

HUO_ That's very interesting because that's similar to what Fluxus was also doing in art. This leads me to a question about the group, because your work has also been associated with Fluxus. At the same time, when I was reading your biography I discovered that you participated in many other groups. I was wondering whether you could tell me a little about these different groups, such as a group called Ongaku, which was about improvisation.

YT_ I talked a little about the group Ongaku already. I also was involved with Hi-Red Center, which was a group involved in social happenings. Their work, *Cleaning Event* was introduced and performed by Fluxus in New York. Soon after Hi-Red Center started Nam June Paik came back from Germany, sometime in 1963, and stayed in Tokyo until 1964. Yoko Ono came back from New York in 1962 and Toshi Ichiyanagi returned from New York also in1961.

HUO_ After studying with John Cage?

YT_ Upon returning, I think, Toshi had one agenda, which was to disseminate Cage through schools of music in Japan. Another was to organize a Japanese group that would later become part of Fluxus. He succeeded with the former quite effectively. Regarding the latter, he asked us to send some tapes of our pieces and notations to George Maciunas. But he never tried to organize concerts of Fluxus-style pieces. That was in 1961, so Fluxus didn't exist yet.

HUO_ So, in 1961 you had a group called Ongaku and this was connected to Fluxus?

YT_ Not necessarily, only Kosugi, Shiomi and myself were, but Ichiyanagi was not.

HUO_ So it wasn't so much Ongaku that connected you to Fluxus so much as you as individuals?

YT_ I think so. Mizuno for instance, was not interested in this outside music.

HUO_ Can you tell me a little bit more about the agenda of the group Ongaku, because on the one hand it's very interesting that you had this specialised musical context about improvisation, and on the other you had the more socio-political group, which is Hi-Red Center. Could you tell me more about these two groups and how you brought politics and music together?

YT_ Actually, Ongaku as a group was never interested in politics per se. When we were about to organize the group, Ongaku, then the timing of that coincided with the climax of the anti Japan-US security treaty movement, Zen-Gakuren or All Japan Student League, which mobilized tens of thousands of people to surround the Japanese Diet and force prime minister Shinsuke Kishi to resign. Almost every student seemed to want to be a part of it. That was an atmosphere rather than a form of ideology or political consciousness. We breathed this atmosphere like an air. I sensed the same taste of liberation from the participation in demonstrations as when we worked with improvisation.

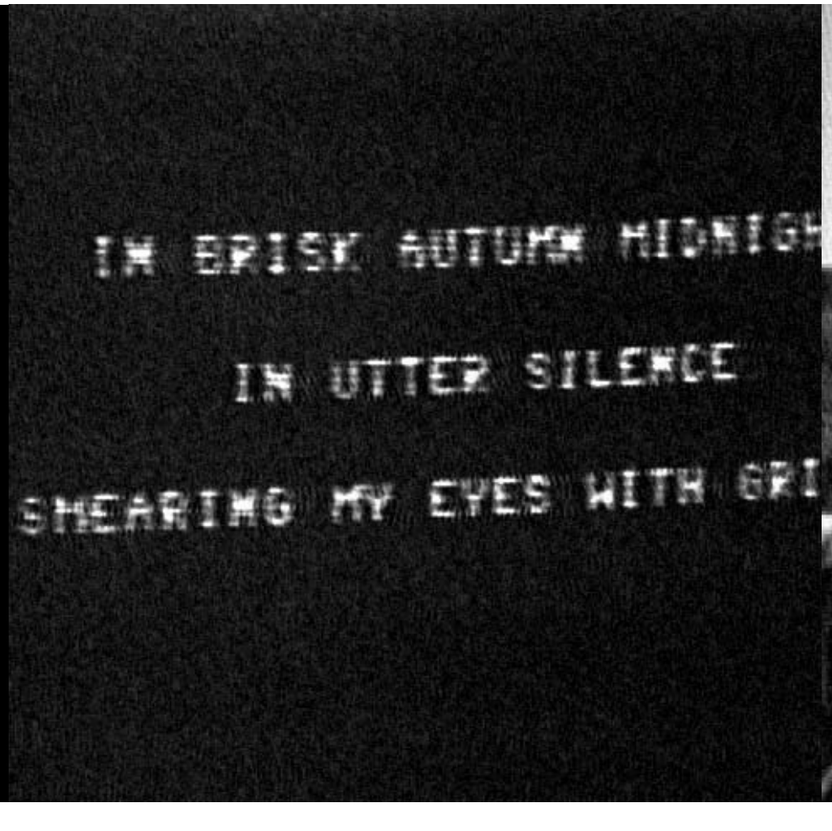
HUO_ It was because of the outer environment?

YT_ Very much so.

HUO_ I also interviewed Arata Isozaki and I was particularly interested in his memories of the 60s in Japan, which was a very interdisciplinary time with music, architecture, and art. I was wondering if you could tell me a little about this change of disciplines in the 60s?

YT_ I think so, too. Matter of fact, Isozaki once invited us – Neo-Dada Organizers, Ongaku, Tatumi Hijikata, who was the founder of the Butoh, et al. – to his house for performances, which were not very successful events though. About the inter-disciplinarity of the time, I can tell you some examples. I edited a 450-page chronology of Japanese avant-garde art from 1916-1968 in the Bijutsu Techo, a leading Japanese art magazine, in 1972. When I tried to enter categories of art in separate columns for the period between the mid 50s and late 60s I found that many entries of the period were inseparable. In other words, art, architecture, music, dance and theatre were so intermingled that I ended up making all the columns into one. I was partly responsible for this as well, because in 1962 I had a concert at the Minami Gallery where Jasper Johns, Wols, Vautier and Tinguely had one-man exhibitions. Naturally, many artists came, so I introduced many artists to each other. Meanwhile, I was thinking to get our group involved with the Neo-Dada art movement, which was a group of young artists whose activities

Barbara Held playing *Lyrictron for Flute* (far right), and photo (left) showing the poem the flute performance generated on a computer monitor - from documentation video of the 1990 performance of *Lyrictron for Flute* (1988) at Experimental Intermedia Foundation.



occupied not only galleries and museums but streets as well. I visited the Neo-Dada group and befriended them, and we talked about a certain form of collaboration. But other members of Ongaku were hesitant. So, I decided to participate in the annual group show, Yomiuri Independent Salon sponsored by the daily Yomiuri Shimbun, which was swarmed by the most active young avant-garde artists. That was a no jury show, as the title suggests.

HUO_ So it was an Independent Salon?

YT_ Yes, then I decided to show sound in a certain way, and ended up making a sound installation.

HUO_ What did you show there?

YT_ I used a tape recorder with a mechanical loop device. So, the recorded sound was always running without any disruption. Then, I wrapped all this in a large sheet of crumpled white cloth, so it looked like just a crumpled white cloth making sound. Shuzo Takiguchi, an art critic who was a chairman of the International Critic Association and has an entry in *Dictionaire abrégé du Surréalisme*, wrote in the Yomiuri Shimbun, "Finally a museum sounds."

HUO_ That's amazing because it's the beginning of the unbelievable wave of sound installations that we have today. It really is the point of departure. What is your second sound installation after 1962?

YT_ [Laugh] I think it was 1992, thirty years after. There was a Fluxus related show in the New Museum in New York, but its independent curator treated us very badly, so we boycotted the show and we had a Fluxus show instead at Emily Harvey Gallery. There I showed my second installation. There I tried to use an induction loop, which is a device where you have a receiver with headset and when you approach near the loop you can hear a sound that is connected to amplifier. It was an old style museum audio guide that nobody uses now. I hid the loop on the floor by covering it with a crumpled cloth, so when you approach the crumpled cloth you hear a sound.

HUO_ And then you move away and silence.

YT_ Exactly! I also remember now, I had done another sound installation in 1965, which is a Volkswagen piece. This sound installation was in a Volkswagen show room as part of a three-person show (with Taro Okamoto, Kasumi Teshigahara). It is a piece that utilized a Volkswagen beetle car to make an electronic music instrument. For instance, when an audience walked through the entrance they went across the beam of the Volkswagen beetle's headlights, which triggered a tape to play the German national anthem for very short period twice, because having two head lights. Also, audiences were encouraged to take a seat in the car so, when somebody opened the door a switch triggered some radio coverage of horse racing, etc.

HUO_ I wanted ask you about your new installation (*Parasite/Noise* at Yokohama Triennial, 2001) because that was similarly to do with this idea of the viewer walking through the show. And at the same time, maybe there is a new dimension because it has more to do with the concept of "Parasite."

YT_ Until I saw the space I had no idea what I was going to do. I happened to be in Japan because I was invited to have three concerts in Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo in January. Then Mr. Kohmoto, the director of the Red Brick Warehouse in the Yokohama Triennale asked me to look at the space, which is not too far from Tokyo. I took a look at the space and immediately I decided to have every exhibition space installed with an audio guide system, so that every piece exhibited in the space would have some kind of an excess/surplus, or noise. Then, no sooner than I thought about the idea about the piece, I conceived the idea of the title, *Parasite/Noise*, because the piece itself is parasitical. All in all, it's a leap from my own old piece to the entire space, so the implication of the installation would be a problematization of exhibition spaces as an institution.

HUO_ What about title? Could you tell me a little about the ambiguity of the two meanings of the term "Parasite"?

YT_ Yes, I mentioned it in my essay, *John Cage and Records* I wrote in 1995. In the essay I first quoted Cage's advice to students how to understand and learn indeterminacy music: "'Observe the imperfectness of a sheet of white paper'. (For me the remark meant that) Not only were the signs he – Cage – wrote taken into account, but also the stains or smudges on the paper, which are also noise." In the same essay, I explained "the process of composition of my album, *Musica Iconologos*: first, the material source of the piece was derived from the poetic text of ancient China and each character of the text was converted into photographic images according to the ancient form of the Chinese characters which are closer to images than the modern form. I scanned the images and digitized them, thus the images were transformed simply into 0's and 1's. Then, I obtained histograms from the binary codes and had the computer read the histogram as sound waves; thus I got sound from the images. So, I used visualized text (images) as source – that is, the message – which was encoded and laid on the CD. Now, when you play that CD, what you receive is not images as message, but sound, which is simply an excess. According to information theory this is none other than noise; and as the French word for information noise 'parasite', indicates, it is parasitic on a host – that is, message. But, in this case there is no host, only parasite on the CD. Therefore this CD is pure noise." So, the idea of parasite is not entirely new, but when I composed *Musica Iconologos* in 1992, I never thought of parasite. I learned the French word reading from English translation of *Parasite*, by Michel Serres 20 yeas ago, though.

HUO_ Can you tell me a little about the piece in Yokohama, how it works?

YT_ OK. You walk in the Redbrick Warehouse, then opposite the box office there is the counter renting audio guides. You put the audio guide on and then you walk in the exhibition room, where at certain points an infrared beam triggers an mp3 receiver and you hear a synthesized voice speaking quotes from Walter Benjamin's *Passagen Werk*. You hear it in every exhibition room in the Redbrick Warehouse.

HUO_ It's a form of infiltration?

YT_ Yes, although I asked the artists for their permission to be able to do that. So, infiltration, but with consent! Many of the artists are pleased with it.

HUO_ What is the link to Gilles Deleuze exactly? Can you tell me more about the Deleuze/Guattari link?

YT_ First of all, I don't want to be interpreted as parasitical in terms of relying on the energy of somebody's work or space as parasites are understood to do. Rather I like to discover the conditions that mediate a work of art to the audience. Direct connections between Deleuze's idea and mine derived from his remark on new sports: "For the new sports – surfing, wind surfing, hand-gliding – take the form of entering into an existing wave. There is no longer an origin as starting points, but a sort of putting-into-orbit. Key thing is how to get taken up in the motion of a big wave, a column of rising air: to get into something instead of in the origin of an effort."

HUO_ At the beginning of the interview you spoke about your pioneering work in the 60's. I am also interested in hearing about your more recent work. In the last decade you have invented the almost performative use of CDs. Russell Haswell told me that you are the inventor of this performative use of CDs.

YT_ I mentioned this in my liner note for the album, *Solo for Wounded CD*, that I had the idea preparing a concert in 1984. I was looking for some technical knowledge about digital recording, and then I found that digital recording consists of binary code, so if you alter the binary code it gives a totally different sound, unknown sound. On the other hand, if you scratch analog recordings you can predict what kind of sound comes out, but with the digital you have no way of predicting. The CD players read the information by a laser beam hitting the CD, so I started experimenting with blocking the laser beam with bits of scotch tape, which altered the CD-information. In 1985, I was asked to collaborate with the dancer Kay Nishikawa in making music for her work *Techno Eden*, and that was the first time I presented this kind of work.

HUO_ So you wanted to reintroduce mistakes?

YT_ Yes, mistakes and unknown sounds.

HUO_ Unpredictability?

YT_ Yes, unpredictability. It's an important form.

HUO_ So, basically, the idea of technology to create mistakes?

YT_ Machines are designed not to make mistakes. In our behavior we often make mistakes, so why not machines also? Enabling machines to make mistakes is more interesting than not to make mistakes.

HUO_ And what was the first thing that you did with these mistakes?

YT_ I used some ready-made CDs prepared as I described before, which were like collages of famous music, so you recognized part of Beethoven or Tchaikovsky tunes but very much distorted. Then after my first album, *Musica Iconologos* was released I altered this CD, this time totally distorted so nobody could recognize the original. This became *Solo for Wounded CD*.

HUO_ Do you think that this was an iconoclast transition?

YT_ No, absolutely not. I added something but I didn't destroy anything. Normally machines don't have the ability to make mistakes, but I added that reality to it. So, it's not destruction but an addition.

HUO_ We have spoken a lot about your realized projects. I was wondering if you could talk about any of your unrealized projects, your utopia?

YT_ I have a CD-ROM project that I have worked on since 1996, and I haven't completed it yet, but the main part is done. So, it has *topos*, but not utopia. The piece is based on the ancient Japanese anthology of poems called *Man'yo-shu* from the 9th century. Some poems are as old as the 5th century. It contains 4516 poems and is written entirely in Chinese Characters, unlike later Japanese literature that consist of both Chinese characters and Japanese syllables (Kana), because Japan in the 9th century simply didn't have syllables. The amazing thing is the rendering of Japanese syllables in the anthology, which only numbered eighty-nine, so they used about 2400 different Chinese characters. This was because the transcribers didn't want to repeat the same character in the same poem, and there were too many transcribers and copiers so their use of the characters was entirely arbitrary. To make the story short, if you make sort of a sound dictionary of 2400 Chinese characters, then you are able to make 4516 sound pieces related to the entire anthology by combination and permutation. At the moment I'm only waiting for funding to finish this project.

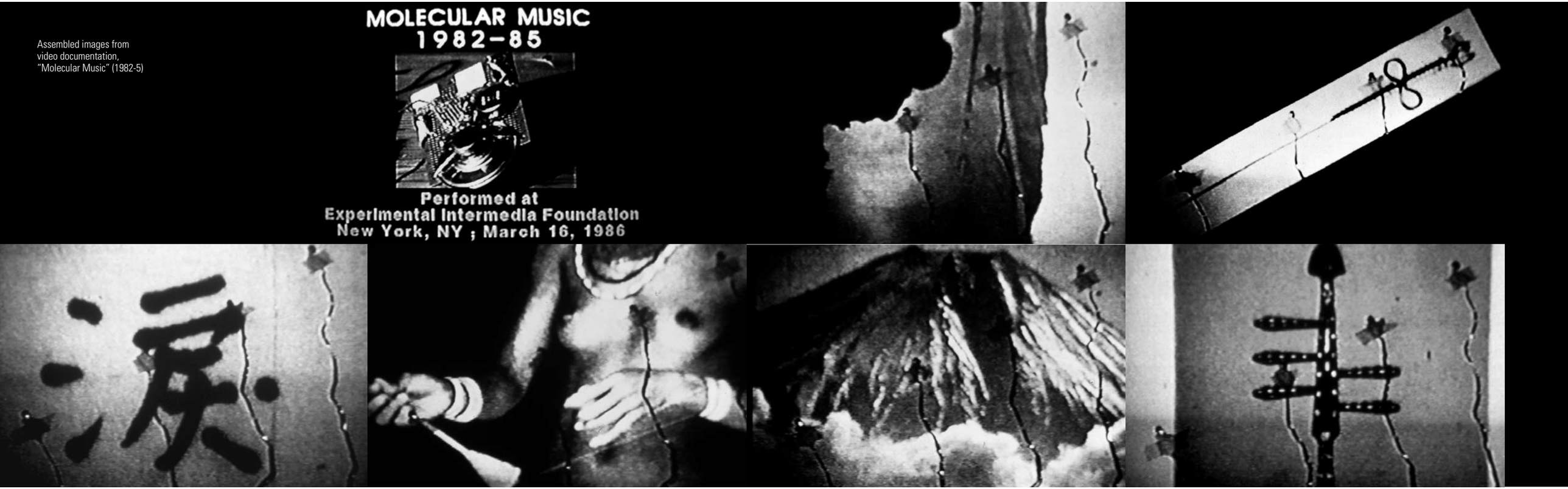
HUO_ One last question - can you elaborate on the non-stop Fluxus group shows?

YT_ Fluxus for me is very much part of history, and many graduate students have written dissertations on Fluxus and related activities. And Fluxus works are on exhibit in museums in such a way that the work, which was originally meant to be played as a game or as toys, now end up in glass cases only to be looked at so the audience can't play with them. How can it be possible to make Fluxus still alive?

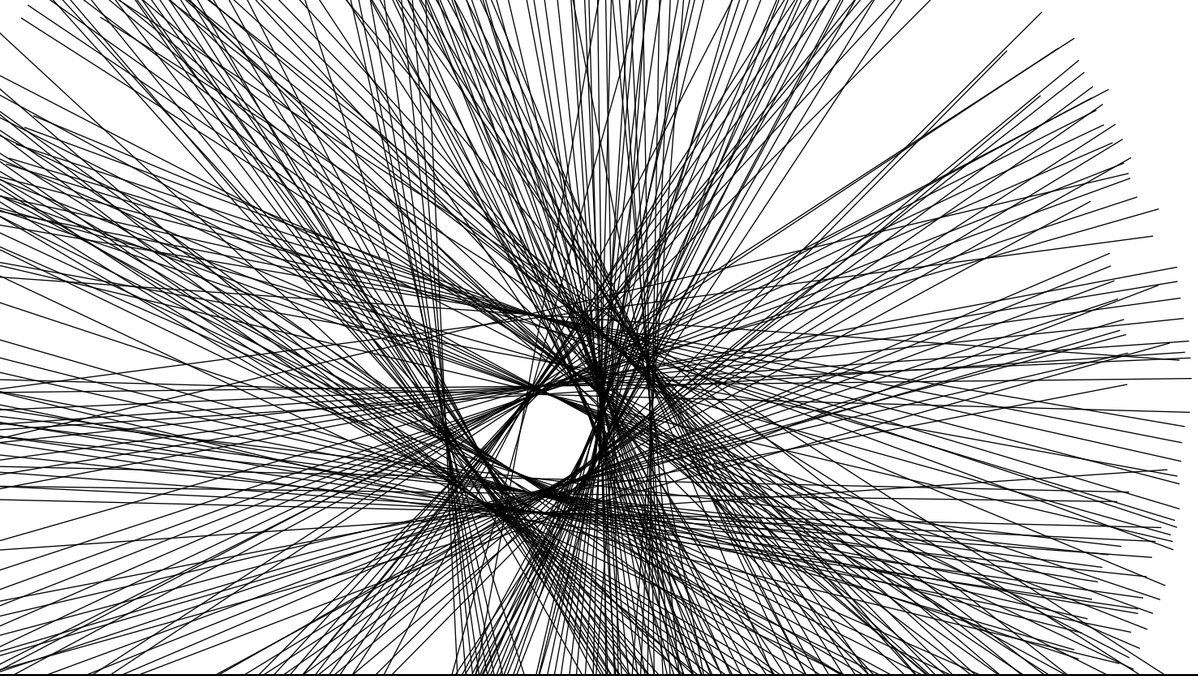
HUO_ Is that question?

YT_ Yes, the question is my answer.

HUO_ Thank you.



Assembled images from
video documentation,
"Molecular Music" (1982-5)



From Logogram to Noise
by Federico Marulanda

CONSIDER the following rendition of a *tanka* by Kakinomoto-no-Hitomaro, anthologized in the *Man' yoshu*, the first masterpiece of Japanese poetry:

Men of yore as well,
Pining after their sweet loves,
Must needs have passed
Many painful sleepless nights,
Just as have I.[1]

The poem speaks across the ages: a man writing over a thousand years ago recounts emotions that men coming long before him, he is certain, felt as intensely as he did. Though he does not explicitly say it, one senses Hitomaro knew that men living long after him would continue to recognize themselves in his poem, even if he could not have imagined how much things other than the basic emotions he speaks of would change before his words were blotted out by time.

This article has its origins in conversations with Yasunao Tone. It has benefited from the comments of Brandon LaBelle, David Lurie, David Meier, and Anna Popovitch.

1. *Man' yoshu* IV, 497. Translation by Takashi Kojima.

Here is a different translation of the same poem:

At times I wonder
if people in the ancient past
like myself tonight
Found it difficult to sleep
due to longing over love[2]

The assuredness conveyed in the first translation has been exchanged for a tentative, questioning tone; as a result, the reader is less likely to suppose that Hitomaro intended to allude not only to the feelings of those coming before him, but also of those coming after him. On the other hand, the second translation speaks of lovesick people in general, not just men, and suddenly the poem acquires a different kind of universality.

Although one could dwell on many other differences between these two renditions of Hitomaro's *tanka*, my interest in presenting a couple of alternatives for what an English reader might reasonably take the poet to have said lies simply in that it provides an example of the way in which meaning mutates, and often dissipates. The point thereby illustrated is familiar: meaning is notoriously fluid in translation, and especially in the translation of poetry, a literary form in which ambiguity is frequently not avoided but sought. In fact, even in everyday speech, and within the confines of a single language, the meaning of words and expressions changes over time, sometimes by erosion, sometimes by accretion, and does so in ways that are altogether unpredictable. One can therefore easily imagine an artist who, intrigued by these shifts of meaning and with the traces that they leave, endeavors to use them in his or her practice. The instances of Yasunao Tone's work that I shall discuss are not, however, the result of such a concern. If I have gone some length in suggesting the possibility of producing artworks based on the phenomenon of shifts in linguistic meaning, it is because the body of work that I will focus on results from a related but more elusive concern, arising from the properties of logographic writing systems.

In a number of audio recordings issued over the past decade and a half, as well as in live performances and installation works, Tone uses texts of classical Chinese and Japanese literature as sources for the generation of sound. The characters used for the writing of these texts have what might be called a *sub-referential* dimension: although they originate as depictions of specific objects or actions, they are not necessarily used to refer to those objects or actions. In fact, the sub-referential relation of the characters to what they originally depict does not in general affect the meaning of the expressions in which those characters appear. For this reason, when Tone devotes attention to the transformations undergone over the centuries by these characters, he is not tracking shifts in meaning analogous to those involved in the *Man' yoshu* translations quoted above. The difference can be hard to appreciate, because it depends on facts that are alien to those of us who read and write using alphabetic scripts only. But the first of these facts – that it is possible for atomic syntactic particles to have a sub-referential dimension – is an important reason why calligraphy is considered to be a high art form in China, Japan, and Korea. Although Tone's work hinges also on the further fact that the sub-referential dimension of the characters need not affect the meaning of the sentences in which the characters appear, it may still be said that, when he turns to writing and to text in general as the starting point of his artistic practice, he is inscribing himself, through the unexpected medium of sound, in a long and important artistic tradition of the East.

2. Translation by Harold Wright.

Sonic calligraphy

In his 1993 CD *Musica Iconologos*,[3] Tone converts into sound two poems from the *Shih Ching*, the earliest Chinese poetic anthology, compiled by Confucius (according to tradition) in the 6th century BCE. The sound pieces are, loosely speaking, transliterations of the corresponding poems: a transformation by digital means of the poems' characters into sound waves. Thus, for instance, the 262-character poem "Solar Eclipse in October" is turned into a startling half-hour excursion through a decidedly unusual sonic field.

A more detailed description of how the conversion process works needs to take into account the way in which the *Shih Ching* poems were written down. Since it is possible to determine what object or action each ancient Chinese character originally depicted, a poem written in classical Chinese can always be correlated with a sequence of images. This does not mean that every ancient Chinese character is used representationally: in addition to using pictograms, early Chinese writing was supplemented with phonograms – characters that originated as pictograms but were used for their phonetic value, without which the codification of abstract notions would have been impossible, as would have been the writing down of grammatically complex sentences. Still, regardless of whether characters are used as phonograms or as pictograms, and regardless of the grammatical function they may play in a sentence, it is possible to correlate them with specific images. Let these images come in the form of found photographs, scan them, use an algorithm to convert the digitized result into sound files, and you will have generated a sound piece that is born out of a feature inherent to the original poem, but that is also immaterial to its meaning, unknown to most of its readers, and altogether lost in translation.[4]

Tone has applied essentially the same conversion process used in *Musica Iconologos* – a work I leave aside for the moment, but to which I shall return – in order to create *Musica Simulacra*, an installation piece consisting of 4516 sound pieces, one for each poem in the *Man' yoshu*.[5] This anthology is preeminently known for its poetic beauty, as well as for the light it sheds into the life of people of all walks of Japanese society of the 7th and 8th centuries CE. But the anthology is also notorious for its orthographic complexity. Because it was compiled prior to the development of a uniform system of writing for the Japanese language, its editors had to invent a way to transcribe what had until that point been orally transmitted poetry. The solution they adopted was to write down the poems by means of characters borrowed from Chinese, a language whose literary tradition Japanese scholars knew well. But Japanese and Chinese belong to separate language groups, and are fundamentally different kinds of language. In particular, the great majority of words in Chinese and Japanese do not have a common etymology, and Japanese is polysyllabic, whereas Chinese consists for the most part of monosyllabic words – a fact that has special significance for the transcription of metered writing. The method of notation that was settled on for writing down the *Man' yoshu* was therefore bound to be unsystematic and complex. It renders some Japanese words by means of the pictograms used in Chinese to represent words of a corresponding sense. In addition, some Japanese syllables are expressed by Chinese characters chosen not for their meaning but for their phonetic value – phonograms that, when pronounced in Chinese, issue in sounds similar to those for which a transcription was sought in Japanese. More daringly, some characters were chosen on the basis of a variety of puns and riddles: to give just one example, the Chinese writing for the number sixteen, "□\□z," which in Japanese is read as "shi-shi" (meaning: four fours), is used in several *Man' yoshu* poems as a writing for the Japanese word corresponding to "boar", which is also pronounced "shi-shi." Finally, a handful of characters were outright invented. The playfulness, ingenuity, and originality deployed in the transcription of the *Man' yoshu* make the writing down of the anthology an artistic achievement in its own right; the drawback is that parts of the book had become virtually undecipherable only a few centuries after its compilation.[6]

What Tone has done for his *Man' yoshu* sound works is to track down, with the help of ancient and modern manuals, the object or action originally depicted by each one of the approximately 2400 characters used for transcribing the anthology. This investigation reveals many surprises. Some of the characters adopted for the transcription originally depicted manners unknown in 8th century Japan. Others conceal a dark past: for example, the character "l̀π," used in both Japanese and Chinese for writing down the word "road," was first drawn to depict a man carrying a decapitated head – an ancient Chinese custom that was believed to afford protection

3. Lovely Music CD3041.

4. In his performance work *Molecular Music* (1982-85), Tone had already converted images correlated with Chinese characters drawn from classical texts into sound, but there he employed analog rather than digital means.

5. *Musica Simulacra* was shown at the 2003 *Fluxus Festival*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, in CD-ROM format, which allows for the simultaneous presentation of the sound works and the photographs used for their generation. See also the CD releases *Yasunao Tone* (Asphodel 2011, 2003) and *Palimpsest* (Mego 060, 2004, in collaboration with Florian Hecker).

6. I have given only the broadest outline of the *Man' yoshu* orthography: a more detailed one would include an explanation of the ways in which a single Chinese character can acquire multiple readings in Japanese, and would take into account the evolution in pronunciation in both Chinese and Japanese. For a full exposition, see Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan* (Leiden/Tokyo: E.J. Brill, 1991).

from attack when traveling through hostile territories. No hint of this history is apparent when the character shows up in the bucolic seventeenth poem of the *Man' yoshu*, which may be translated as follows:

Sweet Miwa mountain,
I shall turn my gaze towards you
until you are hidden
beyond the hills of Nara,
beyond the road's many meanders.
Or will some heartless clouds conceal you?[7]

Evidently, a person reading this poem in translation will not be in a position to grasp aspects of it as arcane as the sometimes troubling origin of the sub-referential dimension of the Chinese characters used for writing it down in Japanese. In fact, the sub-referential dimension of the characters is not known by a majority of Japanese speakers, and need not even have been known by the poets themselves: as remarked above, many of the *Man' yoshu* poems were composed and transmitted orally, only to be written down by later editors – and even those poems that were committed to writing by their own authors may have been rewritten with a different orthography by later editors.[8]

7. *Man' yoshu* I, 17. Adapted from a French translation by Robert Vergez.
8. See Roy Andrew Miller, "The Lost Poetic Sequence of the Priest Manzei", *Monumenta Nipponica* 36, 2 (1981), pp. 166–168.

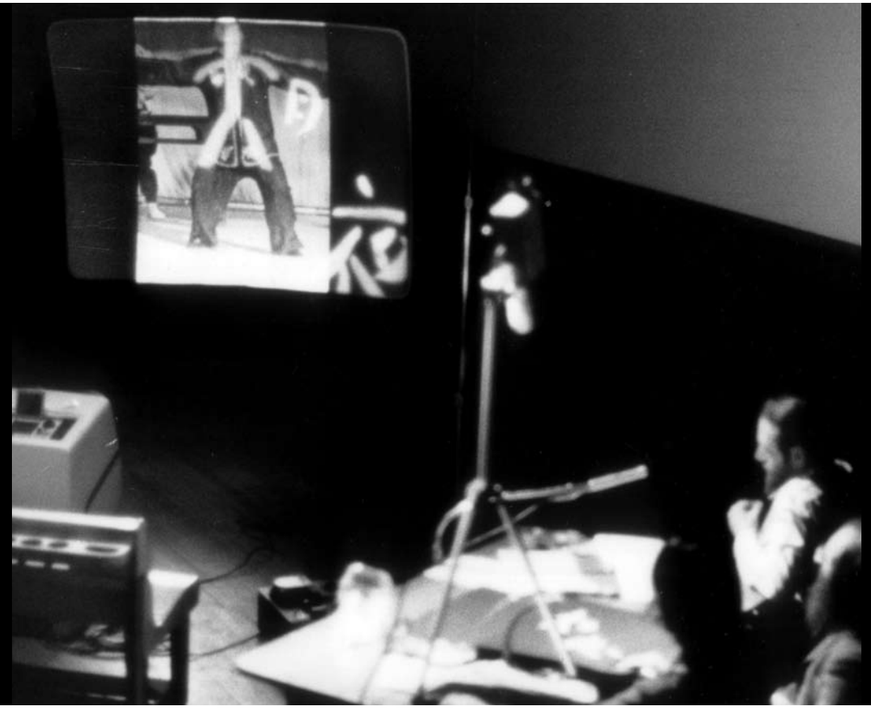
Noise as consummation

The example of the origins of the Chinese logogram used to write down the word "road" in the paean to mount Miwa epitomizes how the sub-referential dimension of a character is often a free-rider – *a parasite*, as Tone is inclined to call it[9] – that bears no relevance to its carrier's meaning. In using that sub-referential dimension as the raw material for his sound pieces, however, Tone's interest is not in unveiling the residue of a long and fortuitous transcription process, but in exhausting it. For, as one might expect, the outcome of the conversion into sound of the photographic images associated with the *Man' yoshu* characters is a burst of noise. Although it has long been recognized that noise can be aestheticized and used in musical composition, what matters for Tone, insofar as the *Man' yoshu* sound works are concerned, is that the bursts he obtains from the conversion are noise not only in the straightforward aural sense, but also in the sense according to which data without meaning is considered to be noise. The conversion results in noise in the latter sense because Tone deliberately uses a process that obliterates the information contained in the images: given a sound wave as input, there is no algorithm that will return anything close to the original picture as output. Thus, Tone's sonic counterparts to the *Man' yoshu* poems burn the bridges behind them, so to speak, and in so doing, they complete the dissipation of the information carried sub-referentially by the characters with which the poems were originally written down.

But here we seem to face a difficulty. If Tone is to take seriously the gesture of expending as noise his recovery of the path leading from the development of ancient Chinese writing to the transcription of the *Man' yoshu*, there can be no such thing for him as the canonical sonic renditions of the poems, because such renditions would have a definitive, recognizable form, and would strictly speaking cease to be informational noise. The question therefore arises as to whether the possibility of the indefinite repetition of these renditions through the use of recording technology does not run contrary to the status they are intended to have as works of art.

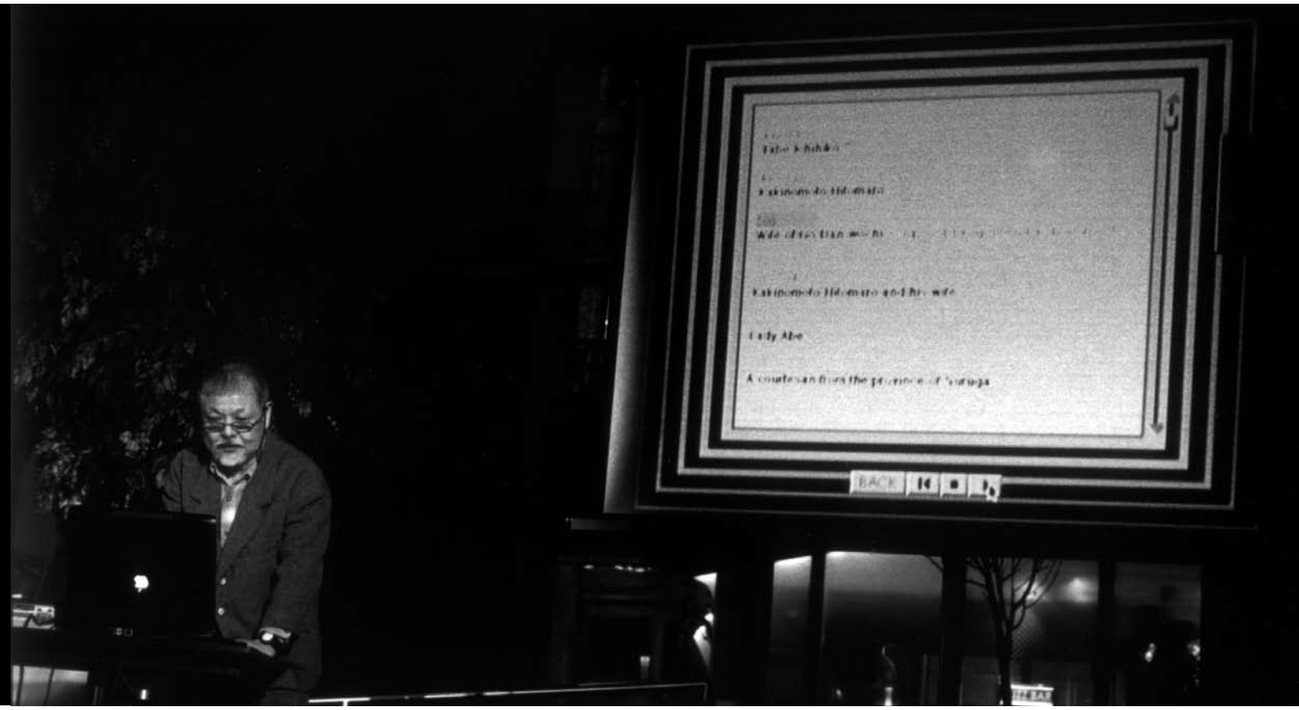
The answer to this question depends on how we situate the sound pieces in musical culture. If we view them as tape compositions, then we view them as examples of works for which the recorded product is the final

9. See Yasunao Tone, "Parasite/Noise," *Yokohama Triennale Catalogue* (2001).



Yasunao Tone with George Quasha and
Chack Stern performing "Voice and Phenomena,"
Arnolfini Art Center, Rinebeck, NY, Oct. 16, 1977
Photo © by Taka Imura
(previous page and to the right)

Performing "Musica Simulacra,"
duo concert with Stephen Vitiello in Pulse,
a digitally inspired Performance series,
Whitney Museum of American Art at Phillip Morris,
New York, NY, April 5, 2001
Photo © by Paula Court
(next page on bottom)



statement of a musical idea, in which case there would indeed be a tension between their intended character as noise and their existence on record. But Tone's work resists being classified as tape composition. To begin with, the tape composer, in the familiar metaphor, is a sound sculptor: someone who shapes sequences of sounds according to criteria that are not exclusively procedural. Tone, by contrast, does not alter the result of his digital conversions, but lets them stand, with few exceptions, however they may sound. To this it must be added that when the sonic counterparts of the *Man' yoshu* poems are recorded, it is only after being subjected to a final round of transformation, whose effect is to make recording less a way to capture a definitive rendition of sound than a way to mark the outcome of a resolutely contingent process. For, after having completed the conversion from photographic images to sounds, Tone burns these sounds onto CD-R, and then "wounds" or prepares the surface of the resulting record in a way that makes certain models of CD players override their skip-correction functions, thus inducing the devices to commit mistakes during playback. It is this furious playback, pervaded with unpredictable and unrepeatable errors, that is recorded for release. As a result, the rendition of a poem that is issued on commercially available CD is a non-canonical studio performance: simply the documented result of one of innumerable possible outcomes of the compositional process that Tone has followed.

Indeterminacy revisited

It may have been noticed that Tone's playback technique is only one of the places where indeterminacy has played a role in the process leading from logogram to noise: as was noted above, the images that he correlates with the characters used to write down the *Man' yoshu* poems are all taken from found photographs; in addition, the parameters of the conversion from image to sound are to a large degree arbitrary, to say nothing of the fact that the very writing down of the poems owes much to whim and chance. But Tone's use of playback errors marks an interesting development in the use of indeterminacy, as his technique introduces randomness by means of controlled equipment failure. The invention and application of this method not only makes Tone a precursor and leading practitioner of the electronic glitch genre,[10] but is especially apt insofar as it openly

subverts recording technology, i.e. the very technology that made it look as if there was an inherent tension in Tone's pieces, generated by their dual status as informational noise and as indefinitely reproducible sounds. This is not to say that the adoption of equipment failure should be interpreted as a reaction against technology: Tone regards his causing CD players to fail as an addition to their capabilities, a creative extension of their use.[11] This legitimization of the use of errors in the context of chance composition is reminiscent of Cage, who wrote: "A 'mistake' is besides the point, for once anything happens it authentically is."[12] But despite the similarities, and besides Tone's open indebtedness to Cage, Tone's goal in using indeterminacy differs significantly from Cage's. The latter appealed to aleatoric methods, as well as to silence, in order to distance himself from the compositional process, thus foregrounding sounds themselves. The score for *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (1951), for example, calls for the playing of twelve radios tuned at random; its interpretation results in a sonic rumble devoid of discernible structure that Cage hopes can be appreciated for its aural qualities, such as they are. Cage sought, in short, to revolutionize not only music, but the activity of listening itself. Now Tone shares with Cage the concern to broaden auditory experience, and his compositional strategies, like Cage's, contain a criticism of standard ideas of musical expression. But Tone's playback technique is not an instrument for effacing the boundary between the musical and the non-musical: rather, as has been mentioned, it ensures that informational noise remains noise despite its being recorded. At a more general level, Cage and Tone diverge in the objectives they seek to fulfill by appealing to indeterminacy. Cage asked himself:

> And what is the purpose of writing music?
> One is, of course, not dealing with purposes but dealing with sounds.
> Or the answer must take the form of a paradox: a purposeful
> purposelessness or a purposeless play..[13]

So far as Cage is concerned, that is to say, his compositions are devoid of meaning or of semantic content of

10. See Torben Sangild, "Glitch-The Beauty of Malfunction," in *Bad Music*, C. Washburne and M. Derno eds., (New York/London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 257–274.
11. See Hans Ulrich Obrist, 'Interview of Florian Hecker and Yasunao Tone', reproduced in the liner notes for *Palimpsest*.
12. John Cage, 'To Describe the Process of Composition Used in *Music of Changes and Imaginary Landscape No. 4*', reprinted in his *Silence*, Wesleyan University Press (1961), p. 59.
13. John Cage, 'Experimental Music', in *Silence*, p. 12.

any sort: they are not about anything, and their only aim is to set up scenarios that facilitate the appreciation of sound.[14] By contrast, Tone's sonic transliteration of the *Man' yoshu* poems represents a deliberate effort to recuperate, and then dissipate, specific bits of information, leaving as a trace only noise.

The introduction of a final round of indeterminacy at the moment of presentation of his sound material not only fundamentally alters the nature of what Tone commits to record, but allows him to circumvent the problem, traditionally faced by tape composers, of the impossibility of the performance of their work subsequent to production. Although this was at one point construed as a possible advantage of tape composition – as a way to fulfill Stravinsky's dream of being able to communicate with the public like any other artist, "without having recourse to intermediaries"[15] – tape composers often found their dissociation from audience interaction limiting. Thus, for instance, after Morton Subotnick recorded a series of compositions commissioned by record labels in the late sixties and early seventies under the premise that tape works played back in a home stereo system could function as a new form of chamber music, he abandoned the form, and only returned to electronic music once advances in computer technology afforded him the possibility of realizing his work in performance.
Tone's error-driven technique, by contrast, permits the presentation in the performance situation of an outcome that is not only generated in real-time, but that demands active manipulation, due to the instability of the setup in which CD players are induced to fail.

14. It is not clear that Cage succeeded in creating works of art devoid of semantic content, despite his self-removal strategies. Unlike ambient sounds, the sounds present in realizations of Cage's works are, at the very least, illustrations of the richness of aural phenomena, and hence they are about sound itself. For subtle discussion of Cage's work, and how far he may be said to have fulfilled his stated goals, see Daniel Herwitz, "The Security of the Obvious: On John Cage's Musical Radicalism," *Critical Inquiry* 14, 4 (1988), pp. 784–804; Noël Carroll, "Cage and Philosophy", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52, 1 (1994), pp. 93–98; Stephen Davies, "John Cage's 4'33": Is it Music?," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 75, 4 (1997), pp. 448–462.

15. Igor Stravinsky, *Stravinsky: an Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), p. 224.

Sounds unheard

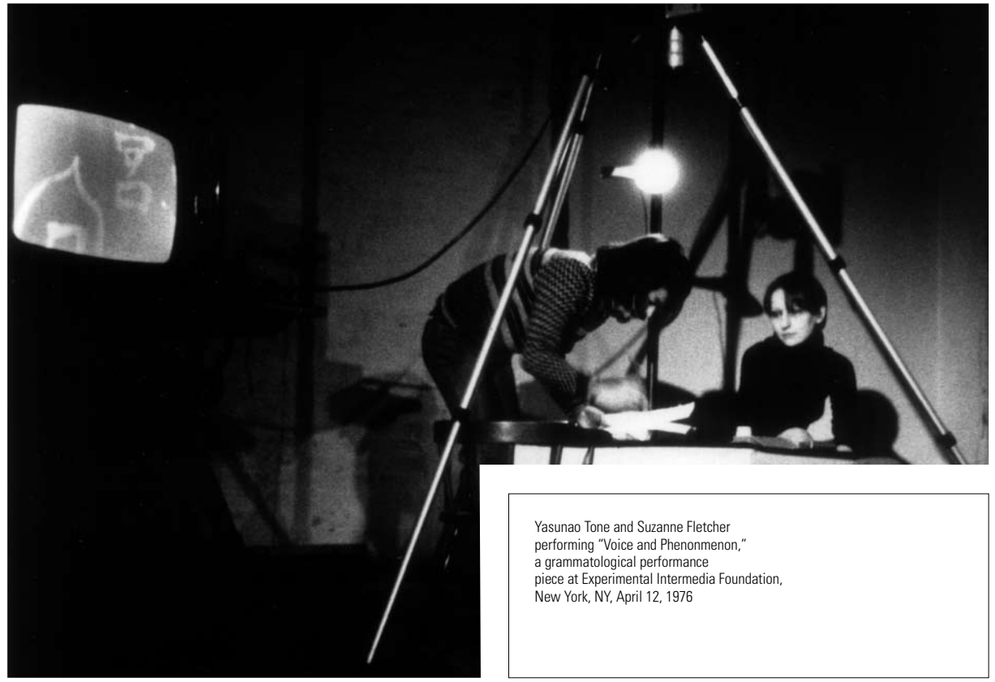
The way in which Tone negotiates the demands imposed by recording and performance attests not only to his versatility, but also to the variety of his artistic purpose. To better see this, let us return for a moment to his *Musica Iconologos*, the work containing the sonic renditions of the *Shih Ching* poems. Tone writes the following about this piece's genesis:

> I had received an offer to publish a CD; however, none of my pieces were suitable for recording. Certain formal elements of the pieces – spatial movement of sound, contrasting acoustic sound with amplified sound, and the use of visuals – made the pieces simply unrecordable. So I had to create something totally devoid of live performance, something that only the CD as medium could produce.[16]

Faced with the challenge of releasing a CD, Tone devises a method of composition well-suited to the recorded medium – the correlation of the characters used for writing a classic text with images, and the digital conversion of these images into sound – and in so doing he explicitly surrenders the option of presenting the resulting work in performance. With the development of his error-driven playback technique, however, Tone recovers the possibility of performance. But note that, beyond this, Tone's playback technique alters the nature of the works that are recorded using it: while *Musica Iconologos* in its released version is "totally devoid of live performance," the 1997 *Solo for Wounded CD*[17] is the recording of a studio performance of a prepared copy of *Musica Iconologos*. Despite the similarities in their aural nature, that is to say, *Musica Iconologos* and *Solo for Wounded CD* are different kinds of sound objects, one not admitting of performance, the other resulting from a performance. The works also have different content: one deals with certain aspects of the characters used to write the *Shih Ching*, and the second deals only indirectly with those aspects, through the intermediary of the first, about which it partly is. Unless one appreciates this difference, one might be led to think that Tone has repeated himself, rather than conclude that he has exemplified, in the realm of sound, that what a work of art is about may

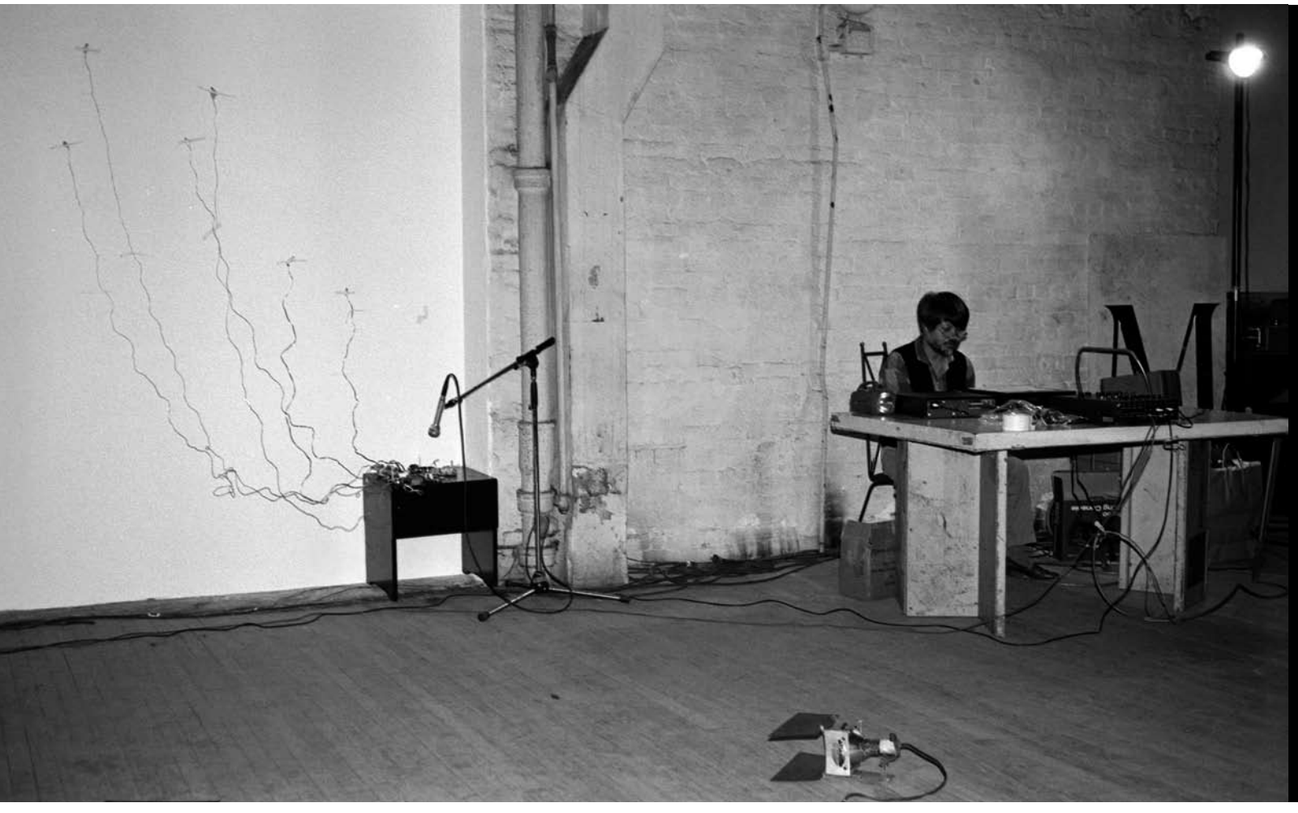
16. Yasunao Tone, "John Cage and Recording," *Leonardo Music Journal* 13 (2003), p. 12.
17. Tzadik TZ7212.

not be something that can be gleaned from its physical properties alone.[18] But it would be a mistake to be distracted by the details of Tone's working methods, and by the conceptual variations exhibited in his different works, to the point of ignoring their aesthetic qualities.
When a work of calligraphy is appraised, the brush strokes are appreciated for their movement, the ink for its tone, and the composition as a whole for its grace. Tone has abandoned the realm of musical practice where one could similarly speak of his work in terms of, say, progression, timbre, or indeed composition as a whole. What he gives instead, to those prepared to continue down the path of expansion of auditory experience opened almost a century ago, are works of immediate, undiluted aural force.

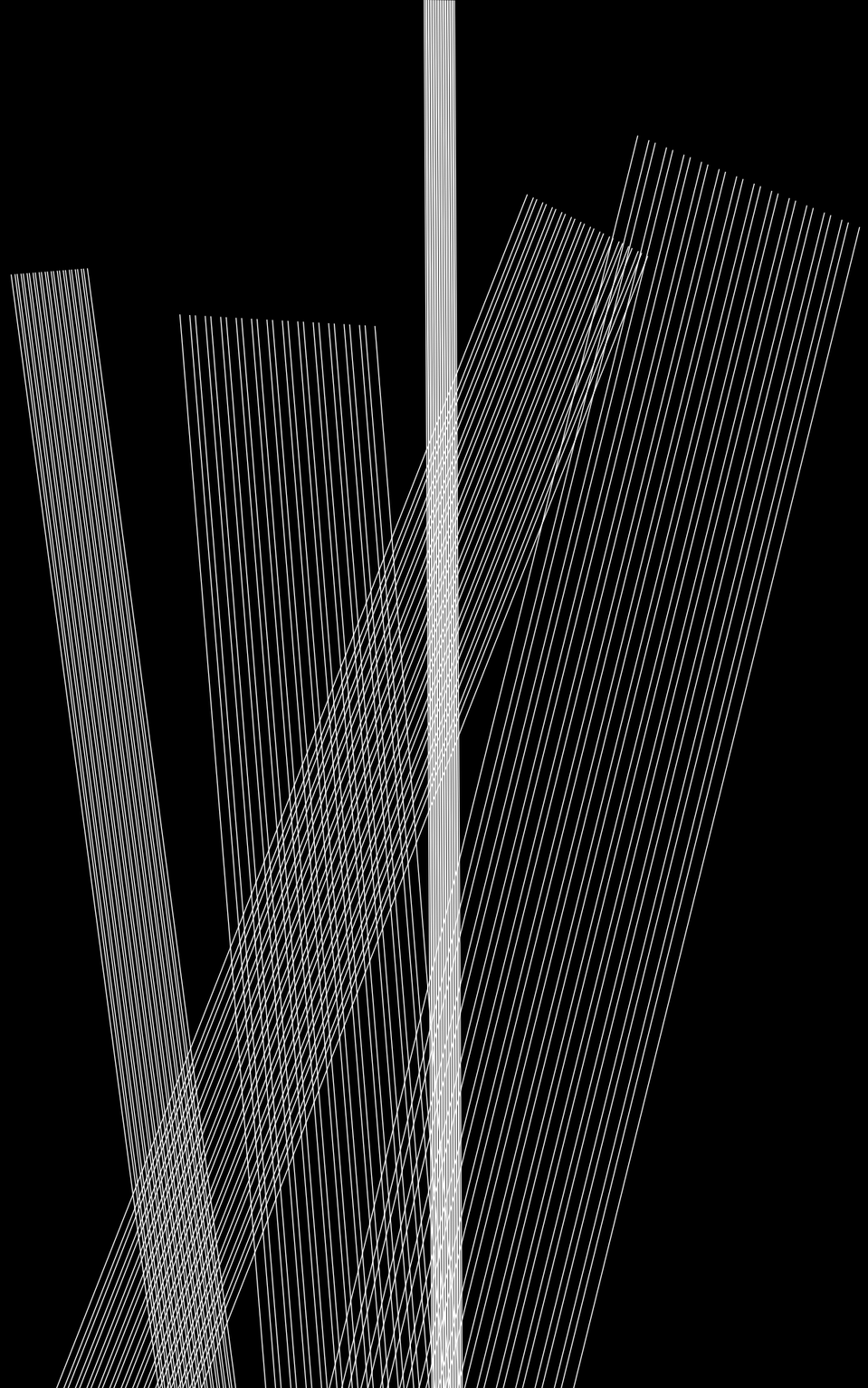


Yasunao Tone and Suzanne Fletcher
performing "Voice and Phenonmenon,"
a grammatological performance
piece at Experimental Intermedia Foundation,
New York, NY, April 12, 1976

18. For further discussion of why the physical properties of a work of art are not what distinguishes it from another work of art (or from non-art), see Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,1981), chapters 1 and 2.



Yasunao Tone performing
“Music for 2 CD Players” (1986),
Experimental Intermedia Foundation,
New York, March 16, 1986



Bio

Yasunao Tone was one of the first Japanese artists active in composing “events” and improvisational music. He has been active in the Fluxus movement since 1962 and has also been an organizer and participant in many important music and performance groups such as Group Ongaku, Hi-Red Center, Team Random (the first computer art group organized in Japan). Primarily a composer, Tone has worked in many media, creating pieces for electronics, computer systems, film, radio and television, as well as environmental art.

Tone was born in Tokyo in 1935 and graduated from Chiba Japanese National University in 1957 with a major in Japanese literature. Subsequently, he audited a program in musicology at Tokyo University of Arts. Here he founded the Group Ongaku in 1960, a group devoted to creating “event music” and improvisational music. He began participating in the Fluxus movement in 1962, and has been in events and shows in numerous places.

His first concert, “One Man Show by a Composer,” was held at the Miami Gallery in Tokyo in 1962. He then became an organizer as well as contributor to various avant-garde groups. These activities encompassed happenings, experimental music, performance and “art and technology.” Some of the Tokyo groups involved were: One of his pieces in the Yomiuri Independent Show, a group show that the 60’s main avant-garde artists were involved, where he had first sound installation in 1962, the Hi-Red Center, a happening group founded in 1963; Sweet Sixteen, an event festival in 1963, the Team Random’s Biogode Process Festival in 1966 (the first computer art festival in Japan, including Tone’s *Theater Piece for Computer*), Intermedia Festival in 1969 and Music for

Tatsumi Hijikata and his Ankoku Butoh troupe. Tone also has explored another sound installation in Volkswagen by Three, with Taro Okamoto and Kasumi Teshigahara, Grand Master of Teshigahara School Flower Arrangement and composed a great deal of experimental music for use in films, theater and dance pieces. Since coming to the United States in 1972, he has composed numerous scores for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and has given solo concerts at the Kitchen, the Experimental Intermedia Foundation, Roulette, P.S.1, Guggenheim Museum SOHO, Chicago Art Club,Metronom, and other places, and participated in numerous Fluxus concerts. Since 1976, Tone has been designing musical compositions as a compound of cultural study based on post-structuralist theories and audio visual materials compiled with ancient Oriental texts and musical sounds generated by electronic means. One of these works, *Geography and Music*, was commissioned by the American Dance Festival for Merce Cunningham's dance *Roadrunners*. It was part of the Cunningham Dance Company repertory between 1979 and 1986 and was heard in many festivals, including the Festival d'Automne à Paris, the John Cage Festival in San Juan and the Berlin Festival. His work has shown in numerous group shows. He has been also, invited to countless music and performance festivals. As a sound artist, his work is distinguished by conversion of text into music via images with analog (*Molecular Music*) and digital means (*Musica Iconologos*) and text generated by music (*Lyrictron*), also with critique of medium in use (*Music for 2CD Players* and *Solo for Wounded CD*, *Parasite/Noise*). He has released many CDs, solo albums, collaborative albums and compilation CDs. He was awarded a CAPS grant in multi-media in 1979 then right after, American Dance Festival commissioned him to compose a score for Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1979. He has been awarded numerous prizes and grants since then.

Solo concerts and collabolative performances (partial)

2005 * Collaborative concert with Florian Hecker, Experimental Intermedia Foundation, March 34, New York NY
* Yaunao Tone and Hecker, a collaborative concert, Bartos theatre at Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge MA,
* Collaborative concert with Yoshihide Otomo, December 29, Stone, New York NY

2004 * Roulette at Location One, New York NY

2001 * Ashiya Museum of Art and History, Ashiya, Japan
* Tokyo Operacity Art Gallery, Tokyo
* Yokohama Triennale special performance, Yokohama, Redbrick Warehouse

1998 * Metronom, Barcelona, Spain
* Galicia State Museum, Santiago de Compostella, Spain

1995 * Roulette, New York, NY

1994 * Solo performance at Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky, Guggenheim Museum Soho

1990 * Experimental Intermedia Foundation. New York NY

1989 * Kitchen, New York NY

1987 * Word of Mouth in a performance series , sponsored by Film Now Foundation, Public Library Chatham Square New York, NY

1986 * Experimental Intermedia Foundation, premiered "*Music for 2 CD Players*" New York, NY

1985 * Musica iconologos, Roulette, New York, NY

1982 * The wall and the books, Basement Workshop, New York, NY

1979 * Fauna of China, Expeimental Intermedia Foundation, New York, NY
* Kitchen, New York NY

1976 * Voice and Phenonmenon, Experimental Intermedia Foundation, New York, NY, April 12

1972 * Repetition and structure, selected pieces of Yasunao Tone, from the 60's, at Mills College, Oakland, CA

1964 * Tone prize exhibition - Investigation Event, Naiqua Gallery, Tokyo

1962 * Yasunao Tone, Oneman Show by Composer, Minami Gallery, Tokyo

Group performances and festivals (partial)

2006 * Opening event for Mediacity Festival, February 21, Detroit Film Center, Detroit MI
* Noise Symposium, with Curtis Roads and Florian Hecker, symposium, April 14, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco CA
* Concert, April 14-15, Recombinant Media Labs, San Francisco CA
* **D**issonanze festival, May 19-20, Rome Italy

2005 * Variation on a Silence, a concert, May 11, Club Unit, Tokyo
* Cut and Splice festival by BBC Radio 3 and Sonic Arts Network, performed, London Symphony Orchestra St.Lukes, May 29, London
* All Tomorrows Party festival, performance, June 2, SE One, London
* Interpretation 17, "Paramedia Centripetal," Seotenmber 15, Merkin Hall, New York NY
* Open System Festival 2005, performance, November 18, Domicil, Dortmund Germany

2004 * Launch Festival, University of York, New Music Research Center UK

2003 * Sonic Light Festival, Paradiso, Amsterdam The Netherland
* All Tomorrows Parties Festival, Camber Sands Recreation Center, Sussex UK
* Centraal Fluxus Festival, Centraal Museum, Utrecht and Hilton Hotel Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2002 * New Music Mini-Festival, Wesleyan University, Middletown CN
* Lovebytes International Digital Arts Festival, Sheffield, UK
* Sonar 2002, Barcelona Contemporary Art Museum, Barcelona Spain
* Ars Electronica Festival, Brucknerhaus, Linz Austria

2002 * Spectacle Vivant, Centre George Pompidou, Paris

2001 * Pulse, With Stephen Vitiello, Whitney Museum Midtown, New York, NY
* Performance with the Autechre and Russel Haswell, Bowery Ball Room, New York, NY

2000 * Vision Festival, New World Café (formery Electric Circus), New York NY

1999 * Tour with Mere Cunningham Dance Company as a composer/performer, Butler Institute, Youngstown, Ohio Power Center, Anne Arbor Michigan.
* Subtropic New Music Festival, Miami Fl

1999 * Warm up 2 at PS 1, P.S. 1 Comtemporary Museum, Long Island City, Queens, New York
* Loos Music Festibval Corzo Theatre, Den Haag, the Netherland
* Friday Apple Blossoms, In Memorial of Dick Higgins, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY

1998 * Tour with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company to perform at Quinn Center in Burlington VT
* His composition "*Seminar on the Purloined Letter*," commissioned for a concert in honor of Earl Brown's 70th birthday by Downtown Ensemble, performed by Downtown Ensemble with Annea Lockwood and the composer, Weiler Concert Hall, New York, NY, Hudson Opera House, Hudson NY, Deep Listening Space, Kingston NY

1997 * Tour with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Vanderbilt University in Nashville TN, University of Kansas in Lawrence, KA and Washington University, St. Louis MS
* Djs go pop, a benefit concert sponcered by the Music, with Christian Marclay and Jim O'Rourke, Anthology Film Archive, New York

1994 * Seoul Nymax Festival, Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY

1993 * Fluxus: East of Moscow, curated for SEM Ensemble and performed with Nam June Paik, Takehisa Kosugi, Willow Place Auditorium, Brooklyn, NY
* Fluxus Festival Chicago, Performance with Joeffrey Hendricks, Art Club of Chicaga, Chicago IL

1991 * Interpretations, Merken Concert Hall, NewYork, NY

1990 * Ear at Knitting Factory, 15th anniversary of EAR magazine, Knitting Factory, New York, NY
* 2nd Austic International, Whitney Museum Equitable Center Auditorium, New York, NY

1989 * Bowery Ensemble performed "*Lyrictron for Flute*" and "Aletheia," Great Hall Cooper Union, New York, NY

1988 * New Music America/Miami'88, Center for the Fine Art, Miami, FL
* Miami Experimental Media Festival to perform "*Molecular Music*" and as a panelists at Miami
* Dade Community College, Miami, FL

1987 * Fluxus 25 years Anniversary Festival at Williams College, Willams Town, MA
* New Music from USA, Grec '86, Garten de Hopitale, Barcelona, Spain

1985 * Butch Morris' "Current trends in racism in modern America," his first orchestral piece, called Conduction,, Kitchen New York, NY

1984 * Good morning mr. Orwell, Nam June Paik's Experimental TV show, with John Cage, David Tudor etal WNET TV, and simulcasted with French National TV via satellite, WNET

1983 * FluxusFest 83, Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY
1979 * Fluxus Concert, Kithcen
* Sunday Performance Series in Sound show, P.S.1 Long Island City, NY
* Amerecan Dance Festival, premiere of *Geography and Music* for Merice Cunningham;s Roadrunners, Durham, NC
1978 * Merce Cunningham with Yasunao Tone for "Event #201," Merce Cunningham Studio, New York, NY
1975 * Merce Cunningham Company with Yasunao Tone, "Event #151" and "Event #152," Cunningham Studio, New York, NY
1974 * Merce Cunningham company with Yasunao Tone"Event #82" and "Event #83," Cunningham Studio, New York NY
1972 * White Anthology, organized and performed, Runami Gallery, Tokyo
* Organized and performed Multi-performance '72 with Allan Kaplow and his students, Calfornia Institute of Art, Los Angels, CA
1969 * Intermedia arts festival organized with Takehisa Kosugi and Chieko Shiomi Nikker Hall and Club Killer Joe's, Tokyo
1966 * Co-organized a computer art group Team Random with Nobuhiro Sato and Yoshio Tsukio, and organized Biogode Process, Japan's first computer art festival Sogetsu Hall, Tokyo, Kyoto Kaikan Hall, Kyoto
* Fluxus week, A Tokyo Fluxus festival, co-organized with Toshi Ichiyanagi and Kuniharu Akiyama, Crystal Gallery, Tokyo
* A la maison de Shibusawa, with Ankoku Butoh troup, choreographed and directed by Tetsumi Hijikata, Sennichidani Hall, Tokyo
1964 * Shelter Plan, an event by Hi-red Center at Tokyo Inperial Hotel, Tokyo,
* Performances for Nam June Paik concert, Sogetsu Art Canter, Tokyo
* Tokyo Metropolitan Scavenging Street Movement a.k.a.Cleaning event, Hired Center, street of Ginza district, Tokyo
* Film independant festival, and showed "*1880 frames = 120 second*," a conceptual film, Kinokuniya Hall, Tokyo
1963 * Sweet Sixteen, a performance festival, co-organized and performed, Sogetsu Hall, Tokyo
1962 * Seminar on Movement and Vision, weekend performance for a month with Takehisa Kosugi,

Chiya Kuni dance studio, Tokyo
* Kunitachi Banquet - Art minus art, Kunitachi Civic Hall, Tokyo
* Yamate loop train event, Happenings on Tokyo commuter train, Japan National Railway Yamate Line, Tokyo
* Fluxus festivals, American Center - Paris, Städischen Museum -Wiesbaden, Nicolai Church - Copenhagen

Selected group exhibitions

2005 * Variation on a Silence, a festival of Art in Recycle plant, "Paramedia Centrifugal"- an installation May 13-29, Re-tem Plant, Tokyo Plant, Jonan Island, Tokyo
* Cut and Splice 2005, a festival by BBC Radio 3 and Sonic Arts Network, May 13 - June 3, exhibition Jarwood Space, London
2004 * Off the the record>sound arc, ARC/Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, June 25~October 3, Paris, France
2003 * I Moderni, The Moderns, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Torino, Italy.
* Electronic Archive, Kunsthalle, St.Gallen, Switzland
2001 * Bitstreams, a Digital Art Show, Whitney Museum, New York, NY
* Yokohama Triennale, Yokohama, Japan
* Jujikan – 10 hours of sound from Japan, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
* Mutations, TN Probe, Tokyo, Japan
* Do It, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City
* Global Conceptualism: Point of Origin, Queens Museum of Art, Walker Art Denter Minneapolis MN, MIT Art Center, Cambridge MA
1997 * Ear as Eye, Drawings by composers, LACE, Los Angeles, CA
1994 * Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky, Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York, NY
1994 * FLUXUS Kunsthalle Basel, Switzland
1993 * In the Spirit of Fluxus, Whitney Museum, New York, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN

1991 * Fluxus: for Ear and Eye, Emily Harvey Gallery, New York, NY
1990 * Venezia Biennale: Ubi Fluxux ibi motus, International Survey of Fluxus, Venice, Italy
1986 * Japon des Avantgardes, Centre George Pompidou Paris
1983 * Time Score, Manhattan Laboratory museum, New York NY
1979 * Sound, Scores and Notations, PS1, Long Island City, NY
1967 * Intermedia, Runami Gallery, Tokyo
1965 * Wolkswagen by three, a group show with Taro Okamoto and Kasumi Teshegawara, a sound installation, Volkswagen Show room, Tokyo
1963 * 15th Yomiuri Independant, exhibited a sculpture and opened Miniature Restaurant with Genpei Akasegawa and Natsuyuki Nakanishi in the Museum as performance, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Tokyo
1962 * 14th Yomiuri Independant, an annual group show sponsored by Yomiuri Shimbun, Exhibited a sound installation and performed an event music, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Tokyo
* New Notations of the World, with John Cage, Silvano Bussotti, Nam June Paik, David Tudor, Lamonte Young, Christian Wolff etal., Minami Gallery, Tokyo

Awards, grants & commissions

2006 * Commissined to compose for Harpist Rhodri Davies by Hudderfield Contemporary Music Festival
2004 * Foundation for Contemporary Arts music grant from Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts
2002 * Golden Nica prize in Digital Music, from Prix Ars Electronica 2002
2001 * Prix Ars Electronica Honorary Mention in digital music
1997 * Commissioned to compose a music "*Seminar on the Purloined Letter*," for a concert in honor of Earl Brown's 70th birthday by Downtown Ensemble.
* 1996-97 Individual Artist Award for Media from New York State Council on the Art for my CD ROM project, Musica Simulacra, an interactive musical piece.
1987 * New York Foundation for the Art Fellowship Grant in performance/Emerging Art Forms
1986 * Commission grant for composition New York State Council on the Art
* Commissioned to compose a music for Kay Nishikawa's dance suite, "Techno Eden"
1982 * National Endowment for the Arts Collaboration fellowship

1979 * Caps Fellowship Grant in multi-media art
1968 * Commissioned and composed a music for a Kabuki theater piece "Kinno Sai Sarushima Dairi" by the 18th century playwright Tsuruya Namboku, directed by Tetsuji Takechi
1967 * Commissioned to compose a score for a film "Gingakei,-Galaxy," directed by Masao Adachi
1964 * Special award to a tape music"Days" International
* Contemporary Mudic Festival, Nova Consonanza, in Rome, October

Residencies

2004 * Residency Program at Music Research Center in University of York in Yorkshire UK
2001 * Loughborough University's Artist-in residency program at Creativity and Cognition Research Studio, Leicester UK
1994 * Artist-in Residency fellowship from the Harvestworks for a CD- ROM project, Musica Simulacra, New York, NY
1988 * Artist in Residence Program at Explolatorium in San Francisco
* Artist in residency program in Sound Research at Yellow Spring Institute and create a collaborative work, "*Genet on Rembrandt*" with Tom Buckner and Barbara Held, Yellow Spring, PA

Discography

Solo and Collaborative Albums

2005 * *Event: Christian Marclay, Yasunao Tone, Christian Wolff* (Asphodel, ASPH 2032CD)
2004 * *Palimpsest*, Yasunao Tone and Hecker, (Mego 060)
2003 * *Yasunao Tone,* (Asphodel Ltd., Asphodel 2011)
2001 * *Wounded Man´yo #38-9,* (Alku, Hajime 39) -3" CD
1998 * *Solo for Wounded Cd* (Tzadik, TZ-7212)
1993 * *Musica Iconologos* (Lovely Music, LCD-3041)

Compilations

2004 * A Call for Silence, a compilation album 33 composers, curated by Nic Collins, published by Sonic Arts Network, UK
2002 * Jujikan, for San Francisco Museum show, Trio for a Flute Player - a companion CD
* Cyber Art 2002, Digital Music / Yasunao Tone "Wounded Man'yo 2001," (Prix Art Electronica 2002 (ORF))
* Accidents, Cabinet Magazine #7 Summer issue - a companion CD
2001 * Un Tributo to James T. Russell / Yasunao Tone " Man' yoshu #37 wounded" (Alku 15) - compilation with Terre Taemlitz, Wobbly, CD_Slopper, Discmen, Javier Hernando, Oval/Frank Metzger and Alku
* Mutations/ Sonic City: Hans Ulrich Obrist, Curator / Yasunao Tone & Hecker "Man'Yo #36`37" extended mix "1065010 Zero Crossings" (Airplane label, AP1014) -compilation with Ramuntcho Matta, Kim Sooja, Corneliius, christoph de babalon and hanayo, samon takahashi, Masami Akita, Yoko Ono, Kai Chee Kien, Atushi Yamaji and Atlier Bow-wow, Russell Haswell and Dominique Petitgand
* Writing aloud, The Sonics of Language / Edited by Brandon LaBell & Christof Migone / Yasunao Tone "Man'yoshu #16" (published by Errant Bodies Press with Ground Fault Recordings distributed by DAP, New York) -compilation with Marina Ambrovic, Alexander St.Onge, Jocelyn Robert, John Duncan, Gregory Whitehead, Michel Chion, Christof Migone, Daved Dunn, Randy H.Y. Yau, Achim Wollscheid, arthur Petronio, and Vito Acconci - a companion CD

2000 * *Geography and Music* / Recorded at Staadischouwburg in Leuven, Belgium on 10/20/83 / Performed by John Cage on voice, Takehisa Kosugi on voice, Martin Kalve on Chin (Chinese 7 strings long zither) andDavid Tudor on piano. / Yasunao Tone Catalog (Aichi Arts Center) - a companion 3" CD
* [R•] iso|chall, Florian Hecker: / "a/s toned Hecker's" remix by Yasunao Tone (Mego 024) - remix compilation of Hecker's work with Bruce Gilbert, Francisco Lopez, Holger Hiller, CD _Slopper, Jim O'Rourk, Ilpo Vaisanen, Marcus Schmickler, Yoshihide Otomo, Gescom and Zbigniev Karkowski
* Cyber Art 2000, Digital Music / Yasunao Tone "Wounded Man'yo 2/2000" (Prix Art Electronica 2000 (ORF)) - compilation with Chris Watson, Gescom, Kevin Drumm, Erik Wiegand aka errorsmith, Mark Rell/Mat Steel, Ryoji Ikeda, Marcus Schmickler, Uli Troyer, Kaffe Matthews, Radian, Matmos, Marianne Amacher and Dat Politics
1998 * Balloon Music: Judy Dunaway: / "Blue Bird" remix by Yasunao Tone (Composers Recordings, Inc. CD778) - contribution to the album by remix
* *Música a Metrónomi*, companion CD for catalog Metronom / Yasunao Tone "Zen and Music" (fundacio Rafael Tous d'Art Contemporani) - compilation with Lawrence "Butch" Morris, Frances-Marie Uitti, Javier "Libra"Villavecchia, Young Farmers Claim Futre, Trio Sekwenza, Joan Saura
1996 * Group Ongaku: *Music of Group Ongaku* (HEAR Sound Art Library, HEAR-002), Group Ongaku (Takehisa Kosugi, Shuko Mizuno, Mieko Shiomi, Mikio Tojima, Yasunao Tone, Genichi Tsuge)
1991 * *Upper Air Observation*: Barbara Held / Yasunao Tone "Trio for a flute player," Yasunao Tone "Lyrictron" (Lovely Music, LCD-3031)
1990 * *Flux Tellus* / Yasunao Tone "Anagram for Strings" (Harvestworks, Tellus#24) a cassette magazine, special Fluxus issue
1985 * *Current Trends in Racism in Modern America*: Butch Morris (Sound Aspects, SAS-CD4010) Performed with Frank Lowe, John Zorn, Brancon Ross, Zeena Perkins, Tom Cora, Christian Marclay, Eli Fountain, Curtis Clark, Thurman Barker, Butch Morris

Books on Yasunao Tone

* Loops- Una Historia de la musica electronica, Javier Blanquez and Omar Morera-Editors, "Amor Digital" by Anna Ramos and Roc Jmenez, Random House Mondadori, SA Barcelona Spain, 2002
* Cyber arts 2002, Hannes Leopoldseder and Christiane Schoepf, by Naut Humon and Hecker, pp. 153~154, PP. 162~165, Hatje Cantz, Germany 2002
* Tekuno/rozikaru/ongaku-ron (Techno-logical Music), PP.144~164 Atsushi Sasaki, Rittor Music, Tokyo, 2005
* (H)EAR, PP. 30~40, "The problem of text/sound," Atsushi Sasaki, Seido-sha, Tokyo, 2005
* Background Noise, Brandon LaBelle, P.35-46 and P. 211-217, The Continum International Publishing Group, London , 2006
* Handmade Electronic Music, Nicolas Collins, PP.165-6, 219,229,231, Routredge, New York, 2006

Selected reviews and articles - (since 1990 only)

* Fluxus Redux, PP. 98~99 Vanity Fair, July 1993, Vol. 56, No. 7, New York
* Mike Silverton, The Fanfare : *Musica Iconologos*, Fanfare Inc., MARCH/APRIL 1994, pp. 347-8
* Mike Silverton, The Want List 1997, The Fanfare, Fanfare Inc., November/December 1997, Vol.21, No2, pp.94-5
* Kenneth Goldsmith, New York Press Vol.10, No. 24, Oct.15-21, 1997
* KYLE GANN, Consumer Cuide-Yasunao Tone "*Solo for Wounded CD*," the Village VOICE, September 9, 1997. Vol. XLII No.36
* Brian Daguid, Sound Check- *Solo for Wounded CD*, P.54, Wire, #166, December 1997, London , UK
* alcides lanza, *Musica Iconologos*, Contact Vol. 9 No. 1, 1998, Montreal
* Cristine Wang, And"digital Art Takes a Giant Leap- Lands Nicely on its Own, The New York ARTS, Vol.6 No.4, April 2001, pp.14-5
* Michael Kimmelman 'BitStreams' and 'Data Dynamics': Creativity, Digitally Remastered," The New York Times, March 23, 2001
* Midori Matsui "Yokohama Triennale report: Dispersion, Integration, Change" P.2, Japanese Art Scene Monitor, Issue 16, Oct. 2001, Australian Embassy, Tokyo
* Atsushi Sasaki p.37, Tomomi Adachi PP.46~7, Naoyoshi Hikosaka P.53, Inter Communication, No. 39, Winter 2001

* Ken'ichi Takeda, "Composer's composer - Yasunao Tone and Hiroshi Shioya," SudioVoice Vol.302 Feburary 2001, Tokyo
* Voices of Hamatori, P.134 Bijutsu Techo, vol. 53. No.812. Nov. 2001, Tokyo
* Shinji Kazariya, " Yasunao Tone live performance" P.212, Harper's Bazzar- Japanese edition, No. 15, December 2001, Tokyo
* Miyuki Shiraishi, A look at the music in the Yokkohama Triennale, PP.39~40, Intercommunication #38 2002, ICC, Tokyo
* Caleb Stuart, "Yasunao Tone's Wounded and Skipping Compact Discs: from improvisation and indeterminate composition to glitching CDs." The Leonardo Electronic Almanac, MIT Press, October issue, 2002
* Brandon La Belle, Reading Between the Lines: Word as Conceptual Project, The Performance Research #7, Vol 3, Taylor & Francis Ltd. 2002, pp.47-53
* Lina D Russell: Lovebytes Festival, The Wire, Wire Magazine Ltd., Issue 219, May 2002, P.94
* Minoru Hatanaka, Saundo aato no atarasii tenkai (New development of Sound Art), PP.106~111 Bijutsu Techo vol.54 No. 821, Tokyo
* R. Young, B. Borthwick and A.H. Nesset, Sonar 2002, PP.82-3The Wire #222, August 2002, London.
* Alan Licht: Random Tone Bursts, The Wire, The Wire # 223, p.p. 30-33, Sept. 2002
* Linda Dzuverovic Russell, ARS ELECTRONICA, P. 93, the Wire, #225, Nov. 2002
* Caleb Stuart, "Damaging Sound: Glitching and Skipping Compact Discs in the Audio of Yasunao Tone, Nicolas Collins and Oval," PP 47~52, Leonardo Music Journal, Vol. 13, 2003, MIT Press, Boston
* Rob Young, Editor's Idea, P.4, The Wire #227, Jan. 2003, London
* David Toop, The Compiler P. 66, The Wire #228, Feb. 2003, London
* Julian Cowley, The Primer P. 38~42, The Wire #230, Apr. 2003, London
* Julian Cowley, Sound Check "Yasunao Tone" P.73, The Wire, #231, May 2003, London
* Brandon LaBelle, Short Circuit: Sound Art and The Museum, *Contemporary,* October/November 2003, London
* Christian Marclay, Invisible Jukebox P.22, and Dave Mandl, Phil Niblock's 70th Birthday Party at Tonic, P. 89, The Wire #237, Nov. 2003, London
* Christoph Cox, Best of 2003 Music P. 26, Art Forum, Dec. 2003, New York
* 2003 Rewind - Record of the year, P. 38, P.48, The Wire #239, Jan. 2004. London
* Yasunao Tone and Hecker, *Pslimpsest*, P.67 The Wire #251, Jan 2005, London
* Bernard Holland, "Paying Attention to Means," New York Times, September 17, 2005
* Daniela Cascella, Dissonanze 2006, P. 68 The Wire #269, July 2006

Interviews

* Nobuyuki Takashima, Post Modernism as symptom, R No.3, July 1985, Tokyo
* Tetsuo Kogawa, PP.176~196, Subaru (The Subaru Monthly) September 1991, No. 9, Vol. 13, Tokyo
* Tetsuo Kogawa, PP. 121~134, InterCommunication No. 39, Winter 2002, Tokyo
* Double interview with Christian Marclay, PP. 38~46 MUSIC magazine #1, 1997, New York
* Michel Henritzi, PP. 6~15 revu et corrigée, No 46, Dec.2000, Grenoble, France
* Kazuki Takami, musée Vol. 28, No. 2000. Tower Records Japan
* Atsushi Sasaki, Special "Roots and Edges of Electronic Music," Fader #11, Dec. 2005, Tokyo

Exhibition Catalogs

* Gino Di Maggio and Achille Bonita Oliva, PP.265~268, Ubi F;isis ibi motus, La Biennale di Venezia, 1990, Venice, Italy
* Alexandra Munroe, PP.217~220, Barbara London, PP.289~290, plate 132-1 and 132-2, Japanese Art After 1945, Alexandra Munroe editor, Guggenheim Museum, Yokohama Museum and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1994, New York
* Atsuo Yamamoto "Otono Jikken to Sougetsu Aaro Senta" (Experiments of Sound and Sougetsu Art Center), PP.247~249, Sougetsu to Sono Jidai, Ashiya Museum and Chiba Museum, 1998, Ashiya Japan
* Christiane Kort, PP. 36~39 Loos Space Music Festival, 1999, The Hague Netherlands
* Reiko Tomii, PP.20~25, Figure 9 - P.21, Figure 108 - P.151, Gobal Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950s~1980s, Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, Rachel Weiss Project directors, Queens Museum of Art, 1999, New York
* Kevin Concannon, PP.179~181, Yes Yoko Ono, Japan Society, 1999 New York
* Akiko Fujii Editor, yasunao tone, 50pages, Aichi Geijutsu Bunka Senta (Aichi Prefectural Cuture Center) and Ashiya City Museum of Art, 2001,Nagoya, Japan
* Interational Triennale of Contemporary Art – YOKOHAMA 2001, Yasunao Tone PP.334~347, 2001, Yokohama Japan

* Mutations, P.117, PP. 217~218, TN Probe, Tokyo, 2001
* Do it, Hans Ulrich Oblist editor, curators Hans-Ulrich Oblist and Pamela Echeverria, Museo de Arte Carrio Gil, 2001, Mexico City
* Anthony Huberman, "After the Age of Reproduction: a Soundtrack," I MODERNI (The Moderns), Castello di Rivoli Musee d'Arte Conemporanea, 2003, Rivoli-Torino, Italy

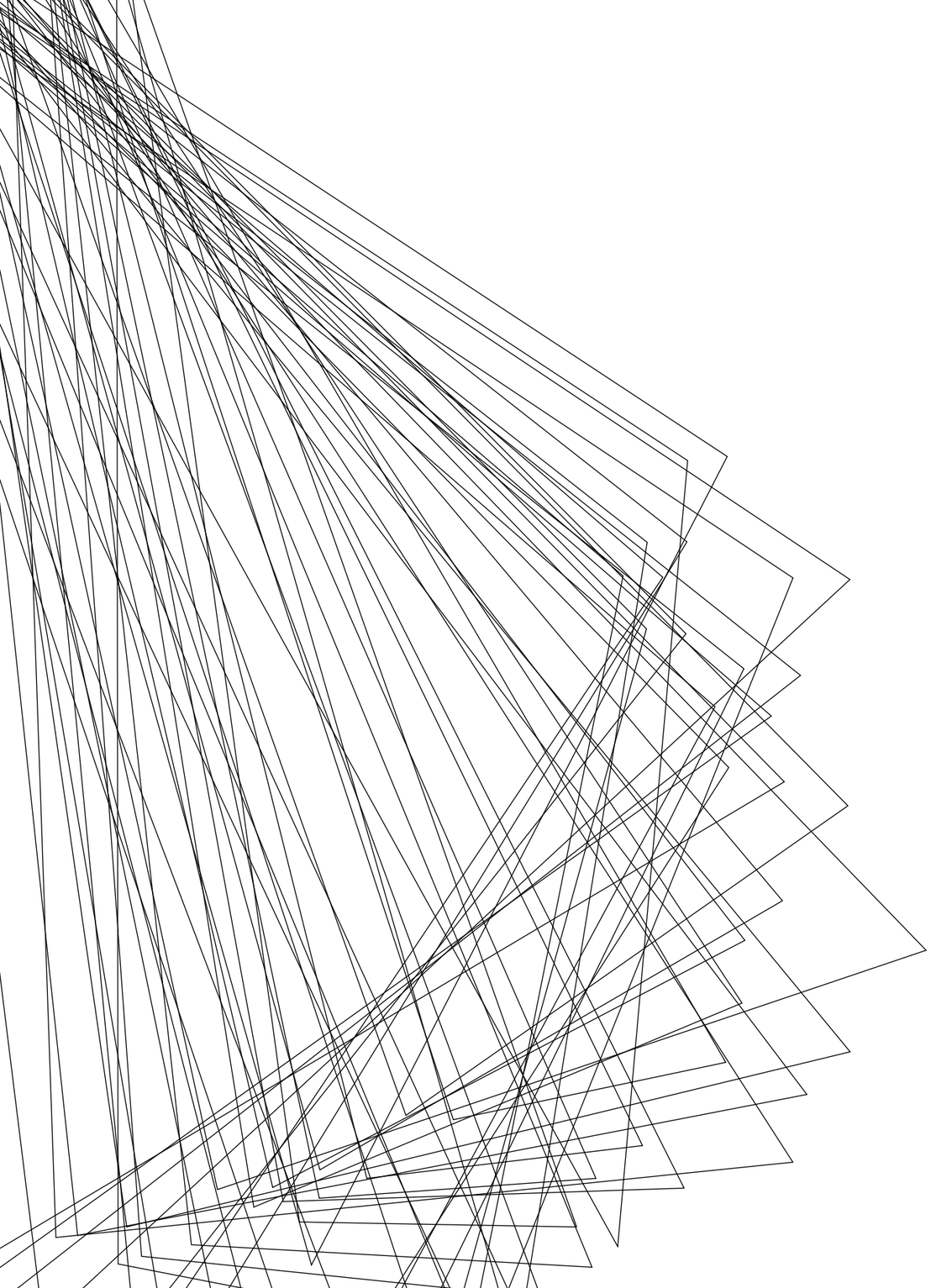
Yasunao Tone's own writings

Books

* *Gendai Geijutsu no Iso*: Geijutsu wa Shisou tariuruka (Phase of Contemporary Art: Can art be thought), Tokyo Tabata Shoten, 1970

Magazine articles and catalog essays

* "Nyuu Yooku no Jikken Ongaku" (Experimental Music in New York), Subaru (Monthly The Subaru) PP.164~173, January 1986, No.1 Vol.1
* "Sen-Yen satsu saiban ni tsuite," P. 110, The adventure of Akasegawa Gempei. A catalog for Akasegawa Genpei Retrospective.
* Genpei Retrospective, January 21 - April 2, Nagoya City Museum, Nagoya Japan
* "Zyon Keiji to Rekoodo," PP. 116~125, InterCommunication No. 35, Winter 2001, Tokyo
* Noizu/Kisei – Noise/Parasite, PP. 336~337, Yokohama 2001, A catalog for Yokohama Triannial, September 2~ November 11,Yokohama Japan,
* "John Cage and Recording," Leonardo Music Journal, Volume 13, 2003, The MIT Press, Boston



Robert Ashley, a distinguished figure in American contemporary music, holds an international reputation for his work in new forms of opera and multi-disciplinary projects. His recorded works are acknowledged classics of language in a musical setting. He pioneered opera-for-television. During the 1960s, Ashley organized the ONCE Festival, the annual festival of contemporary performing arts in Ann Arbor from 1961 to 1969 and he directed the highly influential ONCE Group, a music-theater ensemble that toured the United States from 1964 to 1969. During these years Ashley developed and produced the first of his mixed-media operas, notably That Morning Thing and In Memoriam...Kit Carson. From 1966 to 1976 he toured throughout the United States and Europe with the Sonic Arts Union, the composers' collective that included David Behrman, Alvin Lucier and Gordon Mumma. Other commissioned works include operas Now Eleanor's Idea (1993) and Foreign Experiences (1994); Van Cao's Meditation (1992); Superior Seven (1988); eL/Aficionado (1987); and Atalanta (Acts of God) (1985). Dust, an opera commissioned by the Kanagawa Arts Foundation, Yokohama, Japan, premiered on November 15, 1998. His CD, Foreign Experiences (2006), inspired by the writings of Carlos Castaneda, blends story telling and pop culture.

Hans Ulrich Obrist was born 1968 in Zurich, and currently lives and works in Paris. In 1993, he founded the Museum Robert Walser and began to run the Migrateurs program at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris where he now serves as a curator for contemporary art. He is editor in chief of the hybrid artist pages Point d'Ironie, published by agnès b and begun in collaboration with her in 1997 and special correspondent of Domus Magazine in Milano. From 1991 to the present he has curated or co-curated numerous exhibitions including: Hôtel Carlton Palace, Paris,1993; Manifesta 1, Rotterdam, 1996, Do it (more than 30 versions from 1994 to present); Cities on the Move, Secession Vienna and CAPC Bordeaux, 1997, and Hayward Gallery, London/ Kiasma, Helsinki/ Bangkok,1999; Laboratorium Antwerp Open,1999; Utopia Station 50th Venice Biennale, 2003 and Haus der Kunst, Munich 2004. For ARC/ Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, he has in recent years co-curated the monographic exhibitions of Olafur Eliasson, Philippe Parreno, Steve Mc Queen, Jonas Mekas, and Yoko Ono.

Accompanying his curatorial projects, he has edited the writings of Gerhard Richter, Louise Bourgeois, Gilbert and George, Maria Lassnig and Leon Golub and is the editor of a series of artist books published by Walther Koenig including books by John Baldessari, Mathew Barney, Christian Boltanski, Peter Fischli/ David Weiss, Douglas Gordon, Philippe Parreno, and Anri Sala. The first volume of his ongoing interview project was recently collected in Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews (Milan: Edizioni Charta, 2003).

Federico Marulanda recently obtained a PhD in philosophy from Columbia University. His main research interests are in the philosophy of logic and language.

Dasha Dekleva received MA in art history from University of Illinois in Chicago, focusing on the history of sound in art. Now in Berkeley, she is developing this interest through writing and a web archiving project. Her essay "Ear Scope" is in the forthcoming publication on Max Neuhaus by Dia Art Foundation.

William Marotti received his doctorate from the University of Chicago in 2001. He was the Woodrow Wilson postdoctoral fellow for 2001-2003 at NYUs International Center for Advanced Studies, participating in their Project on the Cold War as Global Conflict. Following another postdoctoral fellowship, at Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute, and a visiting position at the University of California, Santa Cruz History Department, he is now an assistant professor in the UCLA History Department. His main research interests are post-WWII Japanese cultural politics, Cold War and everyday life, art and activism, and the global 1960s.

Achim Wollscheid is an artist, writer, and teacher based in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Since the early 80s he has created both recorded and installation work, collaborating with a variety of artists and musicians around the world. His work in sound has led him to an interest in the relation between sound, light and architectural space, which he continues to pursue and investigate. He is a member of Selektion, an organisation for the production and distribution of information systems, and author of "The Terrorized Term" (Selektion, 2000).

CD for the book, notes and credit lines

1. Anagram for Strings (1961) Performed by SEM Ensemble, re-recorded from a documentation video, at Willow Place Auditorium, March 4th 1993. See also the notation on page #43. Courtesy of Peter Kotik and SEM Ensemble.

2. Lyrictron for Flute (1988) Performed by Barbara Held. Used by permission, Lovely Music, Ltd. From album "Upper Air Observation" Barbara Held, Lovely Music LCD 3031.
Note: The source of the flute score is a western transcription of flute tablature from T'ong dynasty. When a flute is played the computer system detects pitches and the information is converted to a Haiku poem by choosing lines from three different types of "phrase dictionaries" composed for this piece and stored in the computer. The phrases are taken from various poems, such as Mallarmé, Max Jacob, Paul Valéry, etc. The poem is displayed on a video monitor and is read aloud by the voice synthesizer at the same time.
The process of generating Haiku from pitches played on the flute through a pitch tracking system is somehow similar to the surrealist's "Cadavre Exquis," a method of writing a chance-determined poem. The Lyrictron system is designed and built by Dave Meschiter.
The piece was commissioned by Mutable Music Production for Barbara Held.
The following poems are one's the computer created when the piece was performed (needless to say, whenever the flute player plays the score it is designed to make different haiku):

1. Gulls patrol the coastline
each other's perilous arms
purely speculative level

2. The white of summer sounds
on the artistic plane
feeling the air cool

3. The high harvest moon
sleeping soundly in your bed
on purple dawn grows

4. In the hot thick air
surrounded by cedar forest
as abruptly a cuckoo singing

5. Under shining autumn skies
by the motionless water
the flame never ends

6. A cooling soft breeze
amid the palid mausoleum
perishing one after another

7. The scent of burning wood
the horizon gorged with light
leaves shivering with cold

8. The green of summer fields
against the headlight
we walk along the dirt path

9. Fall morning sunlight
gems of my natal walls
sitting in the reaching grass

10. In the heat of June's fury
dwelling-place of my love
abreast I am at last

11. Wiping sleep from my eyelids
on the quiet sands
smearing my eyes with grief

3. Solar Eclipse in October (1992; excerpt) From solo album *Musica Iconologos*, Lovely Music LCD 3041; commissioned by Mutable Music Production and produced by Thomas Buckner. Used by permission, Lovely Music, Ltd.
Note: Refer to the enclosed articles for extensive discussion on the piece – Robert Ashley's original liner notes on page #35-36 and "Logogram to Noise" by Federico Marulanda, page #79-92.

4. Blue Bird Remix of Judy Dunaway's piece *Blue Bird*, from Judy Dunaway "Balloon Music." Used by permission New World Records. CRI 778, copyright 1998 Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc.
Note: Judy Dunaway asked me to remix her *Blue Bird*, to which I prepared, or wounded, the CDR she gave me and played it on my old CD player at Harvestworks' recording studio. Upon mastering she asked if I wanted to edit out spikes although she liked them. I told her "don't bother and they should stay." As with all my prepared pieces on CD this piece is a documentation of a performance without editing.

5. The Seminar on the Purloined Letter (1998) Performed by Annea Lockwood - voice, Yasunao Tone - electronic and DownTown Ensemble, courtesy of Downtown Ensemble - Daniel Goode on clarinet, Bill Hellermann on guitar, Peter Zummo on trombone.
Note: The piece was commissioned in celebration of Earl Brown's 70th birthday, however the DownTown Ensemble had it after his 72nd birthday. Based on Jacques Lacan's famous seminar, Le seminaire sur la letter volée, in his *Ecrits*. (Translated by Jeffrey Mehlman)
Courtesy of Daniel Goode, DownTown Ensemble and Annea Lockwood.

6. Musica Simulacra - Poem number 1 (1996-2004)

7. Musica Simulacra - Poem number 4516 (1996-2004)

Notes for track 6 & 7:
The two excerpts are the first poem and the last poem of the Man'yo-shu, as part of the CD-ROM project, *Musica Simulacra*.
Technical collaboration with Ichiro Fujinaga.
The piece was made possible in part by 1996-97 Individual Artist Award for Media from New York State Council on the Arts grant.
Refer to the enclosed article for extended discussion on the piece – "Logogram to Noise" by Federico Marulanda, page 79 -92.
Concept:
Man'yo-shu, which consists of 20 books and 4516 poems, was originally written in only Chinese characters, which is called Man'yo Kana. Man'yo Kana reveals the way the Japanese in the era of Man'yo-shu – from the mid-5th century to mid-8th century – transcribed their own language through syllabic use of Chinese characters. The Japanese at that time did not have their own phonetic syllabic system, Kana, which is actually a reductive form of a very limited numbers of Chinese characters comparing to Man'yo Kana. The editors and copiers of the anthology tried to avoid repetitive use of the same characters in a poem while also using many different characters for the same sound for esthetic and semantic reasons, so the number of the use of Chinese characters far exceeded the number used in the Kana, which is only 50. The number of Chinese characters or Kanji in Man'yo-shu is around 2400 characters (the use of Chinese characters varies depending on the different editions). The entire Man'yo-shu text consists of approximately 145,800 characters, which means, in principle if you convert 2,400 characters into sounds you are able to convert the entire text of Man'yo-shu only by a matter of combinations and permutations. According to my ball-park calculation this results in 2830 hours,

if the entire piece was performed. Then, I have compiled a sort of sound dictionary that each sign of Chinese character of Man'yo-shu corresponds to digital noise-sound. So, the piece can be only contained in the form of a CD-ROM with computer program. Thus I can make a CD play 4516 pieces of Man'yo poems converted to the same number of sound piece in its entirety.
This work is an attempt to convert the entire text of Man'yo-shu, the oldest Japanese anthology of poems from the 8th century, into digital sound art. First, recording presupposes that through repetition each multiplied version is identical, no matter how many copies are made and how many times they are listened to. However, recording as such is not an ideal medium for composers who write music whose composition is strictly a process that will only be completed through performance and reception as active interventions in music. Therefore, I would like to create a recording that does not repeat whenever you listen to it. I have been working on this concept for years and with different methods. *Molecular Music* (1982-5), take for example, employs a sound-generating system utilizing light sensors attached to a film screen and oscillators connected to light sensors, so that the film projected on the screen creates varying sounds in accordance with the specific arrangement of the sensors and the changing brightness of the projected images. The film component when projected determines the timbres, pitches, and rhythmic structure of the piece. The content of the film is a visual translation of ancient Chinese and Japanese poems, more precisely, a visual conversion of the Chinese characters used in the poems. The rhythmic structure of the film is also derived from the original texts as read aloud; thus, the original texts structure the generated sound. Other examples, *Music for 2 CD Players* (1986) and *Solo for Wounded CD* (1995), are based on altering CDs binary information by putting tiny bits of Scotch tape on the side the laser beam hits, which results in totally unexpected sound (pitches, timbres, volumes, etc.), which also includes changing speeds and direction of spinning as well. The method enables one to create totally different music out of commercially produced CDs.

YASUNAO TONE
Noise Media Language

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