EMBRACING THE CLASH

Julia Wolfe

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY
OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC COMPOSITION

Adviser: Paul Lansky

September 2012
ABSTRACT

In “Embracing the Clash” composer Julia Wolfe explores the origins, early years, and cultural impact of Bang on a Can, a multi-faceted music organization that she founded with Michael Gordon and David Lang in New York City in 1987. Bang on a Can began as a one-day twelve-hour music marathon of contemporary classical music and has grown to include two touring ensembles, a commissioning fund, a summer music institute, and an education program. In addition, Bang on a Can produces multi-media works, recordings, and radio programs.

Beginnings focuses on the early artistic development of Gordon, Lang, Wolfe, and composer Evan Ziporyn. In Six Young Composers Wolfe examines the early style of these composers as well as of Lois V Vierk and Steve Martland. Among the pieces that are discussed are Evan Ziporyn’s Waiting by the Phone, David Lang’s frag, Michael Gordon’s Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!, Julia Wolfe’s The Vermeer Room, Lois V Vierk’s Manhattan Cascade, and Steve Martland’s Drill.

In Influences Wolfe focuses on composers Louis Andriessen, Martin Bresnick, John Cage, Jacob Druckman, Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Steve Reich, and Terry Riley. Influences includes discussions on the obstacles and challenges faced by the organization.

In Performers Wolfe discusses performance practice of new music in the late 1980s and Bang on a Can’s collaborations with dynamic performers like the Dutch group Pianoduo. Also discussed is the formation of the Bang on a Can All-Stars and its six original members: Maya Beiser, Robert Black, Lisa Moore, Steve Schick, Mark Stewart and Evan Ziporyn.

Marathon and Move to Lincoln Center chronicle the years immediately following the first marathon and the controversial move to Lincoln Center. Four Pieces of Music takes an in depth look at four significant compositions by the Bang on a Can composers: Evan Ziporyn’s Tire Fire, Michael Gordon’s Yo Shakespeare, David Lang’s cheating, lying, stealing, and Julia Wolfe’s Lick.

In conclusion Wolfe focuses on the broadening of the programming, the creation of the Bang on a Can Summer Institute at MASS MoCA, and the changes in the new music scene since Bang on a Can’s early years.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Red Poppy for permission to reprint excerpts from the following:

*Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!,* music by Michael Gordon, copyright © 1983
*Illumination rounds*, music by David Lang, copyright © 1990
*frag*, music by David Lang, copyright © 1990
*press release*, music by David Lang, copyright © 1991
*cheating, lying, stealing*, music by David Lang, copyright © 1995
*The Vermeer Room*, music by Julia Wolfe, copyright © 1989
*Lick*, music by Julia Wolfe, copyright © 1994

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Red Poppy.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Airplane Ears Music for permission to reprint excerpts from the following:

*LUV Time*, music by Evan Ziporyn, copyright © 1984
*Waiting by the Phone*, music by Evan Ziporyn, copyright © 1986
*Tire Fire*, music by Evan Ziporyn, copyright © 1994

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Airplane Ears Music.
INTRODUCTION

In 1987 Michael Gordon, David Lang and I produced a one day 12-hour marathon concert of new and experimental composed music in an art gallery in the Soho district of New York City. We called it Bang on a Can. We had no long-term plans. We wanted to create a one day “happening.”

Over the past 25 years (1987-2012) Bang on a Can has developed into a multi-faceted music organization supporting adventurous music. In addition to holding the annual marathon we expanded the organization to include two touring ensembles, the Bang on a Can All-Stars and Asphalt Orchestra; The People’s Commissioning Fund as an independent source for commissioning new work; the Bang on a Can Summer Institute at MASS MoCA offering an alternative program for classically trained musicians in the early stages of their careers; and Found Sound Nation, an educational program for underserved high school students to create their own music.

In addition to these core programs Bang on a Can produces large-scale multi-media works, creates recordings in cooperation with the independent record label Cantaloupe Music, and produces radio programs.
Informally the organization encourages and helps to develop the careers of young performing ensembles.

In the early years of Bang on Can, it would not have occurred to me that one day I would be documenting the events that kicked off what became a thriving multi-faceted music collective or, more significantly, a musical movement. This remembering and writing down is a strange brew of memoir and documentation, the memoir being distinctly personal and the documentation gathered from pieces of paper that mark the dates of specific concerts and the names of pieces, composers and musicians. The collective began with Gordon, Lang, and I sharing ideas around our kitchen tables or in cafes and diners in New York City. Evan Ziporyn was present in the early years but officially came into the fold with the start of the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

This narrative is about the early years of Bang on a Can and the interweaving of the lives of four young composers: Michael Gordon, David Lang, Evan Ziporyn and me. The story focuses on our search for style and audience. This search had no itinerary. Our meeting became a kind of creative confluence, in which we bounced ideas off of each other. We
spurred each other on with the challenge of writing a yet unheard music and the promise that someone would listen to it.

I have focused this dissertation around the pivotal first Bang on a Can Marathon on May 10, 1987, including events and personal histories leading up to the event as well as developments that came shortly after. I dedicate a considerable portion of the writing to discussing the artistic development of Gordon, Lang, Ziporyn, and me. Also included in this peer group are composers Steve Martland and Lois V Vierk who made strong impressions on the four of us in those early years. In our discussions for that first marathon we were excited to include some of the composers whose work had influenced our ideas and writing. I have included them in this paper as well: Louis Andriessen, John Cage, Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Steve Reich, and Terry Riley, as well as our teachers, Martin Bresnick and Jacob Druckman, at the Yale School of Music which was a meeting ground for the four of us.

I have also included some ruminations on what Gordon, Lang, and I were thinking at the start of Bang on a Can and what we were trying to accomplish. We did not want to simply produce a concert, but wanted to create an event. To accomplish this we made curatorial and marketing
decisions that were unusual at the time. I have included stories on how the original members of the Bang on a Can All-Stars came to our attention. In addition I cover some of the trials of those early years and our eventual move out of the East Village art scene and into mainstream venues. I conclude the dissertation with an in depth look at four pieces—one each by Michael Gordon, David Lang, Evan Ziporyn and me.
BEGINNINGS

I met Michael Gordon in August of 1982. I was living in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and I happened to go through New York City on route to visiting family in Pennsylvania. A college friend, photographer Peter Serling, encouraged me to come visit and meet his roommate who, like me, was deeply involved in contemporary music. Serling mentioned that Gordon had just finished the composition program at the Yale School of Music and was doing interesting music projects in New York. Gordon and I met for breakfast at a small diner in Tribeca. I asked him questions about his music and about his experience at Yale.

At his suggestion, the next day I took a trip out to New Haven to meet David Lang. Gordon had met Lang at the Aspen Music Festival in the summer of 1977. The two 20-year-old composers did not like each other on first meeting. Lang was a know-it-all from a big city who had written dozens of pieces. Gordon was an outsider from Florida, and Aspen was his first introduction to the professional classical composition world. Gordon and Lang argued that summer about music and, specifically, about their favorite works by Steve Reich and Philip Glass. One would think that because they
were the only two young composers at Aspen that summer who cared about the music of Reich and Glass, they might have bonded. Instead, they clashed.

Later, Gordon and Lang met again when they found themselves in the same composition program at the Yale School of Music. Here they became friends. Teaming up, they began to challenge visiting composers who came to talk at the Composer Seminars. Martin Bresnick, a new member of the faculty, always suspected that his reputation had been damaged with several visiting composers because of the questions put to them by Gordon and Lang.

In 1982 Lang was finishing up his studies at Yale, and the trip would give me the opportunity to learn more about the composition program. That day in New Haven I spent the afternoon with Lang listening to music nonstop. I distinctly remember that we listened to Laurie Anderson and Witold Lutoslawski. Much of the music I was hearing for the first time. It all sounded amazing, and the world of music felt particularly large and wonderful that day.

A little more than a year later, I was back in New Haven for an interview at Yale. Evan Ziporyn and I had back-to-back interviews, and I
have a clear memory of walking through the Yale campus with him, talking about music. We found a room with a piano, and Ziporyn asked to see my solo piano piece, *Seamarks* (1983), which I had submitted with my portfolio. He sat down to play it and, when he was finished, said, “It’s really well done, but I don’t write music like that anymore.”

I thought my piece might not be smart enough for him. But what he meant was that it was simply “old school.” I had written *Seamarks* while studying at the University of Michigan, and it is the only piece of atonal music I have ever written. Another work I submitted was more of a crossbreed between Igor Stravinsky and Steve Reich, employing wind instruments and hand clappers. Maybe that piece would have resonated more with Ziporyn. What kind of music did he write? I wondered. I didn’t find out right away. We both were accepted to the Yale program for the fall of 1984, but Ziporyn chose instead to head west to Berkeley, California.

The four of us—Ziporyn, myself, Gordon and Lang—were in the same room together in December of 1983. Gordon had been invited to perform at an East Village art gallery obtusely named International With Monument (IWM). Although the East Village art scene was short-lived, during the 1980s there was an explosion of tiny storefront galleries. IWM
was packed with friends and a hip young audience of gallery-hoppers. The concert consisted of just two works by Gordon: *The Tree Watcher* (1981), with Gordon playing keyboards and David Lang on hotel bell; and *Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!* (1983) for the newly formed Michael Gordon Philharmonic, a mixed amplified ensemble of six musicians, with Ziporyn playing clarinets.

By 1986, Gordon and I, now married, were living in New York together. Lang lived in the city, too, and he had been invited to host an event that summer at the Cooper Hewitt Museum. The concert, which was to be held on the lawn of the museum, was moved inside because of the weather. I remember the audience and musicians were tightly crammed in a small basement room. Lang put together a program that included *Music for Winds and Pipes* (1986) by Yale classmate Jeffrey Brooks (I played one of the pipes), *spooky action at a distance* (1986) and *frag* (1984) by Lang, and the Michael Gordon Philharmonic playing Gordon’s *Strange Quiet* (1985).

The museum asked for a blurb for their brochure. At my suggestion Lang gave them this line to describe the event: “Some composers sit around and bang on a can.” The line was never used. The non-musical
setting of the Cooper Hewitt Museum attracted a diverse and attentive audience. Every seat was taken; the room felt charged with excitement. Afterwards, Evan Ziporyn returned to Berkeley, Jeff Brooks to Minneapolis. Gordon, Lang and I began to meet regularly in New York City. We were excited by the promise of the Cooper Hewitt experience. But how could we build on that success? The music scene seemed fairly bleak to us. There were limited opportunities for work. And there was hardly an audience for new music. Our college friends would go out to see highly experimental film, dance, theater and poetry, but not experimental concert music. For most of our non-musician friends, the musical equivalent to other experimental art forms were arty rock bands like Talking Heads and Sonic Youth.

What was unsatisfying about the new music scene? New music concerts had the aura of academic lectures. The audience was select and serious, the program notes were lengthy and the composers’ biographies filled with accolades. The performers looked like they had spent their lives in practice rooms. The 19th-century classical music conventions they employed were formal and distancing.
At some point my compatriots and I moved to take action. We thought of Sheep’s Clothing, the somewhat bohemian, student collective that produced all-night marathon concerts under the supervision of Martin Bresnick at Yale. Those all-night events had been an odd mix of open instrumentation pieces from the 1960s and music written by the students, many of the works incorporating elements of performance art. The audience—mostly other students—came to these concerts with sleeping bags and would drift in and out of sleep. The all-night concert was an endurance test that blurred the boundaries between styles and dulled the impulse to be critical of any one piece of music. When morning came, a collective performance of Terry Riley’s *In C* (1964) marked the end of the concert. Evan Ziporyn was the director of Sheep’s Clothing in 1980-81. David Lang had been an active member in the group. Michael Gordon had attended the concerts. By the time I got to Yale in 1984, Sheep’s Clothing had disbanded and was only a legend.

Gordon, Lang, and I decided to build on the all-night Sheep’s Clothing model and produce a marathon of music. We talked to galleries in Soho. Jeanette Ingberman, curator of the progressive Exit Art gallery on lower Broadway, was interested, but she wouldn’t go for an all-night event.
Soho was still deserted at night in the mid-1980s; she didn’t think anyone would come. We agreed to run the marathon from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m. instead.

While we did not expect listeners to drift in and out of sleep as they did at the all-night Sheep’s Clothing events (although that would be fine), we liked the idea of listeners coming and going as they pleased. Would the format work outside of the close-knit music school community? We really didn’t know. I’m not even sure how much we cared. We were just doing it, having fun, trying a grand experiment. We wanted to hear the music and to make a happening. Our plans were for a one-time event.

We made a long list of possible names for our marathon, and when I jokingly called it “Bang on a Can,” Lang lit up. We all laughed as we decided on “The First Annual Bang on a Can Marathon.” There were no specific plans to continue. We had no thought of starting an organization. We were only hypothesizing. Would a broad art-loving audience actually come to a concert of contemporary music? What would draw them there? Could we recreate the excitement of Sheep’s Clothing in this new context? What message did we, the umbrella-less generation of American composers, stuck somewhere between the burgeoning populism of Minimalism and the monkhood of academia, want to send out into the
world? What mischief could we make? What dialogue was to be had? What music did we ourselves want to hear? What was the world in which we wanted to live?

* * *

SIX YOUNG COMPOSERS

EVAN ZIPORYN

Evan Ziporyn and Michael Gordon met at a Yale Student Composers Concert in Sprague Hall in the fall of 1980. Ziporyn presented his clarinet solo, *Two Obsessions* (1980), and Gordon presented *Earthwork* (1979) for solo piano. Gordon and Ziporyn were easily able to identify each other as the odd ones out. *Two Obsessions* featured an onstage free-standing lamp as a silent duet partner for Ziporyn’s edgy tunes. This was Ziporyn’s first work, among many, for solo clarinet, but at this early stage, Ziporyn hadn’t imagined that the clarinet would play such an important role in his composition. Six years passed before he wrote another work for clarinet, *Waiting by the Phone* (1986).

From the start, Ziporyn’s clarinet playing was unconventional. Emphasizing rhythmic groove and endurance, he cast aside more typical
new music virtuosity with its emphasis on clean tone and extended techniques. He created a unique repertoire of compositions for clarinet that clearly have the Ziporyn stamp, employing the rich tones created by his simultaneous singing while playing, the violent percussive slap-tonguing and a breathiness that he adds for color.

Waiting by the Phone was Ziporyn’s contribution to the first Bang on a Can marathon in 1987. Beginning with offbeat passages running up and down the clarinet, the piece unfolds with a continuous composite melody...
which, in a style referential to Bach's solo violin music, outlines harmonic movement. The melody, in which every note seems to be syncopated, doesn't stop its progressive motion for a “breathless” full four minutes until it comes to a long held low F. The virtuosity here is not in flashy fingers, flutter tonguing, disjointed leaps or other familiar feats, but rather in the precise, unrelenting melody in a syncopated groove that challenges the performer’s concentration in a new and unique way. *Waiting by The Phone* exemplifies Ziporyn’s fantasy-like style and employs a freer structure than works by his Bang on a Can compatriots. Ziporyn, the most trained performer of the four of us, freely revels in licks and techniques that he enjoys playing, and he moves seamlessly from one into the next. There is a thrill in hearing the accelerated ornamental runs in the midst of the opening arpeggiation finally giving way to the rush of continuous running notes. While Ziporyn’s processes are often gradual and continuous, he also allows himself sudden leaps to new material. The music flows organically in a kind of dreamy continuum.

Ziporyn delights in gritty “unclassical” sounds. He doesn’t try to hide the “ugly” stuff. The squeaks, the breaths, the key clicks, the mechanical workings of the instrument—so much the enemy of classical technique—
are all embraced. His playing was not popular with many of the classical clarinetists of the day who were involved in pedagogy, and it elicited warnings to their students of the dangers of the Ziporyn style. But smoothing out his sound was never on Ziporyn’s to-do list. He had extensive experience playing jazz, and in these contexts character, spontaneity and the excitement of the moment were the modus operandi. Further, Ziporyn was not wowed by the clean and perfect technique of other clarinetists. He once described a celebrated clarinetist specializing in contemporary music as “just another virtuoso.”

Meeting Ziporyn was a revelation for me. Here was a musician, far more talented and educated than any I had met in the past, who did not fit the mold of classical composers or performers I had encountered. What was most striking was what he valued in music. It wasn’t braininess or orchestrational finesse that wowed him, but something human, individual and powerful that could be embodied in the roughest expression or realized by the simplest means.
DAVID LANG

David Lang is a self-described “classical music nerd,” though he grew up in a home with little classical music. His parents had few recordings. He remembers LPs with a Ludwig van Beethoven violin sonata, Hector Berlioz’s *Harold in Italy*, a Johannes Brahms symphony, lots of jazz, to which his father often napped after work, and Alan Sherman recordings. Although Lang laughs when he recalls the Sherman records, perhaps Sherman’s cheeky humor influenced Lang’s own sophisticated and delightful sense of humor and irony that find their way into many of his pieces.

While Lang’s parents were avid art lovers, music did not hold a central place in their conversations. Lang ties the beginning of his interest in music to one rainy day in elementary school when the teachers piled the students into the auditorium during recess to watch movies. The choice that day happened to be one installment of the Leonard Bernstein “Young People’s Concerts” series. While most of the kids were completely uninterested, Lang was enraptured. He recalls a moment in the film when Bernstein turned to the audience and announced that he was going to play Dmitri Shostakovich’s *First Symphony*. Bernstein explained that
Shostakovich was 19 years old when he wrote the symphony, and that he became famous overnight. Lang remembers thinking, “I have 10 years.”

Though there were no musical instruments in his house, Lang dove into music at school, eventually purchasing a trombone and teaching himself to play. He also began to write music. When Lang was 13 years old, his mother, noticing that he was absorbed in composing, took Lang to the composition department at the University of California in Los Angeles in search of a teacher. Henri Lazarof was a member of the faculty there and took Lang on as a student, though rather than having the youngster compose, Lazarof gave Lang rigorous lessons in theory and musicianship.

In 1974, when Lang entered Stanford University, the composition faculty was off in Paris, having been invited by Pierre Boulez to help set up the computer system at IRCAM. Stanford hired a local composer to replace the missing teachers; that composer was Lou Harrison. Lang sites this happy accident as an important factor in his early compositional outlook. Harrison’s jolly presence and open-minded approach led Lang to explore a host of experimental music ideas, and he started a new music group with fellow students, which performed the music of John Cage and LaMonte Young, among others.
After Stanford, Lang continued his studies at the University of Iowa, at the end of which he reflected on the music he was writing. He perceived that most of his work was “quiet and spacey.” He decided to challenge himself to write in a more aggressive language akin to Carl Ruggles or Edgard Varese. The outcome, a piece called *hammer amour* (1978, rev. 1989), excited him, and he continued on this track when he began his studies at the Yale School of Music in 1981.

*(Excerpt follows)*
At Yale, Lang wrote *illumination rounds* (1981), a thrilling tour de force for violin and piano. He spent a semester constructing charts and mathematical calculations based on the number 55, the number being chosen for both its relationship to the Fibonacci sequence as well as for being an additive number (the sum of numbers 1 through 10). Lang set himself the task of assigning each musician one of these two properties of the number. His plans were well drawn and, though he had only seven measures of the piece written by the end of the semester, he went home to California over winter break and finished the piece in one week.

*illumination rounds* was a success—tightly composed, edgy, visceral, carefully calculated and spiraling with virtuosity. The piece garnered prizes, bringing Lang recognition, exciting audiences and inspiring musicians, such as Emmanuel Ax, to ask for a piece of their own that was “like *illumination rounds*.”

With all the success and attention, Lang went through a kind of personal crisis. The piece was flashy, but he wondered if it was manipulative. He knew that it made the violinist look “really really good,”
and that it pleased audiences. But Lang asked himself, “Did I write that music because I wanted to hear it? Or did I write that music because I knew it would make other people happy?” He wondered if having the idea of the violinist look “really good” was a virtue. What would happen when he had musical ideas that didn’t make the violinist look good? At the time he didn’t know the answer to his questions.

Lang became uneasy with the idea of delivering music that was expected. He was also put off by the idea of fitting neatly into a definable musical box, and he veered off in a new direction. With his next piece, *while nailing at random* (1983) for solo piano, Lang began to minimize his materials and aimed for a less flashy presentation. At this time, he became familiar with the ideas of Louis Andriessen. Lang saw in Andriessen’s music and philosophies that the tension and the relief from tension in music should be made completely by the materials and not with external ornamental means. Flashy orchestration, crescendos and accelerandos were like artificial stimulants and, as such, should be thought of as “illegal.”

These stimulants were associated with romantic music, and according to Andriessen only served to attach music to a pre-existing emotional framework. Compositional elements which showed off the virtuosity of the
composer’s technique were thought shallow—one depended on these techniques because of a lack of ideas, creativity and commitment to moving the art form forward.

(Excerpt follows)
For Lang’s next work, *frag*, he stripped the music down to the essentials. *frag* is obsessive and single-minded. Even the orchestration is submerged in the unfolding of his process. By paring down so severely, Lang discovered an aspect of his personal language that would resurface in many later works—a stuttering, canonic echo between instruments that are united in a common purpose and direction. In *frag*, Lang sticks strictly to his process, unfolding a stuttered unison tune with unpredictable pitches, rests and unifications as the music travels across the range of the ensemble. Only at the end does he allow for a brief continuous melody, punctuated by flute attacks.

*frag* was a huge stylistic breakthrough in a tiny package. In *frag*, the workings of the piece seem clear. Lang writes, “The work attempts to completely demystify itself, laying bare all its technique for any listener to comprehend” (Lang, David. *frag*, program note, davidlangmusic.com). But *frag* is deceptive. Although the complexity reads as unpredictability, Lang is formulaic and carefully plans his irregular patterns. This ability to work with complex systems made his music palatable to composers who were
interested in rigor. But his increasing move towards a minimal language quickly set him on the wrong side of the tracks.

Lang chose *frag*, not *illumination rounds*, to present at the first Bang on a Can Marathon. The Huntington Trio, who commissioned the work, was baffled by its pared-down language, so Lang brought in the Omni Ensemble, a young, adventurous group, to perform the piece. Finding the work more difficult than it looked on the page, Omni invited Lang to step in as conductor. I remember listening to *frag* at the first Bang on a Can marathon and, even though I was hearing it for the second time, I thought, *What the heck was that?* Its obsessive unrelenting adherence to the unfolding of such stark material shocked me.

MICHAEL GORDON

While planning that first 1987 marathon, Gordon, Lang and I talked about all of the works that we wanted to hear “live,” and over our now 25 years of programming, we have had the opportunity to hear most of them. Some, like Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Gruppen* (1955-57), have yet to be realized at Bang on a Can. A work on the wish list that we presented the very first year was Steve Reich's *Four Organs.*
One of the most gradual process pieces of the Minimalist canon, *Four Organs* was a landmark work for us. Michael Gordon in particular was influenced early on by *Four Organs* and other process pieces. Gordon set out to use similar processes, but rather than maintaining the slow unfolding of an idea as in *Four Organs*, he sped up the processes. An idea might play itself out in a minute as opposed to twenty.

Gordon applied to the graduate program at Yale in 1980 with only Minimalist works in his portfolio. Once there, he proceeded to experiment with more extreme Minimalism. He wrote *The Tree Watcher*, in which he played electric organ and tape loops, and brought Lang in for a cameo on hotel bell. The piece was performed on a Yale Student Composers Concert in October 1981. Loudly amplified and ruthlessly minimal, the piece consisted of three and four note melodies that were looped with primitive machinery, delaying the organ melodies in triplets. There was no score, as much of the piece was created by the looping process.

*The Tree Watcher* was not well received by the faculty at Yale. One professor stood up in the middle of the piece, shouted “Shut up!” and walked out. While the faculty may have found the piece intolerable, the work confirmed for David Lang and Evan Ziporyn (who heard the second
performance of the work in New York), that they had found a comrade in arms. In another early work, *Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!,* Gordon attempted to notate conflicting streams of rhythms similar to those produced by the tape delay in *The Tree Watcher,* much in the way that Reich simulated the phasing of language in *It’s Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966) with live instruments in *Piano Phase* (1967). *For Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!,* Gordon formed his own group of musicians, the Michael Gordon Philharmonic. There were no ensembles that were prepared for the piece’s odd instrumentation and amplification, let alone its incessant repetitive rant. In many ways *Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!* was ahead of its time, both in its instrumentation and aesthetic.

The Michael Gordon Philharmonic offered Gordon a way to hear and develop his work. The first version of the group consisted of Gordon on electric keyboard, Ziporyn on clarinets, Ted Kuhn on violin, John Lad on viola, Jon Fields on electric guitar and Michael Pugliese on percussion. In retrospect, I can see how the Michael Gordon Philharmonic was a precursor to the Bang on a Can All-Stars—an amplified chamber ensemble combining rock and classical instruments.
The Michael Gordon Philharmonic was perhaps the first ensemble to include electric guitar as a chamber instrument. With *Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!*, a loud and aggressive work that pitted the percussionist as soloist in a battle against the other five instruments, Gordon balanced straightforward material with complex rhythms. *Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!* begins with a tune that slowly expands into long and florid melismas, all the while being interrupted by a solo marimba/tom-tom combination moving to a different pulse. In 1983, Gordon was experimenting with odd groupings of contrasting pulses set against one another. Towards the end of the piece, in measure 383, the solo percussionist starts playing quarter-note triplets.

With his next work, *Strange Quiet* (1985), Gordon refined the patterns and grooves that were the subject of *Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not!*. In *Strange Quiet*, the rhythmic layering, which has become a signature of Gordon's style, is more pronounced. With Ziporyn on board, Gordon felt confident exploring complex counter rhythms, and Ziporyn often took the lead in rehearsals. Rooted in simple harmonies and tunes, *Strange Quiet* sounded more like a quirky progressive-rock hybrid than contemporary chamber music. *Strange Quiet* was Gordon's contribution to the 1987 marathon.

**JULIA WOLFE**

At some point in my mid teens, I borrowed an acoustic guitar from a neighbor. I don’t remember who showed me how to play it, but after learning some basic chords, I began to search for my own odd-sounding chords. I would play these chords over and over again and I began to write songs. I was listening to Joni Mitchell, inspired by her beautiful harmonies and spectacular winding melodies. The guitar was a great outlet for my
moody teenage years, and it was a nice complement to the Debussy piano works that I would play when I felt blue or when no one would ever understand how I was feeling. At that time, though, I never considered pursuing a life in music. I was interested in literature, psychology, sociology and political issues.

By my junior year in high school in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, I became restless and decided to graduate a year early. I wanted to see a larger world. I chose the University of Michigan partly for its size, partly for its distance from the East Coast, partly because of the progressive character of the city of Ann Arbor and partly because I found a small alternative program within the larger university, the Residential College, where there were no grades and the classes had interesting names. It was a perfect fit.

By chance, one of my classmates suggested that I sign up for a class called “Creative Musicianship.” I said no, that I really didn’t know enough about music to take the class. But he dragged me along and I went to the first meeting. The professor, Jane Heirich, was a sturdy woman with a straight gaze. She described the incredible things that we would be doing—learning a multitude of music skills, listening to a wide range of music and
writing our own music. She made one thing very clear. This class would require a lot of work. Heirich warned that if we were looking for a lightweight elective we had made the wrong choice. She also said that the class was for anyone to take. It didn’t matter what background knowledge or experience you had. The point of the class was to progress to a new level, no matter where you began. Heirich was a Quaker and her religious philosophical perspective permeated the classroom.

I was hooked. That first year of college I spent most of my waking hours on her class. I then took all of her other classes, performed in her ensembles, sang in her madrigal group and eventually became her assistant. I discovered that music combined the essential things that interested me. It was physical, emotional, mathematical, and, best of all, I could actively create something and not just read about other people doing things.

That my music education began with Heirich was hugely formative. She ran a cooperative classroom with students working together—students teaching other students. She loved all kinds of music and played us everything from folk ballads to Dave Brubeck’s *Take Five* to Terry Riley’s *In C* to Bach. There was no hierarchy of musics. Also, she never told us that
our work was “good” or “bad.” I was a top student all through school and
was used to doing well. This aspect of her teaching was particularly
unsettling to me. She was excited when we worked hard and applied
ourselves. She pushed us and challenged us, but she didn’t judge the
results. Heirich would ask us what we thought of the work and where we
wanted to take it. Today when I meet up with her, she is tickled about
where I began and where I wound up. I was her class beginner. I wonder if
she sees my success as a confirmation of her philosophy of education—
that she laid the foundation for me to find a path and a passion in
composing.

When I showed a strong interest in pursuing classical composition,
Heirich set me up for lessons with a graduate student at the University of
Michigan School of Music. This made me nervous, as I somehow imagined
a stern instructor. But the person who appeared was nothing like I had
imagined. Laura Clayton was a beautiful and gracious woman with a
heartwarming Southern drawl. She was the star student of the composition
program, winning countless awards and carrying herself with a Jackie O.
elegance. I adored her. I was in awe of her. I wanted to be just like her.
Clayton met with me in the dining room of her lovely wooden house on the Old West Side of Ann Arbor. She led me through the mysterious and complex scores of George Crumb, Gyorgy Ligeti and Charles Ives. She looked carefully at my messy incomprehensible sketches. She had confidence in me way beyond what I deserved, and I wondered at times if she had a blind spot or if one day she would notice that I was just barely grasping what she was teaching. Nonetheless, my time with her was always breathtaking, and I was touched by the seriousness with which she took me under her wing. We would discuss music over avocado and cheese sandwiches, often with another young woman, Lucy Bjorklund, whom she had also taken on as a student. There were small photos of gurus all over the house, and they seemed to be guiding her trail to happiness and success. After about a year and a half of studying with her, Clayton fell madly in love with a painter from New Hampshire and moved there.

Clayton was determined to set me up in a proper composition program and found a music school faculty member who agreed to work with me. This was somewhat of a disaster. In my first lesson he had me put aside my somewhat scrawling but definitely lively work for large chamber
ensemble and trapeze artists, and gave me a set of ordered pitches with which to write a new work for piano.

For over a year, as my teacher instructed, I painstakingly arranged the notes, obediently keeping strictly to the pitch order, avoiding repetition and consonances at all cost. But somehow the straightjacket didn’t stick. I wound up collaborating with a dancer on the piece and added ostinato patterns, some pretty tenths here and there, and a continuous low rumbling passage to spice it up.

Needless to say, my teacher was not happy. He did not recommend me for the summer composition program at the Aspen Music Festival and let me know that I would surely be a dilettante composer for the rest of my life. (I did, however, manage to attend the summer program without the recommendation, won the composition prize that summer and somehow have exceeded his expectations.) This was my first exposure to formal composition lessons, and, while there were some interesting things to glean (listening closely, building a structure, working within limitations and controlling register), the lessons left me unsettled.

At the same time, I was listening to a wide range of music that was not being discussed at the School of Music. In a modern dance class I
heard Steve Reich’s *Music for 18 Musicians* (1976) for the first time. I felt liberated by and enveloped in the music. There was something so right about it—the propulsive energy, the resonance, the patience of its unfolding and the directness of expression. While I was amazed at the density of Ives, the mysterious and complex weave of Ligeti and the mystical and sonic world of Crumb, with Reich’s music I felt a world crack open. It was curious to me that his music was not studied or performed at music school.

The omission of his colleague Philip Glass also was surprising to me. When their names came up in discussion they would generally be followed by dismissive laughter; invariably, someone would make a joke about the music by singing a repetitive pattern. I remember a fellow student showed me a Minimalist piece she had written “just for fun.” I asked her if she was going to bring it to her next lesson. She looked horrified and said no, that that would never go over with her teacher. This was all very depressing. I longed for an environment where music was just music and there weren’t so many rules. My studies at the Yale School of Music (1984-1986) where composers were engaged in a wide range of musical worlds and aesthetics, as well as subsequent studies at Princeton University (1989-
1992) where an openness prevailed, provided an antidote to these early frustrations in my education. Looking back, it’s hard to believe that the time period from these early formal lessons until the first Bang on a Can marathon was only four years. How quickly a young composer’s life can change.

As we made plans for the 1987 marathon, I thought about how to represent myself on the event. It seemed the perfect opportunity to write something new. I wanted to write for larger forces and settled on a group of nine instruments that included flute, oboe, clarinet, soprano sax, horn, trombone, tuba, violin and cello. David Alan Miller, the young conductor of the New York Youth Symphony, came on board to conduct.

At this time, Gordon and I were living in a cheap, rent-controlled apartment on the far Lower East Side. The building was constructed in the 1950s by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and bore a memorial to their first president, union leader Sidney Hillman, who advocated decent housing for “every man, woman, and child.” The apartment was small and stark, and the sight from the window was both striking and bleak. I had a clear view of the steely Williamsburg Bridge that stretched out over the East
River. The sound of the subway going over the bridge was loud enough to cover phone conversations.

The view of the bridge was particularly dramatic when one stood beneath the clamorous structure. The incredible arch of the metal underside was breathtaking. I tried to capture that sense of reach and arc in the new piece that I titled, *Williamsburg Bridge* (1987). Starting from a single focus—long held notes and restricted activity—the piece fanned outward to a cacophonous state. There was certainly a streak of Ligeti influence in the way the piece maintained tension as it morphed gradually into a dense texture. Martin Bresnick was a Ligeti disciple and had played us many of his works at Yale. Years later, in 1994 at the Huddersfield Festival in England, I met Ligeti. He was a charming and gracious man, and he invited Gordon and me out to lunch. We kept in contact with him throughout the rest of his life.

Williamsburg Bridge caught the attention of a young Dutch music curator, Bart van Rosmalen, who attended the 1987 marathon. He contacted me months later to say that he’d like to invite me to be one of three featured young composers at the Confrontaties Festival in Rotterdam. My participation in Confrontaties would include a commission for gROep
20, an ensemble of 16 players; an evening of my music; presentation of works that influenced my writing; and an evening of music by my peers.

Planning the event involved extensive correspondence between me, van Rosmalen, the young Dutch composer Martijn Padding and the arts journalist, Pay-Uun Hiu. The other two composers that were to be featured were Hanna Kulenty from Poland and Luca Francesconi from Italy. Excerpts of all our letters and postcards decorated a wall of the performance space Zaal de Unie where the concerts were held. I dove into preparations—planning the concerts and inviting friends to accompany me.

The atmosphere from day one was incredibly fun and exciting, though I was nervous about the new commissioned work. *The Vermeer Room* (1989) was inspired by the Vermeer painting, “A Girl Asleep.” I was particularly fascinated by the story behind this painting: “A Girl Asleep” had been X-rayed, revealing that behind the peaceful scene of a girl asleep at a table, Vermeer had originally included the figure of a man in the doorway. Vermeer painted over the figure, leaving an empty, illuminated space. I began to remove music from my composition, making space for resonances and after-rings, and then I gradually built up to a rolling sea of
sound. I thought about the girl’s sleep and how sleep could be drenched in sound.

(Excerpt follows)
I worked on the piece in stages. The first version, called *Sleeping Child*, was for Pierrot ensemble plus percussion. I presented this version on the 1989 Bang on a Can Festival performed by the California E.A.R. Unit. The sound I imagined was too big for the confines of the sextet, however, and the necessity to expand to larger forces was clear. I rejected this early version, sweating over the material as I strived to push into an intensity and density of sound that I hadn’t previously reached.

At Confrontaties, there were endless discussions and interviews set up as a part of the festival presentation. It was fascinating to me how much the Europeans liked to talk. We had included composer introductions at the Bang on a Can Festival, inviting composers to speak briefly about their work to give a window into their music. These introductions were, for the most part, light-hearted references to inspirations, and quite often composers threw in a joke. Though the seriousness at Confrontaties seemed self-important to me at the time, it was eye-opening to witness the respect for the work. This impression would come back to me again many times during the year that I lived in the Netherlands. The respect was evident even when I spoke with the elderly man selling fruit at the corner
stand. When he asked what I was doing in Holland, I expected that quizzical look that composers often get in the States. But the fruit man’s response was different. He lit up. “Ahhh, a composer!”

We programmed *The Vermeer Room* at the 1990 Bang on a Can Festival, inviting Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne down from Montreal to perform the work. The opportunity to hear the piece again allowed me to tweak it further and Le NEM, under the direction of Lorraine Vaillencourt, realized the piece in the way I had imagined it.

**LOIS V VIERK**

The first marathon included young composers Lois V Vierk, Aaron Kernis, John King, Jeffrey Brooks, Scott Lindroth, John Zorn, Lee Hyla, Maura Bosch and Jay Rozen. Like us, Lois V Vierk was going her own way, developing a language outside the mainstream. Vierk didn’t fit in easily with the formal aesthetic uptown or the improvisational-based downtown scene, and she found a home in performance spaces like the lofts at Phil Niblock’s Experimental Intermedia and Jim Staley’s Roulette. The concerts at these venues were self-produced, and financial support was scarce.
While Gordon, Lang, Ziporyn, and I were honing in on what eventually would be our own personal styles, Vierk, several years older, had already found a compelling compositional voice that fused lessons learned from European Modernism and American Minimalism. We first heard Vierk’s music at Roulette in November 1985 and were mesmerized by its relentless build, obsessively blunt repetition and dense sound world. Vierk's work embraces pure Minimalist structure, but opens up the palette in a unique way. She is heavily influenced by Japanese *gagaku*, which she studied intensively in Los Angeles as well as in Japan. As early as 1981, Vierk began writing for multiples of the same instruments with *Tusk* for 18 trombones and *Go Guitars* for five guitars. *Manhattan Cascade* (1985) was written for four accordions. We chose to include this piece on the 1987 marathon. The performance was with one musician, Guy Klucevsek, accompanied by pre-recorded tape.

*Manhattan Cascade* opens up with a repeated A in running 16th notes, playfully displaced up and down the accordion keyboard. Gradually Vierk adds pitches B, then C, then D, then G. The running 16th notes continue throughout, as do the displaced octaves, which quickly morph into white-note glissandos. Between the rapid shifts of octaves and glisses, the
16th notes settle on a repeated pitch as all the notes of the melodic minor scale gradually fill in. In a very short time, by about two and a half minutes into the 20-minute work, the texture is already quite rich.

The obsessive quality of the music creates a kind of hyper-meditation, maintaining the earthy sensibility of a group of sidewalk accordionists but moving into an increasingly chaotic world. Once the elements are introduced, there is a gradual expansion of register and density. As the register climbs, bass notes are brought in and trills added. Occasionally the accordions land on a chord together. Individual notes become clusters, which are accentuated by dramatic crescendos, cascading up and down the accordion keyboard.

While the piece is reminiscent of early Minimalist works like Reich’s *Four Organs* (1970), in Vierk there is more dissonance and greater interest in sonic variation and dynamics. In non-keyboard works Vierk also adds pitch bending and gradual glissandos to her palette. Similar to *Four Organs* and other Minimalist classics like Philip Glass’ *Music in Fifths* (1969), *Manhattan Cascade* employs a unidirectional form. Beginning with one pitch in one accordion, the piece has a gradual and clear build to its dense wall of sound. The drama is in the maniacal manner in which this is
achieved. *Manhattan Cascade* is clearly the offspring of the 1960s Minimalist aesthetic, but its grittier language and physical relentlessness had a significant impact on a growing new generation of downtown composers.

**STEVE MARTLAND**

Steve Martland’s exuberance, political diatribes and hyper-animated personality drew strong reactions. For me, Martland was a comrade in this new wave of music. His ideas were exciting, and he seemed fearless against the stodgy London music scene. Martland seemed to process everything in political terms. To him, one was writing the right music or the wrong music. There were battlegrounds drawn, and in many of the battlefields, especially in the United Kingdom, he saw himself as the lone figure in his generation on the side of “good.”

His work *Drill* (1987), written for the Dutch group Pianoduo, wasn’t completed for the first Bang on a Can Marathon, but it was ready to go by the time the second marathon rolled around. The opening movement is reminiscent of Andriessen’s orchestral work *Mausoleum* (1979, rev. 1981), with large, loud attacks followed by silences. Martland’s chords are rich,
complex and harsh, with the sharp attacks sounding like strangely tuned bells. The experience of listening is like looking at two brilliant shades of orange side by side: some would say they clash, yet there is a vibrancy to the line that separates their similarities and differences. In *Drill*, there is an ambiguity in each harmony, combining dissonance and consonance, that gives the still chords motion. Like the dense harmonies of Andriessen’s *De Tijd* (1981), the interest in Martland’s chords are not only in the attack but also in the after-ring that follows. Martland gives the listener time to bathe in the sonorities but adds windows of silence to the architecture as well.

In the second movement, the activity level picks up with erratic figures and sudden bursts, though the music is still restrained. By the third and fourth movements, there is a release of energy with moving patterns and a groove. Like Andriessen, Martland is working with hockets. In *Drill*, the two pianos trade off harmonies and interlock to make composite rhythms. The influence of Andriessen’s *Hoketus* (1977) is everywhere in *Drill*. *Hoketus* was designed for two identical groups spatially separated. They trade musical grunts back and forth, eventually building to a frenzy. It is Andriessen’s most jarring affront to the classical music world, and the
effect is overwhelmingly powerful. For Martland’s *Drill*, the hockets are a natural technique for two pianos facing off.

Listening to *Drill* 24 years later, I realize that Martland connects the Dutch sound to American pop music. I can hear a relationship to Aaron Copland’s *Piano Sonata* (1941), as well as to Michael Torke’s *The Yellow Pages* (1985) with its swirling riffs and grooves, although Torke leaves out the dissonance to stay in a brilliant, cheery-clean aesthetic. In movements 2 and 3, one can hear Martland’s syncopated and disjointed “jazzy” rhythms let loose into a swing. While Andriessen's love of jazz, especially boogie-woogie and big band, informs much of his music, in most of his works the jazz influence is distilled through a cool sensibility. Andriessen drew inspiration from the abstractions of Mondrian, whose “Broadway Boogie Woogie” captures the bustle of New York with little boxes of color. Melodic lines are mechanized as Andriessen insisted on distancing himself from what he considered the expressive trappings of classical music.

In the fifth movement of *Drill*, at about 1’45” into the 7-minute movement, the music breaks into a downright happy vamp, with the pianos trading music back and forth on every beat. Martland also switches keys throughout the movement—not unlike the key shifts heard in the music of
Steve Reich, or sudden transpositions heard in pop music. This kind of happy-go-lucky yet virtuosic irregular music appears in many of Martland's later works and is a signature of his style in *Horses of Instruction* (1994) and other pieces written for his ensemble, the Steve Martland Band.

In the sixth movement of *Drill*, Martland neatly closes off the work with a descending half-step motive leading back to the opening material of movement one. Though he ventured out into freer musical territory in the body of *Drill*, his return to the opening material at the end frames the work in the blunt Dutch aesthetic.

Martland was an important figure for me in these early years of Bang on a Can. By the time I met him in the early 1980s, he was already a personality on the scene. With his punk-like appearance—severely close-cropped haircut and worn army-style boots—he was outspoken about his leftist politics and took the opportunity at concerts to use the stage as his soapbox. He was generous in spirit, encouraging and excited about the music of his peers.

I was introduced to Martland through Jeffrey Brooks, who met him at Tanglewood. They were close friends, and Martland was the best man at Brooks’ wedding to composer Maura Bosch. A few summers later, in 1985,
Michael Gordon and I crashed at Martland's apartment in Rotterdam. Brooks was also visiting at the time, and Martland brought us all to the home of Louis Andriessen. We had a wonderful gathering there that lasted late into the night. Andriessen dubbed us The Gang of Four and insisted that we take a photo.

*L-R: Brooks, Martland, Andriessen, the author, and Gordon*

*   *   *
Steve Reich’s attendance at the first marathon in 1987 was an early meeting point for what would develop into one of the most important musical friendships for all of us at Bang on a Can. On the first marathon, we programmed Reich’s 1970 work *Four Organs*—the powerful, lush yet severely Minimalist work constructed out of the slow unfolding of a single chord over approximately 16 minutes. The lore is that the piece caused quite a stir in the audience at the Carnegie Hall premiere in 1973. Perhaps it was just a bit too static for the Carnegie concertgoers.

*Four Organs* is a brilliant meditation on the sound of a single expanding harmony—elegantly laid out and patiently delivered. The constant maracas against the expanding chord create a constancy that simultaneously embodies stillness and motion. Though the unfolding is incremental, the sound is so rich and the expansion so illuminating that at any given point in the piece I am incredibly happy about where I am. My experience of the piece is of a calm state that pulls me through a wonderful sense of anticipation and alteration.
When we contacted Reich about presenting *Four Organs*, his response was, “Why do you want to do that piece?” He had a similar reaction when a few years later we called him about performing *Pendulum Music* (1968). It seemed at the time that he wanted to put a distance between himself and his early, more severe Minimalist writing. But we were insistent about presenting *Four Organs*. He consented and instructed us to hire the SEM ensemble. SEM was founded and directed by Petr Kotik, a conductor and flutist from the Czech Republic. Kotik was a maniacal perfectionist with his ensemble. Reich had heard SEM perform the work and felt confident that they could pull it off. Plus Reich didn’t know us and was not going to take any chances with musicians he had not heard.

*Four Organs* was programmed back to back with Milton Babbitt’s *Vision and Prayer* (1961). Babbitt was in attendance as well, but the two never met. Reich entered as Babbitt left, or possibly Babbitt left as Reich entered. There was clearly no interest in meeting on either side. At that point, to our knowledge, no one had programmed the music of Milton Babbitt and Steve Reich on the same event. Babbitt and Reich represented two very different points of view, American Modernism and American Minimalism, or what was called Uptown and Downtown. When Babbitt
introduced his piece he joked, “sorry I got here late, but I got lost—I’ve never been this far downtown before.” At that first marathon concert we embraced this clash of disparate philosophies. We wanted contrasting musics—powerful in their own right regardless of style or aesthetic.

Reich was particularly enthusiastic about the concert that first year. He had made a home for his work in the world of visual arts at galleries and museums. He found support from and developed friendships with the Minimalist visual artists Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra and Bruce Naumann, among others. So when Reich found himself in the loft-like experimental Soho gallery, Exit Art, with a bunch of upstarts making a concert from scratch without being under the auspices of a larger institution or leading compositional figure, the terrain was familiar.

As a young composer, it was interesting to witness how intensely demanding Reich was about his music. He simply would not stand for less than perfect. We had decided from the very start of Bang on a Can that all composers—young, old, and everyone in the middle—would receive performances of the highest caliber. Whenever possible, we employed musicians the composer requested. As young composers, we were used to being treated as second-class citizens—being shortchanged with rehearsal
time, for instance, especially when a more prominent composer was on the program. We vowed to offer all composers a better situation.

Over the years Reich would come to trust us more and view us as kindred spirits in carving a new way for music. We shared his view that a flexible large ensemble with amplification was a more apt vehicle for the future of new music than the standard orchestra or small acoustic chamber ensemble. While Gordon, Lang, Ziporyn, and I have written for orchestra, it was not the main vehicle for our creative output, especially in these early years. (None of the pieces that I discuss in depth are for orchestra.) In conversation, Reich has said of the orchestra, “It’s like a dinosaur in blue jeans. It may be wearing blue jeans, but it is still a dinosaur.”

For Reich, writing for groups like Ensemble Modern, Kronos or So Percussion is far more appealing than writing for the Berlin Philharmonic or the Metropolitan Opera. Over the years, he has refused commission requests from conventional classical groups. With the large flexible ensemble, Reich could imagine the exact instrumentation and doublings that he needed. And with expert amplification, he not only had complete control over the sound and balance, but he also had the amplified sound of pop music that offered the resonance and intensity he desired. With Reich,
there was no idea of compromise; adjusting his vision in order to follow a well-trod career path was not within his paradigm.

In his collaborations with Bang on a Can, Reich recognized that a younger generation of musicians had emerged that embraced his music and brought to it a whole new set of chops—the ability to play his rhythms naturally and the stamina to concentrate through the continuous repetitive patterns. These players brought a sense of groove to the music that he had not previously encountered. In the early 1990s, Reich began to include members of the Bang on a Can All-Stars in his own ensemble, Steve Reich and Musicians. He employed Mark Stewart for live performances of Electric Counterpoint (1987); Evan Ziporyn for New York Counterpoint (1985); Lisa Moore for ensemble works; and David Cossin, who replaced BOAC All-Star Steve Schick on percussion in 2001, for his unique and creative Piano/Video Phase (1967/2000), which was Cossin’s visual and sonic realization of Reich’s Piano Phase. In 1997 Reich invited Bang on a Can to record for his retrospective box set on Nonesuch. Three years later he released a Bang on a Can CD on Nonesuch.

Although Reich forged a strong relationship with Bang on a Can, it wasn’t until 2009 that he wrote specifically for the Bang on a Can All-Stars,
and even then, not so specifically, as he didn’t stick strictly to the group’s line-up. The work had begun as a new piece for the rock band, Radiohead. Very quickly, though, both Reich and Radiohead realized that the piece was not going to work for the band. Reich then called in Bang on a Can to take on his raucous and hard driving 2 x 5 for four electric guitars, two electric basses, two electric keyboards and two drummers.

As Reich embraced the Bang on a Can world, he began to refer to it regularly in talks and interviews. He expressed a strong interest in the music by Gordon, Lang and me, including us in his book, Writings on Music, 1965-2000. As music presenters worldwide began to celebrate Reich’s significant birthdays, Reich not only began to request Bang on a Can’s presence, but also asked us to write the opening notes on programs or to interview him before concerts. What began as younger composers paying tribute to one of their heroes, broadened to a friendship of mutual respect and a sharing of ideas that continues today.

**LOUIS ANDRIESSEN**

When one walks down the streets of a Dutch town, the curtains of every house are open. It is possible to see, in plain view, the people inside
eating, reading, watching TV or socializing. When I first spent time in the Netherlands, the lack of privacy was disconcerting. Dutch friends explained to me that it was a tradition in Holland—to show the world that you have nothing to hide and that all is viewable. Similarly, composer Louis Andriessen keeps things clear and transparent in his music. He is against the “hidden” or “mysterious” in art. Andriessen uses few dynamics and rarely uses hairpins or glissandos. The brilliant hard-edged orchestration, the preference for winds and brass, the use of modality and the very aggressive nature of his “Dutch sound” is straightforward and bold.

Andriessen’s work owes much to Stravinsky; he is clearly a fan. Along with composer and musicologist Elmer Schonberger, Andriessen wrote the book *The Apollonian Clockwork: On Stravinsky*, a free-floating conversation about their love of Stravinsky. So there was a nice parallel between Stravinsky’s *Agon* and Andriessen's *De Staat*, (both in arrangements for two pianos) performed by the Dutch Pianoduo on that first Bang on a Can marathon in 1987.

The first time I encountered Andriessen’s music was in 1984 when Martin Bresnick handed me a score and recording of *De Staat* in its original form. I was thrilled by the power and directness of the music and amazed
at the way it looked on the page. The following year, I heard that the Cal Arts Festival was featuring his music. The festival was conveniently timed with Yale’s Spring break. Gordon and I flew out to California to hear the music live. We were die-hard fans—camping out in the Cal Arts parking lot for the duration of the festival.

The opening concert on March 16th featured De Staat and De Tijd. De Tijd was performed in a large, open, gallery-like space with students sitting and sprawled on the floor, surrounding the musicians. Hearing De Tijd in that setting was not only a musical epiphany, it was also a revelation in how to listen to music. The Cal Arts Festival, with the presentation of these large works in an open and relaxed forum, certainly influenced our ideas about presenting music at Bang on a Can just a few years later.

Before the Cal Arts trip I had also heard about Andriessen from Steve Martland, who talked about him nonstop. Martland had played Gordon’s Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not! for Andriessen. It must have made an impression, because when we met Andriessen for the first time at the Cal Arts Festival, he said to Gordon, “Yes, I know you. We are already friends.” I was amazed at how accessible and generous he was. When I lived in Amsterdam, he would hang out every night at a local spot, inviting anyone
who wanted to come for “late night drinks.” Andriessen sometimes arrived in his rowboat.

It's hard to overstate the attraction Andriessen held for us in the mid 1980s. His fierce independence and dynamic, straight talk were unusual. Andriessen was charged with a mission to tear down the old ways of the classical establishment and build a new paradigm. He championed a new model for ensembles in Holland and was involved in the formation of several collective groups like Hoketus and orkest de volharding, which began as a political street band. He demanded a new way of playing—bold and direct, with less emphasis on nuance and a perfect sound, and more on sheer power. Andriessen’s music required endurance and strong rhythmic chops. In 1994 I remember watching him in rehearsal at Tanglewood. When the young musicians ran through a passage of De Tijd rather timidly, he walked up to them and said, “I would rather that you play the wrong note very loud than the right note very soft.”

His works De Staat (The Republic) and De Tijd (Time) both require a large impractical configuration of instruments that matched no existing group at the time they were composed. Andriessen benefited from a government system that allowed composers to dream on a large scale
without regard to convention. This freedom to dream beyond practicality was particularly captivating and intriguing to me. Andriessen may have felt the liberty to develop these large scale works knowing that they would be heard in the Netherlands—but where after that?

Andriessen grew up in a family of musicians—his father was one of the leading Dutch composers of his time. His uncle and two older siblings were also composers. Brought up in a musical household, Andriessen was confident in his musical training and talents. He once told me that he was wary of depending on his musical background; composing came so easily to him. The challenge for Andriessen was to move beyond his facility, to carve an individual path.

I was fascinated that Andriessen saw his talent and education as potentially getting in the way. For Andriessen, being an artist was not about having “chops,” but rather about having something to say. His perspective on the fundamental power of the message in music resonated with me. Unlike Andriessen, I was the only musician in my extended family. I came late to composition and had to scramble to fill in the gaps, gathering my tools of the trade in an irregular manner. The idea that interesting music need not emanate from a composer’s formal classical training was an
important part of the conversation at Bang on a Can. Innovative and interesting music was being made by composers who had studied formally in music school, as well as by those who were essentially self-trained, like Glenn Branca, Brian Eno, and Meredith Monk.

Political idealism was another important part of Andriessen’s upbringing. Both his father and uncle were outspoken about refusing to join the Nazi “Cultural House” during World War II and were imprisoned for their beliefs. During the year I spent in Amsterdam, I would often meet up with Andriessen for a walk to a café or concert. On one of our walks, he adamantly declared that one particular café was off-limits because the owner had been a Nazi sympathizer.

Andriessen’s politics shape his creative work and not just in pieces where he uses politically charged texts. There are politics in the very nature of Andriessen’s writing, in how he defines the group dynamic and how individual parts contribute to make a whole. Most of his works focus on the mass sound of the ensemble as opposed to individual moments of virtuosity. This recalls the popular Dutch expression, “Steek niet met je hoofd boven het maaivled uit,” which translates to “Don’t put your head above grass level.”
The idea that one should not call much attention to one’s self or be concerned about towering above the others is very Dutch. This is an important characteristic of Andriessen’s aesthetic, especially in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Listening to Andriessen, I found myself drawn to the power of the group sound. My musical thoughts became very Dutch—embracing dense harmonies and textures that require a mass of musicians playing together to make the whole.

The notion that one’s head should not raise above grass level certainly applied to the general arts funding in Holland. It was interesting to see that in his own country Andriessen was treated more or less the same as other composers of his generation, even though he was, by far, the most celebrated Dutch composer internationally. It struck me that the emphasis in Holland was not so much on the musical superstar but on the musical culture.

I had come to Amsterdam after an intense five years of Bang on a Can. Every year we’d start from scratch, raising the money and finding a venue—nothing was ever guaranteed. Witnessing the flush arts funding in Holland, I was dumbfounded. While in Amsterdam, Gordon and I, in communication with Lang, planned a Bang on a Can Marathon for the 1994
We curated the event with Johan Dorrestein, then manager of the Nederlands Blazers Ensemble, and musicologist Elmer Schoenberger. We discussed plans for the event over many elegant dinners, whereas as artistic directors back in New York, Gordon, Lang and I would meet at diners, make fast decisions and beg for funding. That year in Amsterdam, I marveled at the contrast.

On many occasions I wondered if I should consider relocating to this arts friendly environment. But by the end of my year in Amsterdam, I missed the craziness of New York, the energized desperation. Maybe it was fine to return, if I could survive. I could stay connected to the great European arts culture from abroad, I told myself. I learned much from that year in Amsterdam. It was particularly encouraging to see an enthusiastic and large audience for new music. I went back to New York and to Bang on a Can refreshed and inspired to be a part of an ever widening world of music.

Meredith Monk, Terry Riley, Philip Glass

Along with Steve Reich and Louis Andriessen, Meredith Monk, Terry Riley and Philip Glass have all had close associations with Bang on a Can—
—appearing on early marathons, writing for and/or touring with the Bang on a Can All-Stars, being in residence at the Bang on a Can Summer Festival at MASS MoCA and recording for the Cantaloupe label. Although neither Monk, Riley, nor Glass were presented on the first marathon in 1987, they made appearances on the marathons that followed.

In 1989, Meredith Monk opened the marathon, performing with pianist Nurit Tilles in a jubilant rendition of *Double Fiesta* (1986). I was thrilled to meet her. Though we hardly spoke at the marathon, I remember her introductory words as she graciously welcomed Bang on a Can to the music scene. We stay in regular touch now. In later years I worked closely with Monk in arranging her music for the Bang on a Can All-Stars, and on many occasions we have shared not only ideas about music but also thoughts about the challenges of being creative artists in a male-dominated field.

In 1990, we invited Terry Riley to the festival. He responded by requesting to bring his newly formed band, Khayal, an odd assortment of free-spirited performers from both the new music and rock-and-roll scenes, including Jaron Lanier (author of *You Are Not a Gadget*). Riley had been fairly reclusive during this time; an appearance in New York was a rare
event. I remember standing at the back of the RAPP Arts Center during the
concert, listening to his free-wheeling hippie collective jam on stage. Khayal
was followed by an exuberant and large *In C*, which included the Kronos
Quartet, La Monte Young, and Tom Constanten of the Grateful Dead.

In 1988 we asked Glenn Branca to open our marathon. When he
canceled at the last minute, we decided to call Philip Glass to see if he
could jump in. Gordon and Lang had both worked as copyists for Glass. He
not only agreed to perform but offered to play for free. Glass performed his
early work *Music in Similar Motion* (1969) with long-time colleague Michael
Riesman. When Branca did appear in 1989, Glass came back to the
festival as a listener to hear Branca’s very loud *Symphony No. 6 (Devil
Choirs at The Gates of Heaven)* for 10 electric guitars, electric bass and
drums. Branca’s piece was on an evening concert that was a part of our
first expanded Bang on a Can Festival. I remember walking Glass
backstage after the concert, down the winding paths of the RAPP Arts
Center basement, to locate Branca, who refused to greet well-wishers as
he was coming down off of his performance. Glass was very relaxed about
it all—an early glimpse of his easy-going nature.
While I met Glass only briefly at the Bang on a Can Festivals, our friendship really began at the Other Minds festival in the mountains south of San Francisco. Other Minds, created by composer-impresario Charles Amirkanian, is a festival of new music that includes a week-long retreat for composers. At the retreat, composers have the opportunity to share their ideas and music in the intimate setting of the Djerassi Artist Colony. Amirkanian invited me to participate in the first Other Minds festival in 1993. It was an incredible year to attend, as I joined Glass, Meredith Monk, Conlon Nancarrow, Trimpin and Robert Ashley, among others, in the remote mountain setting. The composers were in great spirits, and the atmosphere allowed for a casual exchange of conversation. I remember that Glass greeted me enthusiastically. He spoke excitedly about Bang on a Can. As New Yorkers, we joked about how bad the bagels were in San Francisco and how it was just too beautiful to stay for very long.

I think everyone was excited to be there with Nancarrow who, at 89, was a bit frail but nonetheless a powerful presence. Perhaps the most memorable moment for me at Other Minds was just after the performance of my string quartet *Early that summer* (1993). As I returned to my seat after taking a bow, Nancarrow reached out from his aisle seat to stop me.
With a slow drawl and a twinkle in his eye, he said, “Was that your piece? I really liked that.” From a straightforward man of few words, this resonated with me for years to come.

In the year that followed, I would often run into Glass in the East Village. He asked more than once if I was recording music with any company. I was a bit slow to realize that he was beginning a conversation with me about making a CD of my music. Eventually I caught on. Glass curated the label Point Music at Universal, and Point released my first solo CD *Arsenal of Democracy* in June 1996.

Glass’ support at this early stage was a tremendous boost. Gordon and I would meet up with Glass regularly at a small, vegetarian Indian restaurant in the East Village. He would spark up with questions about how we were conducting our business, making insightful comments about the choices we’d made. We would always leave these get-togethers feeling inspired by his energy and enthusiasm, and encouraged to continue to take things into our own hands. We watched as he constructed an empire to support his work—creating his own publishing company, production team, booking agency, recording studio, record label and more, with a brilliant business sense that is unmatched in contemporary music.
In June 1994 I was in London with Bang on a Can as part of a festival at the Southbank Centre. Glass was there performing his *La Belle et La Bette* (1994). For this work, Glass wiped the soundtrack off the classic black-and-white movie by Jean Cocteau and wrote a new original score that was performed live. When the characters in the movie spoke, the vocalists on stage sang. His soundtrack and the movie synched up perfectly; magically, the singing turned the film into an opera. When I discussed this with Glass he said, “I got lucky.” Glass insisted that sometimes a project is just lucky. I had never heard a composer talk about the luck factor in composing.

**At Yale**

The very first marathon included other composers who were important to us as well—John Cage, Pauline Oliveros, Iannis Xenakis, Morton Feldman, Phil Niblock, George Crumb, and the composers from the Yale faculty, Martin Bresnick and Jacob Druckman. The Yale experience had a huge impact on our thinking. While we were inspired by the intellectual ideas of Bresnick, who placed compositions in their
sociopolitical contexts and focused on the architectural underpinnings of a work, we were also encouraged by the real world perspective of Druckman.

Jacob Druckman, who headed the composition department at Yale, was a reigning figure in contemporary music in America. As composer-in-residence at the New York Philharmonic, he spearheaded the Horizons Festival, which featured a broad range of contemporary music not previously heard in New York. Druckman’s music gained attention because of its brilliant orchestration and unique colors. He maintained a distinctive non-academic approach at a time when many of his peers were heavily involved in mathematical approaches and strict procedures. He was uncommon among the American Modernists in his disdain for 12-tone-technique; Druckman had a more emotional and sensual approach to composition. In contrast to the elite aims of the who-cares-if-you-listen perspective of Babbitt’s famous manifesto, Druckman was openly ambitious and prepped his favorite students in the nuances of career building. He applauded all attempts to engage in the performing arts world and would light up if a student mentioned that he or she had a performance outside the university setting.
David Lang was one student whom Druckman took under his wing. Although I did not study in Druckman’s studio, I caught the “real world” message and took it to heart. Combined, Druckman and Bresnick offered an alternative to the serial school of thought which predominated academia at the time. And while neither Druckman nor Bresnick wrote Minimalist music, it was not shunned at Yale as it was at many institutions of higher learning at that time.

As Gordon, Lang and I set out to find our way in New York City, we were spurred on by Druckman’s enthusiasm for the public ear and Bresnick’s habit of asking hard questions. The first marathon included Jacob Druckman’s funny and virtuosic bass solo Valentine and Martin Bresnick’s introspective String Quartet No. 2, “Bucephalus.”

**PROGRAMMING DIFFICULT MUSIC**

From the very start, Gordon, Lang and I programmed “difficult” works by composers such as Elliott Carter, Iannis Xenakis, Harrison Birtwistle, Gyorgy Ligeti, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Mario Davidovsky, Edgar Varese, Milton Babbitt, Pierre Boulez and Ralph Shapey among others. Along with Milton Babbitt’s Vision and Prayer, listeners at that first marathon also
heard *Theraps* (1976) by European modernist Iannis Xenakis. An important impetus for starting Bang on a Can was to program innovative music, regardless of style. We were interested in presenting music that had a powerful effect on us, and we wanted listeners to hear the music in a relaxed and open environment. We had witnessed the Modernist versus Minimalist battle of the previous generation, and we recognized that this was not our fight. While we were heavily influenced by the musical ideas of composers from the Minimalist aesthetic like Reich, Andriessen and Glass, we were also fascinated by the experimentation of the Modernists. But aside from Ligeti, who expressed great interest in Bang on a Can, we often found many of these composers unresponsive.

To this day I am sorry that Elliott Carter missed the performance of his *Duo* (1974) with Rolf Schulte and Martin Goldray at the Bang on a Can Marathon held at The Kitchen performance space in 1993. The performance was spectacular, and the audience rose to their feet with a standing ovation. Bang on a Can audiences were never limited to “new music” listeners. We were determined to reach out to a broader audience. With the very first marathon, we advertised to dance, theater, poetry and film audiences—leaving out music lists all together. Our audiences simply
didn’t know that if they liked Reich, for example, they were not supposed to like Carter, and vice versa. It’s hard to remember now the atmosphere of divided camps within new music audiences of the 1980s and into the 1990s. We felt encouraged by the enthusiasm of our audiences, as it supported our beliefs that great musicians could play challenging music to a wide array of listeners and that reaching a broader public was not about “dumbing down” but about welcoming in.

While Carter was simply nonresponsive to our invitations, others were downright cranky about our existence. We would receive regular reports that the older conservative guard was complaining about Bang on a Can. We were “childish,” “selling out,” “dangerous,” or far worse. In Joan Peyser’s *New York Times* interview with Charles Wuorinen (June 5, 1988), she revealed his bemoaning of the demise of serious music.

David Lang’s letter to the editor in response, “Body Count,” to which he proudly signed his name “David Lang, Artistic Director, Bang on a Can Festival, New York” (after only our second marathon!), was published in the *Times* (June 26, 1988) and is worth quoting here. The language of the letter, which includes much cold-war terminology, makes it seem that Lang is writing in support not of Minimalism, but of a grass-roots movement
fighting a guerrilla war with a cruel totalitarian government. One can’t imagine this language being used today in the current, kinder gentler nation of contemporary music. Lang writes:

“...In under 40 column inches they team up to dish Minimalism, untutored audiences, the San Francisco Symphony, the New York State Council on the Arts, minorities, art appreciation, modern symphony management, Mr. Wuorinen’s colleagues, the American Composer’s Orchestra, most composers, most musicians, most conductors, the past, the future, and all of Bach’s sons, in that order. This is a pretty high body count, and such carnage is, for the most part, unwarranted....

No one is quite sure how it happened, but in the ‘60s this school took control of the musical scene, wielding enormous power on committees, giving commissions, awarding prizes and professorships, force-feeding students, rooting out dissent with the ardor of holy warriors on a serial jihad....

Mr. Wuorinen says that audiences are incapable of making valid esthetic decisions. Quite the contrary, there is a
substantial audience ready to cheer good music of any style or school, if it is presented properly. Programming a work, be it a masterpiece or a dud, simply because it has been composed in a politically correct manner is not presenting music properly, and no audience will, or should, put up with it. Any ideology in power can be pernicious. Any artistic movement runs the risk of developing a totalitarian world view, and, in fact, New York's downtown music scene can be as hierarchical and dogmatic as anything seen uptown.

Only by encouraging diversity can music hope to stay vital; after all, a bad piece with the highest artistic pretensions is still a bad piece.”

It is interesting to think about how the development of Bang on a Can may have been different had this older generation of Modernists embraced our efforts or expressed even a small amount of interest in what we were doing.
JOHN CAGE

While the Modernists were unhappy with Bang on a Can, those who had built their own audiences without the support of established institutions recognized something familiar in our efforts. These composers were thrilled to be included in the Bang on a Can mix. John Cage showed up to the very first marathon. We had programmed his piece Ryōanji (1983-1985) for a late night slot, but he appeared sometime in the mid afternoon. We were excited to see him and gave him a ticket, but Cage insisted on paying. David Lang finally relented and let Cage make the purchase. Cage stayed for about four hours and went home hours before his piece was performed. He continued to attend the festival, often with Merce Cunningham, both as a participating composer and other times just to listen.

On the second marathon in 1988, the Dutch group Pianoduo performed Cage’s Three Dances, a remarkable work for two prepared pianos. Written in 1945, it is surprisingly forward looking with its Minimalist propulsive rhythms. The piece has a gamelan-like quality, with the prepared pianos sounding bell-like in continuous interweaving patterns. The piece appeared on the 1973 LP Three Dances/Four Organs, which also featured Michael Tilson Thomas, Steve Reich and friends. The two
revolutionary works were set back to back. I remember being delighted on first hearing *Three Dances* live at the festival. The music so clearly foreshadowed not only Minimalism, which kicked off officially 20 years later, but also was an early marker of contemporary composers creating a fusion of Eastern and Western sensibilities.

In its third year, the Bang on a Can Festival expanded from the one-day marathon to include three additional evening concerts. One of those concerts, entitled “An Evening with John Cage,” included a set of his *Three Constructions* (1939-1941) as well as the dreamy *Five Stone Wind* (1988), with Cage reading from one of his notebooks in what seemed to be stream-of-consciousness writing. Cage clearly embraced Bang on a Can as an apt home for his radical approach to music. He demonstrated his support not only by showing up to the festival every year from 1987 until his death in 1992, but also by writing two of his mesostics for us. The first mesostic, given to us in 1991, was lost. The second, written in 1992, was thankfully saved: it was formed out of the words BANG ON A CAN.

*(Image follows)*
Fig 6 - John Cage’s Original Handwritten Mesostic

For Bang on a Can
PERFORMERS

Many of the musicians who appeared at that first marathon would return for years after. We referred to them as “new music warriors.” In 1987, there was a joke among musicians: “If you can’t make it in the classical world, you can always play new music.” But this changed as more and more high-level players considered “new music” a viable option. The success of the Kronos Quartet had a huge impact on the classical music world. Composers such as Steve Reich, Philip Glass and Meredith Monk, along with their dedicated performers, had all gained popularity. New avenues were opening up, and, given the aging classical music audiences, these new directions looked attractive.
The traditional contemporary music concert, where performers dressed in formal attire and clung to 19th-century performance rituals, was on the top of our aesthetic hit list at Bang on a Can. We wanted to set up an environment that allowed performers to connect with the audience. We wanted performers who were clear and direct, and to see this direct expression through body motion, more like the physical movement in rock and jazz. The performers we sought out were those who, like the legendary pianist Glenn Gould, felt liberated to move to the beat and play like they were “inside the music,” as opposed to sitting completely still or throwing their bow up in the air with what seemed to be an artificial flair. Strong rhythmic chops and a feel for pulse and groove became important skills.

**Pianoduo**

Among the spectacular musicians performing on the first marathon was Pianoduo, which was comprised of Gerard Bouwhuis and Cees van Zeeland, a Dutch piano team from The Hague. Pianoduo was loud and intense. They played hard-driving music, and their performance style was distinctively non-romantic—no rubatos, no frills, nothing exaggerated. In their hands, pianos sounded bright and harsh. The duo was relaxed in their
body movement and in their dress, donning worn T-shirts and jeans for performances. While it was their powerhouse playing that drew us to them, their attitude and personal presentation resonated with us as well. We wanted to dispense with the formality of classical concerts that were the norm of the day, to bridge the divide between audience and performers. The message was: This is your music. We are not on a pedestal. We are like you. We look like you.

In 1987, Pianoduo performed the two piano version of Louis Andriessen's *De Staat* (1976, arr. 1984), Diderik Wagenaar’s *Stadium* (1981), Jeffrey Brooks’ *Chaconne* (1984), and Igor Stravinsky’s two piano version of *Agon* (1957).

**Robert Black**

Michael Gordon met bassist Robert Black in 1985 at the North American New Music Festival in Buffalo, New York, a festival that was the precursor to the annual June in Buffalo event in that city. At the time, Yvar Mikhashoff and Jan Williams were the principal organizers of the festival. Mikhashoff had invited Gordon up for a performance of *Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not*. Black, who had made the decision to dedicate himself to
performing and commissioning new works, was a regular at the Buffalo festival. Gordon and Black hit it off immediately.

Later, at our first marathon, we invited Black to play four solo pieces: Jacob Druckman's *Valentine* (1969), Iannis Xenakis’ *Theraps* (1976), James Sellars’ *Get Hot or Get Out* (1984) and John Deak’s *Readings from Steppenwolf* (1975, rev. 1982). It was exhilarating to find a counterpart like Black in the performance world. Works like *Valentine* and *Readings from Steppenwolf* gave the audience some lighter moments. Tom Johnson’s *Failing* (1975), performed by Black on the 1988 marathon, brought down the house. He welcomed humor into his repertoire, and this had an impact on the way we thought about programming. At times it led us to the border of the absurd, goofy or kitsch with composers singing into cans, rubbing balloons or spraying empty aerosol cans. Humor was a welcome relief in the midst of many loud, intense and obsessive works. We can credit Robert Black for bringing this to light.

When we found a performer who knocked our socks off, such as Black, we kept inviting him or her back. Black performed on the 1987 marathon and again in 1988, 1990 and 1991. In 1992, we formed an early version of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, a touring band, and our long-term
collaboration with Black was sealed. It would be a long time before I wrote Black a solo, though he had quietly made requests over the years. While I may have underused him in *Lick* (1994), my first work for the All-Stars, I employed quintessential Robert Black-isms in my second All-Star work, *Believing* (1997), with wild, frenetic, improvised screaming on the bass. And in *Big, Beautiful, Dark and Scary* (2002), my third work for the group, Black has a stand-alone part throughout as the noisemaker. It wasn’t until 2009, when I wrote Black’s “solo”, *Stronghold*, for eight basses, that I truly captured the incomparable breadth and range of his playing.

Black was unusual in the mid-1980s; he had given up career opportunities in the classical world to dedicate himself to contemporary music. He was a unique figure and he steadfastly followed his passion. Years later, in 2009, when the Bang on a Can All-Stars were well established and holding auditions for a new pianist, Black said that it was difficult for him to come to terms with the idea that many of the young musicians coming to audition were looking at the position as a stepping stone in their careers. In the ‘80s, those playing contemporary music were fervent diehards. They believed that they were engaging in a radical and subversive venture rather than seeking a well-trodden path.
Maya Beiser and I were classmates at Yale, though we didn’t get to know each other until afterwards. Beiser had come to the States from Israel to study cello with Aldo Parisot. I remember her sitting at the back of Michael Friedmann’s music history class in ripped jeans, her hair hanging down wildly, her piercing blue eyes. She was quite beautiful; she had a sultry, sexy presence with a seemingly apathetic attitude, as if she had just woken up and deigned to come to class. I wasn’t sure what to make of her, but I was busy sitting in the front of the class, absorbed in Friedmann’s lectures. Beiser has since explained that she was shy and nervous about adjusting to a new language and culture. Today Beiser seems anything but shy.

I met her again in August 1990. Michael Gordon and I had traveled up to the Monadnock Music Festival to hear Robert Black play Gordon’s bass solo *Paint It Black* (1988). The concert also included Luigi Boccherini, Johannes Brahms and Franz Joseph Haydn. Beiser played in two of the Haydn *London Trios* and the Boccherini *Oboe Quintet*. We met Black after the concert at a bar and he brought Beiser along. She was clearly star material, and she knew it. Her stage presence was hugely striking; her
playing, expressive and strong. At that time her musical life was centered in
classical music of the past, but she had an interest in contemporary music.
She wanted to meet us and was eager to do something with Bang on a Can.

In 1992, when we decided to put together a group, Beiser immediately came to mind. At that time the exact instrumentation hadn't been set. By the 1993 marathon we had decided on an odd assortment of six instruments that included Maya Beiser, cello; Robert Black, bass; Lisa Moore, piano; Steve Schick, percussion; Mark Stewart, electric guitar; and Evan Ziporyn, clarinets. Throughout the formation period of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, it felt a little bit like we were Don Kirshner and the producers who put together The Monkees.

LISA MOORE

Music comes to us in many different ways. We hear pieces in concerts. Composer and performer friends tell us about new works, and we track them down for a listen. Perhaps the most fun and most democratic way we have discovered new work is from our Open Call. We listen to everything that is sent our way and pride ourselves on our “blind” listening
sessions. It is always fascinating to hear the music without knowing who
the composer or the ensemble is. We have found that this approach,
without preconception or prejudice, is helpful in keeping an open ear.

One work that we heard in an early blind-listening session was a
monster piece by a young Canadian, Michael Maguire. *Seven Years* (1988)
was a cacophonous blend of live instruments and electronic tape. The
instrumental parts were clearly virtuosic, but the messiness of the piece
made it difficult to decipher exactly what they were doing. We decided to
include *Seven Years* on the 1989 marathon and asked Canadian
composer-conductor Linda Bouchard to take on the arduous task of putting
together the 45-minute work with her New York-based group, Abandon.

There were problems from the start. Some parts were impossible to
play and had to be divided between two players. The piano part probably
should have been split between two players as well, but a fiery young
Australian pianist, Lisa Moore, claimed it for her own. This was our first
encounter with Moore; it was an early glimpse of her ferocious dedication to
realizing new and difficult pieces. We soon discovered that this was the
challenge for which she lived. Though she had amazing chops for Brahms
and the like, her heart was in championing the work of living composers.
As demonstrated by her playing on the Maguire work, Moore was not deterred by impossible tasks. She took the lead in communicating with the composer directly, and played that piece with a blazing intensity. When she played the piano, she hit the keys hard. She literally pounded on the piano, sometimes so hard that her body jumped off the piano bench. Later that year, when Gordon set out to record his rhythmically complex *Four Kings Fight Five*, he remembered Moore’s fiery chops and brought her on board for the recording. When we formed the Bang on a Can All-Stars for their first concert in May 1992, it was clear that we wanted a keyboardist in the ensemble. Moore immediately came to mind. We remembered her fierce energy and intense commitment and knew she would match the others in the group.

**Steve Schick**

When Steve Schick first appeared on the Bang on a Can Marathon in 1988, he was already a legend in the new music world. Schick played difficult and complicated contemporary solo percussion works from memory—a stunning feat. The memorization liberated him from performing behind a music stand. His performances were like dance or theater—
visceral, with athletic movement and dramatic timing. Schick was intensely committed to the art. He had spent a year memorizing Iannis Xenakis’ *Psappha* (1975). He championed difficult European Modernist works and brought these works to life like no other.

Lang met Schick while a student at the University of Iowa and remembered his performances. He suggested that we invite Schick to perform at the second marathon. Lang’s enthusiasm was contagious. Although Schick lived on the opposite coast in California, we decided to find a way to bring him in for the event. He performed Xenakis’ *Psappha* and Morton Feldman’s *The King of Denmark* (1964). We prepped the audience for *The King of Denmark*, an extremely quiet piece. The bar was closed and volunteers were at the doors to stop people from coming in or out during the performance. Schick was riveting and intense at an almost inaudible volume.

After the 1988 marathon, we invited him back. In the early 1990s he became a founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars. Schick had strong opinions. He contributed to the festival’s reach to thorny European music. But he allowed other musics to come into his world as well, and, in the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Schick expanded his technique to include
playing drum set and laying down a groove. Bang on a Can became a curious new frontier around which to wrap his brain and talent.

MARK STEWART

It didn’t take long for word to get around that Bang on a Can was the new music home for the electric guitar. On the first marathon, composer/performer John King played his *Immediate Music* (1986) on electric guitar and Robert Black played James Sellars’ *Get Hot or Get Out* on electric bass. In 1988, Jeffrey Brooks’ *Composition for Amplified Instruments* (1988) featured the guitar and Jack Vees cranked his electric bass so loud on his work *John Henry* (1985) that a piece of the ceiling fell down. In 1989, the electric guitar presence rose with performances of Lois V Vierk’s *Go Guitars* for five electric guitars, David Rosenbloom’s *Requiem for the Fallen* (1989), which included electric guitar and electric bass, Michael Gordon’s *Four Kings Fight Five* (1988), with electric guitar, and Glenn Branca’s *Symphony No. 6* (1987) for ten electric guitars, electric bass and drums.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, electric guitarists who were trained in reading experimental notated music were few and far between. We had
encountered classical guitarists who were happy to take the gig. They could read music and follow a conductor, but most borrowed electric guitars from their friends and showed up without any idea of how to get a “sound.” They would perform sitting, holding the electric guitar upright in classical guitar fashion. In contrast, the electric guitar players we encountered had plenty of “sound” but had trouble with the notes and ensemble playing.

But by 1991 things changed. The use of electric guitar exploded. On the festival that year we presented over ten works that included either electric guitar or electric bass. The amplified British group Icebreaker included both guitar and bass in performances of *Think Slow, Act Fast* (1981) by Michael Nyman, *Tam Tam* (1979) by Diderik Wagenaar and *Euthanasia and Garden Implements* (1990) by John Godfrey. Mary Wright’s *Lizard Belly Moon* (1988) called for three electric guitars and electric bass; Lois V Vierk’s *Red Shift* (1991) included electric guitar; composer/electric guitarist Steve Mackey premiered his theatrical solo, *It’s Good to Be Back* (1991); and expatriot Arnold Dreyblatt came from Berlin with his Orchestra of Excited Strings, which included retuned electric guitar. Electric basses were present in Louis Andriessen’s *De Tijd*, as well as in several works presented by Philadelphia’s new music ensemble, Relache.
At the end of the 1991 festival, the Michael Gordon Philharmonic, which had been part of the festival each year, was featured again in his *Van Gogh Video Opera* (1991).

One electric guitarist who appeared that year was Mark Stewart. I met Stewart at the wedding of violinist Muneko Otani and cellist John Whitfield. It was a true musicians’ wedding, complete with a crackerjack wedding band filled with their friends. Mark was playing guitar in the band. When he heard that the Bang on a Can crew was there, he jumped off the stage, handed me his card and said, “If you ever need an electric guitarist I’ll do a good job for you.” So right he was. Bang on a Can is many things to many people, but to a surprising number of folks, Bang on a Can is Mark Stewart. His effusive personality and remarkable stage presence has charmed old and young alike.

Stewart grew up in a family akin to the Von Trapp Family singers. All of the kids played musical instruments and sang, and his family formed a troubadour band that traveled around the country singing folk songs. Having made music from the cradle, Stewart went on to formal training at the Eastman School of Music and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His main instrument was cello, and he specialized in
contemporary music. He played rock guitar just for fun. But as more and more opportunities arose to combine his classical reading chops with his rock guitar playing, Stewart gradually let go of the cello and focused his energy on the electric guitar. It was at this crossroad that we met. After wowing us with his musicianship and guitar playing on the festival, Stewart became a founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

Over the years his musical life has expanded to include his hilarious musical comedy duo, Polygraph Lounge (we were all amazed that his rehearsal jokes transformed into a gig), and performing with rock legend Paul Simon. But perhaps his most passionate pursuit has been building musical instruments out of “junk.” Most summers at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at Mass MoCA, affectionately known as Banglewood, Stewart leads an extended workshop on building “original” instruments, capped by a public performance of all of the festival participants in what he calls the O of Oi (Orchestra of Original Instruments).

*   *   *


On May 11, 1987, at 4 a.m., after everyone had left our first Bang on a Can Marathon, Gordon, Lang and I were cleaning up after the 12 hours of
music. We were giddy with excitement and exhaustion. We made the decision to do it all again in 1988. Exit Art didn't want to host the second marathon, however, so we went searching for a new home. In the East Village, we found a dilapidated, former Catholic School that had been leased by an entrepreneurial theater director, Jeff Cohen. He had named the venue the RAPP Arts Center and was eager to rent the space to support his theater. Located on East 4th Street between Avenues A and B, the RAPP was in what was then a borderline dangerous neighborhood. The theater had old-time charm—lots of distressed wood, grungy floors, a large funky stage and decent acoustics.

In May 1988 we held our second marathon there. In May 1989 we continued on at the RAPP, expanding the festival to include three additional evening concerts: *Four Hours of Politics: The Music of Louis Andriessen and Frederic Rzewski; An Evening with John Cage; and Music of David Rosenbloom, Michael Gordon and Glenn Branca.*

Again at the RAPP in May 1990, the expanded festival continued with *The Music of Harry Partch* performed by Newband, an evening with the *Kazue Sawai Koto Ensemble* and *Terry Riley with Khayal*. The Partch instruments were stored in a basement in San Diego, California. We
convinced their caretaker, Danlee Mitchell, to entrust the instruments to us. But Partch instruments are no small peanuts, so we set out to find a place large enough to store them.

After many phone calls, we were nearly ready to give up when we reached an inquisitive real estate broker on the phone. She asked about the instruments. Amazingly, it turned out that she was a huge Partch fan, and she found us a warehouse for an extended period of time where we could both store the instruments and rehearse. We enlisted Dean Drummond and his ensemble Newband to take on the project. Drummond had played in Partch’s group and he was fanatically devoted to Partch’s music. He knew how to care for the instruments. The Partch performance at the Bang on a Can Festival at the RAPP Arts Center marked the first time that Newband was in possession of the instruments; they have remained with Drummond since that point.

It’s hard to say exactly what the magic was that brought audiences and press to these early festivals. Clearly it was more than the down-to-earth friendliness and beer sold at the concerts. The timing was right. We perceived a void, longed for a different world and then set out to create that world. We knew that we needed new listeners and we tried to market our
event with this in mind. We wrote irreverent and ridiculous blurbs about the music to get people’s attention and to draw in an untutored crowd. In the first year, we described the marathon as “an eclectic super-mix from the serial to the surreal.” In the second year, we began creating postcards with highlights. A few examples are:

* Fifty years ago Cage crashed through the boundaries of the traditional grand piano when he put screws, bolts, washers and other hardware between piano strings creating an orchestra of rattles, gongs and drums under 88 keys. (1988)

* In 1968 Stockhausen brought the techniques of Tibetan overtone singing to the Western World in this hysterical and meditative space age piece. (1989)

* Branca changed music history with his symphonies for massed electric guitars. He is the loudest genius in the world. This concert presents the New York premiere of Symphony #6, Devil Choirs at the Gates of Heaven. (1989)
The best work by perhaps the greatest American composer ever. She wrote only a few pieces and then gave up composing to collect American folk music. This greatly influenced her family, including step-son Pete Seeger. (1989)

Ligeti was catapulted to fame when Stanley Kubrick used his dense and atmospheric music in the movie 2001. Kammerkonzert is Ligeti’s Modernist masterpiece. (1990)

It seemed to work, as we drew in listeners far beyond the usual suspects.

The RAPP Arts Center proved to be a good home for Bang on a Can in most ways, and we imagined continuing on there indefinitely. But a few weeks before the 1991 festival, the center was “condemned,” shut down by the Catholic Archdiocese of New York. It seemed that Jeff Cohen, inspired by the controversy over the NEA Four—the four performance artists who were propelled to instant fame after their National Endowment for the Arts grants were vetoed because of obscene content—hoped to elicit
controversy with his production of an anti-Catholic play on the Church's turf.
The Archdiocese, which never batted an eyelash at the stream of punk bands that Cohen ushered through the space, quickly shut down the arts center and was able to minimize the bad press to a few articles here and there.

To their credit, the Archdiocese office, knowing that we had a festival just days away, called us and made an effort to relocate Bang on a Can to other Church facilities. But none of their suggestions were quite workable. We scrambled to find spaces for the events, and the 1991 festival spread out to four venues, including La Mama, Town Hall, CSC Theater and Circle in the Square Downtown.

In the days following the 1987 Marathon and throughout most of the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, Gordon, Lang, and I met regularly. I became used to seeing Lang show up with dark circles under his eyes. An insomniac of sorts, Lang drank lots of coffee, stayed up all night and wrote music. Often, at what seemed to be the very last minute possible, Lang would announce “I've thrown everything away,” and then he would stay up all night and miraculously write something new. We talked about the music we were writing and played our work for each other. The sharing of music often
happened on the phone as well. One of us would say, “Hey, do you want to hear what I’m working on?” and then hold the phone up to the speakers. By the mid 1990s, we all lived downtown within 10 minutes walking distance of each other, which made our meeting easier.

Along with planning and producing those early festivals we wrote grants and raised money. I remember an early fund raising meeting with Gayle Morgan at the Cary Trust, an early supporter of Bang on a Can. We took out our budget and proudly announced that all of our raised funds went directly to the artists! She was silent. She then explained to us that we would burn out in a matter of years if we didn’t build an administration. We took her suggestion to heart, hiring our first part-time assistant to help run the organization. Bang on a Can is now headquartered in Brooklyn.

Executive Director Kenny Savelson, Director of Development Tim Thomas, Director of the Bang on a Can Summer Festival at MASS MoCA Philippa Thompson, along with support staff, administer a wide range of year-round activities.

*   *   *
MOVE TO LINCOLN CENTER

In 1993 at the end of my stay in Amsterdam, we got word that Jane Moss from Lincoln Center had called the Bang on a Can office. She wanted to discuss the possibility of having Bang on a Can on the Great Performers Series. We wondered if the young woman who took the message got it right. It must be an error, we figured, like in Charlie Chaplan's The Little Tramp, when the tramp is mistaken for an aristocrat. What could it mean?

That year, Bang on a Can was in desperate need of funds. We had no real administrative support and were self-producing all of our events. Gordon, Lang and I created and mailed the flyers, wrote the press releases, contracted the performers, wrote grants, sent out fundraising letters and were the crew. Despite the onslaught of brilliant reviews in the New York Times and Village Voice, we were literally on the verge of collapsing. The '93 marathon was put together after we had all spent big chunks of time out of the country—Lang in Rome on the Rome Prize, and I on a Fulbright with Gordon in Amsterdam.

The 1993 Bang on a Can Festival was held at The Kitchen, the historic downtown performance space that had moved from Soho to Chelsea. Could the seemingly opposing worlds of Bang on a Can and
Lincoln Center merge to create some kind of magic, we wondered, or would this be a grand error? Many serious discussions ensued.

We were exhilarated by the thought of downtown avant-garde music being represented at what was considered the temple of musical culture. Why shouldn’t a pedestrian walking down Broadway see the names Phil Kline or Mary Wright on the big three-sheet next to Placido Domingo? Would that be cool or uncool? We realized that we really didn’t care. It was interesting to us that hardcore downtown composers, like Nick Didkovsky and Annie Gosfield, seemed particularly excited to hear their work at Lincoln Center. In truth, everyone seemed pretty excited. With Lincoln Center came greater visibility but also the trappings of a large corporate institution. Where would the audience hang out when they took a break from listening? We talked Jane Moss into letting us put lawn furniture in the lobby. In the recent renovation of Alice Tully Hall, a café was added that satisfied this need.

With the move to Lincoln Center, we were suddenly dealing with a complex weave of departments; press, marketing, programming, development and stage crew were all separate entities, and people in one department didn’t necessarily know those in another. Once we got on
stage, a host of union stagehands did all of the work we used to do ourselves—we were not allowed to move even a music stand.

Jane Moss, who had just begun her tenure at Lincoln Center, made a bold move to define her curatorial voice. Her decision was announced just before the end of our ‘93 festival, and it brought considerable controversy. It is hard to imagine any programming at Lincoln Center today that would spark this kind of response by a standing *New York Times* critic:

“Next year, the festival moves to Lincoln Center, a move I fear will be wrong for both parties. The style without a convincing name thrives on informal settings without institutional weight; it is scrappy, irreverent and unsettling. Lincoln Center risks making it seem more established, more absolute, more conclusive—in other words, more ‘totalist’—than it really is.”

Allan Kozinn's review of the debut show of the May 14, 1994 performance of the Bang on a Can All-Stars at the Walter Reade Theater begins:

“Professional worriers of different stripes are no doubt pouring over the schedule of the eighth Bang on a Can series, searching for portents. For some, Lincoln Center's adoption of the post-Minimalist downtown festival, with its informal atmosphere and its occasional nods to rock-and-roll, is a sign of Western civilization's imminent collapse; or at least, of Lincoln Center's shameless abandonment of the artistic high ground in pursuit of trendiness. The alternative fear is that Bang on a Can, having allowed itself to be absorbed by Lincoln Center, will surrender its quirkily omnivorous character and be sucked into the bland mainstream. Maybe both sides have a point. But after their first dance, on Monday evening at the Walter Reade Theater, neither Lincoln Center nor Bang on a Can seemed any worse for the encounter.”
Back in our tiny East Village office after the first event, we were thrilled. The All-Stars were spectacular. The concert was packed. But on our phone machine was an extended rant left by an irate fan. She couldn't get in to the concert. In order to get a ticket over the phone she needed a credit card, and, she said “I don't have a fucking credit card!”

The controversy over the move to Lincoln Center continued through the ‘90s. While we had a glorious time hearing the music and filling the halls, there were problems. Along with the marketing fire-power of Lincoln Center came higher ticket prices and a shortening of the Bang on a Can Marathon from 12 hours to 8. The bureaucracy was deep. The box office, for example, wasn't equipped to deal with the come-and-go-as-you-like or stay-all-day style of the marathon. Once they sold out the house, they closed the box office and no one else could get into the concert. We’d have a “sold out” show with a house that was three-quarters full. People standing outside couldn't get in because, on paper, Alice Tully was at fire code capacity. During the six years we were at Lincoln Center, we would regularly hand torn ticket stubs to shut-out fans in order to get them in.

But the hassles of Lincoln Center were miniscule compared to the energy it injected into Bang on a Can. Jane Moss' desire for adventure
could not have happened at a more perfect moment. The move filled our
tank with rocket fuel, propelling us onward. The Bang on a Can All-Stars,
our hybrid amplified chamber ensemble, previously had played only a few
concerts. With their own season at the Walter Reade Theater, the group
leapt into the limelight. For Gordon, Lang, Ziporyn and myself, the first two
years at Lincoln Center was a showcase for new work: the world premiere
of my work *Lick* on April 10, 1994; the American premiere of Gordon's *Yo
Shakespeare* on May 8, 1994; the world premiere of Lang's *cheating, lying,
stealing* revised for the Bang on a Can All-Stars on May 1, 1995; as well as

* * *

**FOUR PIECES OF MUSIC**

**Evan Ziporyn** *Tire Fire*

Evan Ziporyn's obsession with Balinese music began in 1979 when
he heard a short recording of traditional Balinese gamelan while working at
Festoon's record store in New Haven and had a self-described “conversion
experience.” Ziporyn spent the following summer in Oakland, where he met
composer Michael Tenzer, who was studying at the University of California
at Berkeley. Tenzer, along with Rachel Cooper and Wayan Suweca, had
recently formed Gamelan Sekar Jaya, and Ziporyn was inspired to join in. In 1981, Ziporyn traveled to Bali on a Yale Murray Fellowship to immerse himself in playing and studying gamelan music.

Ziporyn's interest and ultimate expertise in Balinese music has become, perhaps, the defining aspect of his career, although it is hard to define Ziporyn or put him neatly into any box. For me, Ziporyn has always been something of a musical superhero—a clarinetist with both classical and jazz credentials, a saxophonist, conductor, keyboardist, percussionist when need be, the leader of Boston’s Gamelan Galak Tika, professor at MIT, band leader, articulate writer (see, for instance, Evan Ziporyn, “Who Listens if You Care,” in Strunk’s Source Readings in Music History, eds. Leon Treitler & Oliver Strunk, Rev. Ed. [New York: WW Norton, 1988]), and all of this as an aside to his prolific compositional output.

According to Ziporyn, his involvement with Balinese music, as well as his clarinet playing, started out as side interests. He never meant for them to get mixed up with his principal work of composing. So much for plans. Today his catalogue includes two bass clarinet concertos, a clarinet quartet and eight major solo works for either clarinet or bass clarinet. And as a founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, his life as a clarinetist is...
a year-round endeavor. Likewise, his involvement in gamelan seeped into his compositional life.

In the summer of 1989, Michael Gordon and I spent several weeks in Berkeley visiting Ziporyn. During our stay we had the opportunity to take in a performance of Gamelan Sekar Jaya, of which Ziporyn had become an active member. It was fascinating to see him in Balinese garb bowing ceremoniously to the free-spirited, hippie-like audience spread out on the green field. There were kids running everywhere, and everyone seemed to be in a really good mood. I had played briefly in a Javanese gamelan under the direction of Judith Becker at the University of Michigan. While I was fascinated by the collective sound of the instruments, I found it difficult and tedious to learn the patterns. The one thing I remembered was Becker saying that the noise of children was a natural part of the gamelan concert experience, and I thought of this while listening to the ringing Sekar Jaya amid the youthful chatter.

In those early days of Bang on a Can, when we talked “composing,” Bali hardly entered the conversation. There were other topics—amplification, performance style, electric guitars, rock, Minimalism—and for Ziporyn, jazz. He was interested in the freedom and performance style of
jazz. *LUV Time* (1984) and *Tree Frog* (1990) were both written for jazz-type combos.

*(Excerpt follows)*
*LUV Time* is scored for bass clarinet, baritone sax, trombone, piano and percussion, and *Tree Frog* for bass clarinet, baritone sax, trombone, violin, keyboard, electric guitar and percussion. Both pieces conjure up the sound of late-night jam sessions, but there is also a bit of a Ramada Inn lounge band—too tired and drunk to listen to each other—written into the music. This isn't the clean, optimistic jazz captured by Leonard Bernstein. With the three low winds blending in a somnolent clunkiness, Ziporyn offers his rebellion to both jazz and classical genres in completely notated scores.

I remember stopping in to a rehearsal of *LUV Time* when I was in Berkeley. *LUV Time* sounded so “cool”—rich and reedy, with a free-floating, groovy sensibility. The regular constant beat on the gong was startling—so steady and straightforward. Both *LUV Time* and *Tree Frog* embrace the precise but loose style of performance that has become Ziporyn’s trademark, requiring the performers to play complicated, syncopated rhythms in a relaxed manner that gives the impression of improvisation or possibly accidental coordination. But there is nothing accidental about it.

*LUV Time* and *Tree Frog* integrate ideas from Balinese music into a jazz sensibility. *LUV Time* includes a time-beater—a gamelan standard.
The original title for the piece was *The Greatest Love of All Love Time*, which Ziporyn had seen written on an Indonesian T-shirt. But he shortened it to *LUV Time* for a variety of reasons including the iconic shapes of the instruments—the bass clarinet shaped like an “L,” the trombone like a “U” and baritone sax like a “V.”

The title *Tree Frog* is a hint at the shift in landscape from America to Bali. Balinese ornamentations and techniques weave in and out of the music, becoming lost in the meandering reappearances of the jazzy tunes. At first listen, one might think that *Tree Frog* is just the next song on the play list after *LUV Time*. But *Tree Frog* covers a much wider terrain, and the ornamental gestures that circle around, the repeated percussive tunes, the winds blurring in with frenzied licks and the rock-and-roll progressions that emerge at the end lead us through new territory. Throughout much of the piece there are hints of Andriessen’s influence, especially two-thirds of the way through as Ziporyn brings in a hocket reminiscent of *Hoketus*, which Ziporyn had played as part of the 1989 Bang on a Can Marathon. Hocketing of course is also found in traditional Balinese music, but the sound in *Tree Frog* smacks more of Andriessen’s contemporary take on it. Both *LUV Time* and *Tree Frog* fuse the disparate worlds of gamelan,
American pop, jazz and classical composition. Back then, it was all new to my ears.

In 1990 Ziporyn wrote his first work for gamelan, *Night Bus*, followed that same year by *Kekembangan* (for gamelan and saxophone quartet) and *Aneh Tapi Nyata* in 1992 (for gamelan and chamber group). *Aneh Tapi Nyata* is made up of a “motley crew of musicians playing Western instruments,” as Ziporyn describes them, accompanying Gamelan Sekar Jaya. In this early piece, though rough in form, Ziporyn discovered that he was interested in maintaining the integrity of the two disparate musical worlds, gamelan and Western, when he combined them.

In 1990 Ziporyn moved to Boston to take a position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He continued his work with Balinese music with his own Gamelan Galak Tika but maintained contact with Sekar Jaya as well. Now that he was back on the East Coast, his involvement with Bang on a Can solidified.

In 1994, Ziporyn wrote *Tire Fire*, his third work for a mix of Western instruments and gamelan, commissioned by Gamelan Sekar Jaya for their East Coast tour. I heard *Tire Fire* performed by Gamelan Galak Tika at the 1995 Bang on a Can marathon.
Ziporyn talks about composers who, when working with the fusion of different cultural musics, feel the necessity to avoid “the clash.” The most frequently used strategy is to have one group tune to the other group’s tuning system. But Ziporyn discovered that it was precisely this clash in which he was interested. According to Ziporyn, when one musical group adjusts to the other, it gives up a certain part of its identity, relinquishing the integrity of its natural musical voice. In *Tire Fire*, Ziporyn has the Western instruments tune their C sharps to the gamelan’s C sharp pitch. Everyone’s C sharps match, more or less, but the other pitches are all slightly off.

Ziporyn tells a story of playing *Tire Fire* for a Balinese master musician. The musician shook his head and explained that in Balinese music the instruments work together, and he made a swimming fish motion with his hands. Then the Balinese master laughed, saying that he understood: “The piece begins like this,” and his hands swam independently, “and then becomes like this,” and his hands swam together. And this, Ziporyn says, is the essence of the piece, the two hands moving together, but they are still two hands.

Ziporyn also points out that tuning is not fixed in the gamelan world. The instruments themselves, with their rich and complex overtones, allow
for a broad sensibility about tuning. Flutes can play a quarter tone off from the rest of the orchestra. Singers can sing in a completely different key. Ziporyn became interested in creating what he calls “categories of uncertainty.” And this was certainly true with his recent opera A House in Bali. He had written the piece with his own gamelan instruments in mind, thinking that when he worked with the gamelan instruments in Bali, adjustments would be made. When Ziporyn reached Bali it turned out that the gamelan the Balinese group used was tuned a minor third off from the U.S. gamelan. Ziporyn was dismayed at the first run-through. But he said his ears adjusted, and he embraced the tuning. With a few adjustments he made it work.

In many ways Ziporyn led the way for his Bang on a Can colleagues in tuning explorations. In 1995 I began work on a piece for three Harry Partch instruments combined with three Western instruments for a new work for Newband. I chose two harmonic canons, which are like microtonal zithers, and the bloboy, which looks like a giant fireplace bellows and sounds like an oddly tuned train whistle. I had conversations with the group’s director Dean Drummond about the piece I would write. I wanted to keep the Western instruments—electric keyboard, cello and flute—in their
regular tuning, to play along with the incremental microtonal tuning of the Partch instruments, which have 43 glorious notes to the octave. I had borrowed the harmonic canons and was amazed at how I was actually able to tune into the pitches. I thought the two sound worlds in their own tunings would create a wonderful buzz for my new work *Steam* (1995). Drummond was a Partch purist and this made him wince. But he relented, and *Steam* was the first piece for his group that didn’t strictly adhere to the Partch tuning. Later Gordon would experiment with tunings in several pieces, most notably in *Decasia* (2001), his work for detuned orchestra. Ziporyn has since been involved in creating an electronic gamelan that has a completely adjustable tuning.

(Excerpt follows)
The opening three minutes of *Tire Fire* are for gamelan only. The listener is lulled into the melodious terrain that is recognizable as gamelan music. To the untrained ear, it is unclear whether there are radical departures from what might be expected in a gamelan context. But
untrained ear or not, there is no question about the radical departure that takes place at about three minutes into the piece. Guitar #2 crashes the party with a clash that is startling, blowing everything out of whack. The guitar has a chord of open fifths—E flat/B flat/F (going upward from middle C)—followed by the same chord in transpositions, starting on F, and then on D.

*Fire Fire*, like traditional gamelan music, is taught by rote; the players have very specific instructions for what to listen to and whom they should be following at any given point. There is a whole daisy chain of listening instructions. But once the players know the piece, there is opportunity to sit back and make different connections. The written score, in fact, does not perfectly match the recording available, as certain timings of the piece are unpredictable. There are no measure numbers written in the score, as the score was drawn up after the piece was created so that Ziporyn could have a written representation of the music.

Shortly after the Guitar #2 entrance, the mandolin joins in with similarly voiced chords, followed by Guitar #1. The chord entrances are staggered and jagged, as if the Western players are trying to find their
footing in this foreign land. I am guessing that a seasoned gamelan musician might say, “This is not your father’s gamelan.”

Ziporyn makes the interesting choice of limiting his harmonic and melodic material in Tire Fire. In Part One, the guitars and mandolin play transpositions of one three-note chord (the stacked fifths, outlined above). In Balinese music there is no real idea of harmony as we conceive of it in Western music. The focus of the music is on a central melody and its embellishment. In Tire Fire, as a counterbalance to the sound world of the gamelan, the amplified strings live in their own sound world. The coexistence of the two forces is somewhat reminiscent of Charles Ives’ polytonality, which was inspired by his father’s experiments with brass bands playing in different keys approaching the town square from different sides.

At the top of page 7 of the score, the mandolin enters on a G sharp/D sharp/A sharp chord and methodically rises chromatically until the end of Part One on page 12. This rise, accompanied by Guitar #1 and countered by the descent of Guitar #2, creates an expansion, and the heightened energy serves as fuel to heat up the music. As the strings increase in speed and energy, so do the percussive gamelan instruments. The time-
beater, who had been marking groups of $5/16$ths, now begins to mark every quarter note at the $3/4$ measure at the top staff of page 8. There is an acceleration and crescendo that drives the ensemble to the end of the first section.

*Fig 9 - Excerpted From Tire Fire (pg. 12)*
By the time the musicians arrive at Part Two on a loud and ringing chord dominated by C sharps and G sharps, we are no longer shocked at these strange bedfellows. The arrival at Part Two sounds downright sweet and harmonious. While the piece kicks off “in Bali,” so to speak, in Part Two there is a shift to a psychedelic pop world, a bit more dissonant and rhythmically obtuse than, say, the opening of *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, but nonetheless referential to ‘60s acid rock. Ziporyn cites Miles Davis’ *In a Silent Way* as an inspiration, as well as Davis’ spacey jams of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s. Guitar #2 leads with an arpeggiated figure outlining a slow melodic line, and the mandolin enters with what can be thought of as Part Two's main theme—a series of haunting, chromatically descending fifths that lengthen and contract and are eventually answered by a series of chromatically ascending fifths. This stark melodic material sets the mood, and a relaxed groove takes form as the rest of the ensemble gradually joins in.

(Excerpt follows)
In Part Two Ziporyn constructs a series of repeating loops of unequal lengths. Through the course of the section, these loops gradually build up
and then thin out. Ziporyn clearly outlines the loops in the notes at the beginning of the score, along with detailed instructions on their entry points for the independent lines. These instructions result in a mesmerizing, luxurious music that offers a soothing fusion of the disparate musical worlds. The clashes in tuning remind us dreamily that we are in some exotic new world, but it is difficult to put one’s finger exactly on what that world is. As Part Two pares down, we are left with a small percussive group playing out a groove made from the last remnants of overlapping loops that seamlessly morph into Part Three. Part Three is marked by an aligned 4/4 meter and the entrance of the cowbell-sounding reong on a single note—perhaps a momentary reference to *Honky Tonk Woman*.

The opening of Part Three sounds downright Afro-Cuban to me, but the impression quickly slips. In the score, Ziporyn says that the “bass and all Balinese instruments play cycles that are synchronized and in multiples of four. Mandolin and guitars play through-composed material as indicated in the score and parts.” Instead of the irregularly looping of Part Two, the percussive loops in Part Three line up in multiples of 4/4. Only the ceng-ceng, a single instrument made up of small cymbals, has an oddly metered loop.
The build up at the end of Part Three recalls the build up at the end of Part One, but it is followed by a clean break to Part Four with a solo melody on Guitar #1. Guitar #1 is followed in cannon by the mandolin and Guitar #2. The 16-bar melodic loop inches its way up in transposition, keeping the melodic shape but adjusting pitches to conform to this scale: E, F sharp, A sharp, B, C sharp, E sharp, F sharp, G sharp, B sharp. Like Part Two, the movement fills out and then thins out without the anxiety of a dissonant climactic moment.

(Excerpt follows)
But Ziporyn isn't content to let the good sounds roll just yet. On page 55, in the third measure, the bass enters playing a quizzical rising and
falling line, outlining a diminished 7th chord (C sharp/B flat/G/E). (Note: The bass’ bottom string is tuned down to C sharp in order to accomplish this.)

This “unanswered question” seems to take the place of the central unresolved melody laid down by the mandolin throughout Part Two. In Part Four it serves as the foundation of the build that reaches a peak on the top of page 64, where something remarkable happens—a harmonic progression is thrown into the mix! This might not sound like a dramatic addition, but in context it sounds like it is the world’s first ever chord change. The music suddenly unleashes what had been lying dormant as the string instruments assert their Westerness, i.e., the ability to progress harmonically. The patterns in the gamelan become a color that shades the harmonic changes, giving it a sheen of glistening dissonance.

By page 72, Part Four thins out and leads to music reminiscent of Part Two. But by the time the mandolin enters, the music sounds like some kind of cool jazz-rock-Indonesian band playing slightly out of sync. Maybe it is because of the moving bass line, or the random sounding guitar tune, or the steady percussive beat. I sure would enjoy hearing this band at a café. In Part Five, Ziporyn has figured out that everyone is ready to party and he just writes music. It is here that the Indonesian-jazz-contemporary music
superfusion comes alive, without hesitation or anything remotely self-conscious. It is a joyous meeting of East and West, tempered and just, of electric and acoustic, embracing the clash. The after-ring is spectacular.

MICHAEL GORDON YO SHAKESPEARE

On June 1, 1989, Louis Andriessen’s evening-length De Materie premiered at the Muziektheater in Amsterdam with staging by Robert Wilson. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands was in attendance, as were Michael Gordon and British flute player James Poke. During intermission, Andriessen came over to Gordon and Poke, who happened to be standing near each other, pulled them together, and said, “You and you are friends,” and then promptly left.

Gordon and Poke began a conversation, did in fact hit it off and remain friends to this day. Poke had just started Icebreaker, a contemporary music group in London. Icebreaker was a mixed amplified ensemble of 13 musicians that included two flutes (or panpipes), two saxophones, three keyboards, accordion, percussion, violin, cello, electric guitar and electric bass. The group formed to perform Andriessen’s
Hoketus (therefore the panpipes) when they were students at York University, and they decided to continue from there.

Early on Icebreaker caught the attention of Andrew Cornall, producer at Decca’s Argo records. He gave them the go-ahead to commission an album length work by composer Michael Torke for their debut Argo recording. As the deadline drew near Torke’s piece did not appear. He was overloaded with other work and passed on the Icebreaker opportunity. Poke and John Godfrey, Icebreaker’s other founder, scrambled. They called Gordon in the fall of 1992 and asked if he could quickly write a new work to contribute to their revamped CD project. Gordon jumped in.

Working with Icebreaker was a unique experience. The musicians gathered at James Poke’s father’s house in the beautiful English countryside of Dorking, about an hour outside of London. They would crash at the house for week-long stretches, rehearsing all day and then staying up late into the night drinking beer and listening to new music. They were a rebellious lot, railing against the London new music establishment.

The Icebreaker musicians wrote a manifesto that included a set of rules called, Line Up and Rules. They gave it to the composers they commissioned, including Gordon. Along with details about the group’s
instrumentation, *Line Up and Rules* included an introduction followed by 18 rules. I have included the introduction and some of the rules below. (The other rules were simply technical).

Icebreaker was formed to play a loud amplified form of new music with influences from the jazz and rock worlds and is influenced by the Hague school of composers led by Louis Andriessen. Strongly articulated rhythm is the primary building block of the group's music. The group intends to offer a radical alternative to more mainstream forms of contemporary music which it often finds sterile. The group aims to make its music exciting and enjoyable to an audience without compromise of artistic ideals.

"Selected Rules"

1. Icebreaker's music is loud (very loud), that is to say it's loud.
2. This is because it’s always amplified (see below).
3. ...It should be noted that a scoring such as flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, violin, cello and piano, a very
conventional line-up in normal "classical" terms, would seem to us very strange and we would think that the composer must be a bit off his nut to score for such a strange combination. Our equivalent of a really normal scoring would be something like 2 pan-pipes, 2 altos and tenor, 2 electric pianos, vibes and bass (guitar).

[...]

13. THE GROUP ALWAYS PLAYS WITHOUT A CONDUCTOR. Composers should take considerable note of this.

14. The group does not normally use advanced instrumental techniques, e.g., multiphonics, quartertones, etc.

15. The music is amplified. This allows for balance between instruments not possible acoustically. This does not mean, however, that anything can be balanced with anything. A low piccolo, for instance, cannot be heard above three blasting saxophones, whatever the amplification may be. Care should be taken to consider the special difficulties and nature of playing with amplification.
16. Icebreaker does not essentially regard itself as an "electro-acoustic" group, but tape parts (on DAT) are perfectly acceptable.

17. The group would normally expect to work with the composer during the period of composition/rehearsal. The group may wish to make compositional changes in the piece during rehearsal. Composers should be prepared to be flexible in this direction.

18. Titles: the group has very strong opinions about titles of pieces. In general the following titles are banned: generic titles such as "sonata"; quotations from poems, or any poetic references; programmatic titles; latinesque or Greek titles; titles preceded or followed by "...". In general the title should have nothing to do with the music (exceptions possible). Composers should discuss possible titles with the directors of the group."

Because Icebreaker chose composers with similar perspectives, the group was, for the most part, preaching to the converted. *Line Up and Rules* never reached composers who might have been stressed or upset by the directives. Gordon found these rules very funny, and he was game
for the encounter. He submitted a list of three titles, allowing the group to
vote on which one fit best. The title *Yo Shakespeare* was a shout out to the
British literary hero, but it was also something that Gordon had heard on his
telephone answering machine. His high-school buddy Sheldon Frank left
him a message one day simply saying, “Yo, Shakespeare”—a term of
affection for his talented friend, as Shakespeare was one of the few artistic
figures Frank had heard of.

In 1992, Gordon had just arrived in Amsterdam for the year. The
beginning of the stay there was unsettled, with moves to different
apartments, constant rain and adjusting to a new culture. But things settled
down and, in this foreign land, Gordon wrote this joyous and dancing piece.
Though some of the rhythmic ideas related to explorations in earlier works
like *Four Kings Fight Five*, which employed nine against eight, or *The Low
Quartet* (1985), with its constant jagged counter rhythms, in *Yo
Shakespeare* Gordon found a clarity and sense of groove that was new.
The rhythms clash, but the grooves make me want to dance, though it is
hard to know when to put my foot down as conflicting beats create irregular
patterns.

*(Excerpt follows)*
Fig 12 - Excerpted From Yo Shakespeare (pg. 1)
At the time, Gordon was writing music on a Mac SE/30 using the notation program HB Engraver. HB Engraver had a lot of quirky features. One was that every bit of information, including clefs, keys, time signatures and bar lines, was inserted manually. It was possible to input music that didn’t fit neatly into regular beats or time signatures. Gordon began to experiment with odd groupings of triplet quarter notes. Groups of four eighth notes and four triplet quarters (Group 1) were looped together and piled on top of groups of four dotted eighths and two quarter notes (Group 2). The relationship between the durations in Group 1, four to three (eighth notes to triplet quarter notes), was exactly the same as the relationship between the durations in Group 2 (dotted eighth notes to quarter notes). The combination of the independent syncopated rhythms produced a composite clangorous result that Gordon had been aiming to capture in written notation since experiments with tape looping in his early work *The Tree Watcher*.

Gordon wrote sketches for *Yo Shakespeare* in a score without bar lines. He knew that, at a certain point, he would have to figure out a way to notate the music in a readable format. He decided to fit the odd groupings of triplet quarter notes into regular bars of quarter beats, mostly 4/4 with...
2/4, 3/4, 5/4, 6/4, 8/4 measures sprinkled throughout, and a closing section barred all in 6/4. The measures look strange with a single triplet quarter note followed by four eighth notes followed by two triplet quarter notes in a 4/4 measure, with the measure after beginning with two triplet quarter notes, followed by four eighth notes, ending with a single triplet quarter note.

Early looping devices and computer software programs in 1992 allowed the members of Icebreaker to make mock-ups of the rhythms and learn them by rote. Out of the context of the measures, the rhythms themselves were not so complicated—only the notation looked strange. Later, when Gordon was making the final preparations for the score, Steve Reich suggested that he add an explanation of the “irrational rhythm” at the beginning of the score.

The sound of Icebreaker was like no other—their edgy, amplified big band persona was loud and clear. Gordon retuned the guitar so that the bottom three strings were all B flats and the top three strings were all E’s. This way he could easily form the power-chords he needed. With the distortion, ethereal panpipe timbre, jazzy saxes accompanied by violin, guitar and bass, and dense sound of doublings with keyboards, electric
percussion and cello, Gordon created a distinguishing thick sound. Most of the instruments play most of the time, a characteristic of Gordon’s orchestration in many of his works.

In *Yo Shakespeare* the ensemble is divided spatially into three groups: pan-pipes 1, keyboard 1, cello and bass stage right; pan-pipes 2, soprano sax, keyboard 3, percussion and guitar stage left; and alto sax, keyboard 2, accordion and violin center stage. The groups are divided based on their different rhythmic universes. The spatial division allows each subgroup to work tightly as a unit. To facilitate staying all together, all sides can tune in to the alto sax in the group at center stage, as the performer plays regular divisions of the beat, mostly 16th notes.

The spatial division also emphasizes the opposing rhythms, and there is a wonderful clangorous sound as the rhythms clash and layer on top of one another. The rhythmic dissonance, as well as the syncopation, blur a regular sense of the beat. At the opening, the individual rhythmic components are set up clearly with limited pitch material and repetition. The clear division of two parts at the opening of the piece evolves and builds as Gordon layers on parts, eventually covering the full range of the ensemble by measure 25. At measure 43, he introduces a tuneful circling of pitches in
counterpoint in the winds, complicating the texture and increasing the tension.

Throughout the first section Gordon varies the density of the texture as he builds up to a forward drive in measures 98-101. In these measures, there is a clear eight against nine, with the triplet quarter notes clashing against the dotted eighth notes, accompanied by a glue of running 16th notes as the music charges into the next section. In measure 102, the music cuts back to begin with just two players quietly battling out their rhythmic line. Everything sounds muted and seems slowed down as various instruments enter with fragmented bits of rhythm patterns. There is a striking call and response between the panpipes and electric guitar as they trade irregular groups of triplet half notes and quarter notes. The back and forth between the two instruments is like birds trading calls in the wild, regular but unpredictable, as the notes seem to float above the muted texture.
Though the piece builds with added running 16th notes, Gordon keeps the music quiet until gradually raising the dynamics and adding thick power chords to drive the music forward into the section that follows. In the building up and final part of this second section, in measures 143-166, the rhythm is divided into subgroups of nine and eight as the triplet quarter is divided into triplet eighths (pic 2 m.149) as well as into a subdivision of nine 16ths in the time of two quarter beats (guitar m.149). The dotted eighth figure is further subdivided into dotted 16ths (pic 1), so that along with the running 16th notes in the accordion, keyboard 2 and violin, these 6/4 measures have subdivisions of 27, 24, 18, 16, 9 and 8. It is a messy pile-up that coordinates like noisy machinery.

_Yo Shakespeare_ can be divided into four large sections: measures 1-101, 102-166, 167-253 and 254-288. In measure 167 the third section kicks into high gear with an all out party groove that, though irregular, is completely danceable. The colors and patterns shift around in a kaleidoscopic mix. While Gordon was writing the piece I remember hearing the music from the opposite side of the apartment, thinking that he must be
having a great time. The joyful tunes and rhythms filtered into my consciousness and I was changed by the music, eventually stealing the off-beat samba rhythms and translating them for my own use.

At the start of the last section of *Yo Shakespeare*, beginning in measure 254, the music starts again with a sudden cut back. This time the ensemble trades short fragments of the rhythmic pulses in a pointillistic weave. Over the next 34 measures Gordon fills in the spaces and thickens the texture with power chords in a series of brutal repetitions that build to a gigantic shaking rumble. The rhythmic overlaying has been simplified. The group of four quarter-note triplets is gone, replaced by clearer divisions of the beat as triplet quarters appear in groups of three, preceded or followed by eighth notes. The juxtaposition of the dotted eighths and quarters are also left behind in favor a continuous run of dotted eighths. The two independent rhythmic lines are a composite of smaller parts that are traded off to make the whole—creating a rough-edged, double hocket. The sound of the ensemble is deepened with the switch from soprano and alto saxes to tenor and baritone saxes at measure 272, which add a rich noisy color to the roaring finish. *Yo Shakespeare* was premiered by Icebreaker at
Jackson’s Lane Theatre in London on December 14, 1992, and released on Argo/Decca the following year.

**DAVID LANG CHEATING LYING STEALING**

In 1987 Lang took a dramatic leap with his work, *are you experienced?*, which was written for the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. A few years earlier, Lang had met with Yale classmate Jay Rozen to hear Rozen’s new electric tuba. Rozen enthusiastically demonstrated the huge range of sonic possibilities of the instrument. Lang joked that someday he would write Jimi Hendrix arrangements for him, and Rozen lit up. When the Pittsburgh commission came in, Lang asked Rozen if he might be game to play his electric tuba in the piece. Lang grabbed the title, *are you experienced?*, from Hendrix’s first release with the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Lang gave Rozen several opportunities to “blow out” on sonic electric guitar-like riffs. Lang put himself in the piece as narrator and also wrote his own text. He begins, “Hello. I’m David Lang. I know you were looking forward to hearing this piece, but something terrible has just happened. While we were busy setting up, someone crept up silently behind you and
dealt a quick blow to the side of your head. As you fell towards the floor and started losing consciousness, a number of disconnected thoughts crowded into your head. Here are a few of them.” The music starts. Percussive delay-like attacks ring out as Lang continues to tell us our “disconnected thoughts.”

Evident in this early work are his irony and charm, mixed with an attraction to the macabre. Lang borrows from the rock music of his youth and traverses a sonic landscape that is both aggressive and serene, contrasting different sensibilities in a way he hadn’t previously. In six short movements, *are you experienced?* includes epic rock progressions, dance grooves, edgy riffs on tuba, powerful percussive hits and also the stuttering rhythms that have become a signature of Lang’s work.

While he clearly references Hendrix, Lang was also inspired by the New York No Wave band, The Swans, which he claims to have listened to over and over again while writing the piece. In contrast to the extreme paring down in *frag*, Lang now allows an expressiveness back into his music, creating a more emotional language. In the third movement of *are you experienced?*, Lang speaks, “I remember this music. It’s nice, but we've heard it already. So let's get on with it.” Though in context he is
referring to the immediate musical moment, perhaps Lang was asking a more general question that he was pondering: *Do I want to write the same music again?* Apparently not.

With *are you experienced?*, Lang kicked off what became an enduring interest in the theatrical presentation of music. He went on to write operas as well as music for theater and dance. He also began to think about the theatrical possibilities of concert music. For *the anvil chorus* (1991), he worked closely with percussionist Steve Schick to choreograph hands and feet as well as to add drama to the way objects are hit and rests are held. In *the so-called laws of nature* (2002), his half-hour long percussion quartet written for So Percussion, Lang employs his irregular stuttering rhythms and delightful sense of timing but also specifies the theatrical coordination of movement, choreographing when and how the players turn their bodies to face in different directions. In his vocal work *the little match girl passion* (2007), he unfolds the painful and dramatic story with a chorus of four singers who dramatize the work with spare percussion.

Even when theatrics are not immediately apparent, they are often at the core of Lang’s conception of a work. In *orpheus over and under* (1989),
for two pianos, Lang purposefully gives the musicians the impossible task of smoothly maintaining single-note tremolos for an extended period of time. With *orpheus over and under*, written in memory of his mother, Lang sets up a struggle that represents “holding on to something you don’t have.” He imagines that the tremolos are like voices. Throughout the two movements, titled *aria* and *chorale*, the pianists play tremolos for 18 minutes.

In *orpheus over and under*, Lang writes in a freer, seemingly unmetered, sonic texture that is consistent throughout. The music has wave-like motion as the pianists trade off notes. It is delicate and seems to almost hum or hover in a suspended state. The listener is lulled through Lang’s very gradual process of lengthening trills, creating greater overlap between the pianos, bringing in a rich harmonic counterpoint as he expands the range. Hearing the work years later, I realize that this continual pulsing harmony must have been in my consciousness when I wrote my second string quartet *Early that summer*. Perhaps it gave me the idea or the freedom to kick into an ecstatic musical place and just stay there.

Lang’s musical explorations were now far from the flashy virtuosic music of *illumination rounds*. Lang mischievously declares, “I can make a
whole piece out of nothing—like a tremolo that doesn’t work.” *orpheus over and under* was followed by a series of works that were even more minimal and slowly unfolding. In fact, *orpheus over and under* sounds almost hyper in comparison to *slow movement* (1993), *the passing measures* (1998) and *men* (2001). In these works Lang further develops his interest in gradually shifting textures in which things seem to hardly change. Lang often introduces these works by saying, “This is the most boring piece you will ever hear.”

*(Excerpt follows)*
PRESS RELEASE
written for and dedicated to
EVAN ZIPORYN

DAVID LANG

Fig 14 - Excerpted From Press Release (pg. 1)
While Lang became increasingly interested in static music, his process of writing remained consistently formulaic; for each work he would invent shifting patterns and number games that unfolded the music in unpredictable ways. Lang’s clarinet solo, *press release* (1992), written for Evan Ziporyn, is an essay on the combination of two registers, low and high. The piece opens with a six-note, James Brown–inspired bass line built on a blues scale. In the 16 repetitions that follow, each bass note alternates with a leap to a high pitch. Eventually we can hear two distinct melodies—high and low—unfold in the alternation. Each repetition offers a variation through a slight shifting of the rhythmic pattern.

The virtuosity of the leaping is visceral and a bit of a trick. Lang had imagined that the leaps would require alternate pressing and releasing of the keys, thus the title. Ziporyn pointed out that this would not always be the case, but the title stuck and served as a fun pun for Lang’s game. The propulsive opening builds energy by removing the spaces between the notes, leaving us with a rush of activity.

In *press release*, the performer plays a kind of hocket with himself—like an air hockey game where the player has stretched his hands to both ends of the table and is simultaneously shooting and defending. The
seemingly static high D, which at the beginning of the piece is unmoving, eventually develops melodically, adding counterpoint against the bass line. The piece travels to elaborate funk grooves as high and low melodies interweave. While Lang takes a certain pride in the formulaic processes and building blocks of his music, he also allows freedom in altering his plans and readjusting his calculations. Lang's interest in numbers stems from his studies with Martin Bresnick at Stanford. Bresnick had Lang counting numbers in the music of Bartok, and ingrained in Lang a sense that there is a connection between math and a “well made piece.” Gordon once asked Lang what he does when the number patterns don't work and he doesn't like the music of the results. Lang explained that the patterns suggest options that he can keep or throw away. Gordon's response was that Lang wrote music just like he did - by trial and error.

(Excerpt follows)
Fig 15 - Excerpted From cheating, lying, stealing (pg. 1)
In 1993, *cheating, lying, stealing* was written on the heels of *press release*. While the commission for *cheating, lying, stealing* was for a standard Pierrot ensemble, Lang removed the flute and violin and had those musicians play brake drums and triangles set up antiphonally on the outer sides of the ensemble. He had considered that without the flute and violin the piece would transfer easily to the newly formed Bang on a Can All-Stars. Like *press release*, *cheating, lying, stealing* begins with a repeated hocket-like tune. In *cheating, lying, stealing*, the line is similarly disjointed, with four of the players playing leaps from low to high. But here the opposing brake drums play a true hocket, trading off attacks and marking the lows and highs of the melody.

The opening theme consists of three pairs of eighth-note leaps, with each pair separated by an eighth-note rest. The melody is played by the marimba, piano and bass clarinet, while the independent cellist holds her or his own on repeated quarter-note triplets. Although Lang gives the performers instructions at the top of the score, “an ominous funk,” the overt references to James Brown found in *press release* have now been transformed into a proclamatory theme that fuses the funk with a fanfare quality reminiscent of the opening of Leos Janáček’s *Sinfonietta* (1926).
Like the *Sinfonietta*, the music begins with a theme that is simple, direct, anticipatory, theatrical, bold and constantly reshaping itself.

The opening theme of *cheating, lying, stealing*, repeated in one permutation or another for the first four minutes and then for the last minute of the piece, constitutes a large portion of the musical material. I counted over 50 reiterations of the theme over the first four minutes (through measure 113) and another 16 at the end (beginning at measure 363). In between (measures 114 - 362) something else happens. But even during that something else, the antiphonal underpinning of the opening is a running undercurrent in the music.

In *cheating, lying, stealing as in press release*, Lang tripped up the opening theme with small changes. In measures 5, 7, and 9, each repetition of the theme is systematically altered as an eighth-note rest is inserted between the leaping notes, rotating the rest’s location with each reappearance. The rest lengthens the theme to nine eighth-note beats. Then in measures 11-16, another eighth-note rest is added to the theme, lengthening it to 10 eighth-note beats. This is followed by the addition of a third eighth-note rest in the theme beginning in measure 17, which allows
for an eighth-note rest between every note—the final statement of the process.

It is a neat mathematical pattern; without looking at the score, we get the idea aurally. The theme is not stagnant, but incrementally shifting. Each shift varies the rhythmic implications just slightly, like shifts of poetic meter. With this ultimate statement of the theme in six separate hits, Lang takes the liberty to change pitches of the tune. The bass pitch makes a power-chord shift moving bluntly from E to C. Two additional pitches, G and A, are added to the upper line and a poignant, long-note tune on the cello is coordinated irregularly with attack pitches of the theme.

Again Lang goes through permutations as rests are reshuffled throughout the line. At measure 35 Lang gives himself the freedom to literally repeat the first run of the theme heard in measures 3-18, and he does this again at the very end of the piece at measure 373. Lang was educated in an era in which repetition and, in particular, literal repetition, were thought to be banal. Repetition would be “cheating.” But that’s the idea.

Permutations of the theme continue throughout the piece. From measures 84 -108 the opening theme from measures 3 is cracked open
further with more rests, until the notes that had once been adjacent have a quarter-note rest or longer between them. Rests or silences are as active as the sounding notes in this work, and the spaces between the statements of the theme vary throughout according to Lang’s mathematical scheme. He adds rests to break our expectations and throw us off balance, and shortens the silences to create acceleration. At the recapitulation at measure 363, the extra rests have been lifted out and the theme is compressed so that it repeats incessantly without pause.

Throughout the piece, the cello plays a special role—standing out as the dramatic loner, while the rest of the ensemble forms a unified and impenetrable front. Its separateness is there from the start as it saws away in triplets against the small militia’s duple meter. There are points in the piece where other instruments have the opportunity to mess up the patterns. The first is in measure 68, with the percussionist coming in with unexpected and unpredictable thwacks on the anvil to confuse the pattern. The piano breaks into an irregular stutter at measure 84. The snare drum interjects 16th-note attacks in measure 223.

In the contrasting section, which could be considered the development, in measure 114, the bass clarinet joins up with the cello
melody, winding around it with almost the same pitches. Here the bass clarinet and cello are operating in an independent sphere against the “lazy phrasing” of running modal scales on piano and marimba.

At this point in the piece, aside from the nod to the percussive opening with the low, left-hand piano cluster attacks, the atmosphere becomes psychedelic and delicate. The hocketers have left their brake drums for a more ethereal sound on triangles. This contrasting development section is reductive. At measure 208 the material is reduced to a stark, two-chord, back-and-forth irregular march, with the militaristic snare punctuating to keep everyone in line. As if giving one last plea, the cello is back in again in measure 239 with a melody that is untethered by the aggressive march of percussive attacks. The cello’s range is tightly restricted until the end of the section, where a dramatic dip down a minor seventh and back up a minor ninth pushes into a condensed version of the opening theme.

(Excerpt follows)
The theme’s return is startling in its sped-up, choked character. When the music returns to the literal repeat of the opening, the silences seem particularly big. Though we know that we are at the end, the silences hold us in suspense about where and how Lang will leave us hanging.

Julia Wolfe Lick

In 1993, I was commissioned by the Huddersfield Festival to write a new work for the British group, Piano Circus. This young ensemble had taken the new music scene in the United Kingdom by storm with their photogenic looks and the unlikely combination of six pianos. I based the new piece for them, my lips from speaking, on the opening piano riff of Aretha Franklin’s 1968 feminist anthem, “Think.” While I loved Franklin’s singing, I was particularly inspired by her piano playing at the top of the song. She played a blues vamp based on two chords.

In the piece I took this short vamp and broke it into fragments. By isolating the fragments and framing them with after-rings and silences, the song’s upbeat opening becomes an abstraction of the riff. The fragments, which grow over time, continue and build for the first two-thirds of the piece. Eventually the riffs link together and develop in a wildly quixotic manner.
The music lets loose into a united blast of Franklin’s original blues vamp over the entire range of the piano. The piece closes with a cacophonous splattering of a groove out of sync. There is a strong Nancarrow influence at work with the pop material gone haywire, though the effect in my lips from speaking is ultimately less restrained.

Although I had embraced the intense and driving energy of rock in pieces leading up to my lips from speaking, this was the first time I used material that was directly lifted from a pop tune. The stolen goods amounted to a tiny fragment, but the source was clearly recognizable. As a tribute to Franklin’s background in gospel, the piece’s title is from the Hebrew prayer service, “Guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit.”

By the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, the world of amplification, electric guitar and rock had seeped into classical music. The edgy sound of distortion and the propulsive grooves were infectious. When we set out to form the Bang on a Can All-Stars in the early 1990s, the presence of the electric guitar was a must. Like Piano Circus, our new, oddly instrumented ensemble needed new music, and I leapt at the chance to write for them.
For my first All-Star work, I wanted to write something aggressive and fun—a tough girl rant. By the time I began writing the piece, I knew that it would be on the Lincoln Center season in the spring of 1994. My thoughts went to the incredible performer James Brown. I loved his sense of the beat—always playing off it, never squarely on it. I thought of the timing of his grunts and his sudden shouts. I loved his music making and, though I had no intention of replicating it, I wanted to somehow capture my experience of it, to take it somewhere else. A few years earlier, I was studying the late string quartets of Beethoven at Princeton University. These quartets transfixed and transformed me. They seemed completely modern to me, ridiculously ahead of their time. The muscular incessant irregular character of the music swept me away and the late quartets have been one of the most significant influences on my music. The blunt and brutish attacks of Lick owe as much to Beethoven as they do to James Brown.
I tried out several sketches with the All-Stars and found the basic ideas for the piece. The material consists of short, driving grunts and licks.
Like *my lips from speaking*, *Lick* begins with small fragments, almost as if the opening riff had been shattered into splinters. Again these fragments are framed with anticipatory silences. Each isolated gesture is aggressive and sudden.

I labored over the timing of the opening, trying to determine and control the element of surprise and unpredictability of the attacks. In the process of writing, and hearing the piece again and again, it was tricky to hold on to the sense of suspense. Unlike the meditative entry into *my lips from speaking*, *Lick* is combative and highly charged from the first hit. Although the pop references are clear at the outset, the first chord of *Lick* is thickened by a piano cluster. I had used piano clusters all over *my lips from speaking*, and I used the dense sound for attacks here as well. I wanted the pop influence to be both overt and subverted.

The entire band plays the first two hits, which are followed by 10 beats of silence. In order for the band to enter together on the last eighth note of measure 3, they have to count and look at each other for the cue. As the group came to know the piece better and better, the counting and cueing became increasingly subtle. The suspense created by the timing of the silences and the unsettled nature of the chords was meant to keep the
listener hanging in space, like waiting for an axe to fall. These sharp
attacks and suspended silences continue throughout the opening minute of
the piece.

At measure 42 and continuing on through the bulk of the music, the
isolated gestures are lengthened and transformed. In measures 43-86,
there is a gradual build of the material with an irregular party groove laying
in at letter C, measure 67. The overall build is to rehearsal letter D, where
the texture clears to an A major-ish chord that is repeated irregularly for 30
seconds. When we arrive at rehearsal letter E, it is clear that we have been
lead by a messy V-I rock cadence to the clear D tonic. It is messy because
there are lots of extra notes, different colors and various riffs that color the
sustained V chord.

(Excerpt follows)
At measure 110 there is a return to the opening attack material, but it is sped up and less spare, with shorter rests and everyone playing all the time. In measures 110-243, there are basically two sets of material that alternate. Both are muscular, syncopated and nervy in that they do not
back down or let up. In measures 110-161, measures 169-176 and measures 209-216, the group plays sharp, funk-driven attacks, tutti screams, short fast swells and running notes that mimic the opening but at a hyper pace and louder. Interspersed are musical break-outs in measures 162-168, measures 177-208 and measures 217-243 that are freer, wilder, erratic, cluster-filled, jam-like sections that feature untamed rock riffs in the guitar, piano-gone-mad pounding, a spray of percussion, sustained notes on cello and bass, and high held sax notes that elevate the sound. This music has a feverish stasis which breaks up the tension of the tighter funk groove material.

From measures 232-245, individual accelerations in the piano and percussion attacks and a winding high tune in the sax lead us straight into the “rock” groove at measure 244, which is pure fun—no more tugging and pulling, now it’s time to party. I remember laughing when I got to this point in the piece, wondering if I could just let it rock out at the end. It’s definitely a release from all of the crazy counting and cacophonous sounds—a syncopated dance groove that the band can “let go on.”

*   *   *
ENDING

Shortly after writing *Lick*, the Bang on a Can All-Stars were signed to a record deal with Sony Classical. *Lick* appeared on the first Sony release, *Industry*. The liner notes to that CD, which I co-wrote with Lang and Gordon, read like a manifesto. The notes convey the excitement we felt and reveal the combative spirit that drove us forward.

“When we came to New York in the 1980s, things were very polarized—academic music uptown, its audiences filled with New Music specialists, a very critical atmosphere and everyone in tuxes, and downtown, another kind of uniform, black T-shirts, and another serious pretension. Neither side was really fun, and there was a whole generation of young composers who didn’t fit in anywhere. We had the simplicity, energy and drive of pop music in our ears. We’d heard it from the cradle. But we also had the idea from our classical music training that composing was exalted and pieces could be ordered and structured, that there still was a value to writing music down. Too funky for the academy and too structured for the club scene, we had no clear
place to go. We knew there were other young composers like us, and we wanted to make a statement. So in 1987 we decided to make a happening, a 12-hour marathon featuring the work of 28 composers, the first annual Bang on a Can Festival. It took place at the Exit Art Gallery in Soho. For our program, we put pieces together that were really strong and belonged to different ideologies, or not to any ideology, defying category, falling between the cracks. Music of unknown composers was presented side by side with music by living masters. We didn’t want to be restricted by boundaries, and we didn’t want the listener to be restricted either."

The “boundaries” to which we refer in the Industry CD liner notes continued to expand. Gradually musics from outside our esoteric sphere began to seep in. In 1989 we invited the World Saxophone Quartet to bring their dissonant complicated jazz improvisation to the Marathon. We followed a jagged path into experimental jazz that led us to collaborations with Henry Threadgill, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Bill Frisell and younger jazz composers Matthew Shipp and Vjay Iyer. There were
appearances by Charles Gayle, William Parker, and Leroy Jenkins. The Bang on a Can All-Stars’ collaborations, tours, and CDs with Don Byron were pivotal in the development of the ensemble.

In the late 1980s we met a dynamic Japanese koto player, Kazue Sawai, who led a koto school that encouraged experimentation on the instrument. Her ferocious ensemble of eight young Japanese woman appeared on the 1989 marathon. Sawai paved the way at Bang on a Can for others working with traditional instruments of other cultures in untraditional ways. In 1994 we presented a one-time event titled World Orchestra Day which included Amancear performing avant-garde flamenco, Wu Man and Sola crossing Chinese music with blues, the mystical Moroccan musician Hassan Hakmoun, and Ziporyn’s Gamelan Galak Tika. The one-time event confirmed in our minds that these experimenters were a natural part of our world and did not need a separate presentation. Over the years the marathon programming included hybrid musicians such as Tuvan punk throat singers Yat Kha; Talvin Singh, a London remixer of Indian classical music; the ecstatic eastern European big band sound of Ivo Papasov and Goren Bregovic; among others. An extended collaboration
with master Burmese circle drummer Kyaw Kyaw Naing also led to a tour
and CD release with the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

Also in 1989 we forged a relationship with composer Glenn Branca.
He appeared on the festival that year and our collaborations with him
included new work for the Bang on a Can All-Stars as well as presentations
of his massive electric guitar symphonies. This early interest in Branca led
us to other musicians from the experimental rock scene. The Bang on a
Can All-Stars’ collaborations with Sonic Youth’s Lee Renaldo and Thurston
Moore, Wilco’s Glenn Kotche, Nick Zammuto from The Books, and Tyondai
Braxton from Battles further extended our sphere of music. Strange indie
bands like the all-girl Japanese group Ne Ne and the Scandinavian (also
all-girl) band Amiina came to perform, as well as better-known groups like
Yo La Tengo and Tortoise. Many of these hybrid musicians were hard to
categorize and they contributed to our ever-widening vision of the art music
scene. Additional projects developed like Bang on a Can’s new music
marching band, Asphalt Orchestra, whose repertoire includes new works
by Yoko Ono, David Byrne and Annie Clark, and a collaboration with
Tatsuya Yoshida of The Ruins.
As Gordon, Lang and I imagined an open world of experimentation we wondered about ways to support a younger generation of musicians. In 2002 we started the Bang on a Can Summer Music Institute at MASS MoCA. Our aim was to create a summer festival where young classically trained performers and composers could fully express the breadth of their musical interests. At “Banglewood” (now in its 11th season), the day is packed from early morning until late at night with music making. The festival day begins with movement, followed by workshops in nonwritten musics - improvisation, gamelan, Latin band, African drumming, and instrument building. The middle of the day is filled with chamber ensemble sessions in which musicians rehearse innovative and interesting notated music, including works by the fellow composers—each ensemble is comprised of both faculty and fellows. Two daily concerts bookend the afternoon sessions; the lunchtime concert is curated by and features the fellows, the late afternoon concert features both faculty and fellows. The day ends with spontaneous late-night anything-goes jam sessions. Perhaps more important than our instruction is that the festival has provided a meeting ground for what has quickly become an internationally connected group of young composers and musicians, many of whom have proactively
moved forward the field of contemporary music. In just ten years our alumni have founded dozens of ensembles, festivals, composers collectives, record companies and publishing houses.

Now, in 2012 in New York, it is clear that the music world has changed. For this generation of musicians many of the questions we asked, dreams we had, and obstacles we faced in the early years of Bang on a Can are now nonissues. Embracing the clash—the super mega-mash-up of cultures—the mixing of classical and pop, of counterpoint and re-mixes, of gamelan, jazz, scherzos, blues harmonica, home-made instruments, novel tuning systems, sonata form, James Brown, concertmasters and street musicians—is no longer a concept or philosophy or artistic approach—it just is.

*   *   *
NOTES

All quotations by composers that are not anecdotal are from the following interviews:


David Lang, telephone interview, 24 August 2011.
MUSIC WORKS CITED

LOUIS ANDRIESSEN (b. 1939)
De Staat (1976)
Hoketus (1977)
Mausoleum (1979, rev. 1981)
De Tijd (1981)

MILTON BABBITT (1916-2011)
Vision and Prayer (1961)

GLENN BRANCA (b. 1948)
Symphony No. 6 (1987)

JEFFREY BROOKS
Chaconne (1984)
Music for Winds and Pipes (1986)
Composition for Amplified Instruments (1988)

JOHN CAGE (1912-1992)
Three Constructions (1939-41)
Three Dances (1945)
Ryoanji (1983-85)
Five Stone Wind (1988)

ELLIOTT CARTER (b. 1908)
Duo (1974)

AARON COPLAND (1900-1990)
Piano Sonata (1939-41)

JOHN DEAK (b. 1943)
Readings from Steppenwolf (1975, rev. 1982)

JACOB DRUCKMAN (1928-1996)
Valentine (1969)
MORTON FELDMAN (1926-1987)
The King of Denmark (1964)

PHILIP GLASS (b. 1937)
Music in Fifths (1969)
Music in Similar Motion (1969)
La Belle et La Bette (1994)

JOHN GODFREY (b. 1962)
Euthanasia and Garden Implements (1990)

MICHAEL GORDON (b. 1956)
Earthwork (1979)
The Tree Watcher (1981)
Thou Shalt!/Thou Shalt Not! (1983)
The Low Quartet (1985)
Strange Quiet (1985)
Four Kings Fight Five (1988)
Paint It Black (1988)
Van Gogh Video Opera (1991)
Yo Shakespeare (1992)
Decasia (2001)

LEOS JANACEK (1854-1928)
Sinfonietta (1926)

TOM JOHNSON (b. 1939)
Failing (1975)

JOHN KING (b. 1953)
Immediate Music (1986)

DAVID LANG (b. 1957)
illumination rounds (1981)
while nailing at random (1983)
frag (1984)
spooky action at a distance (1986)
DAVID LANG CONT'D
are you experienced? (1987)
orpheus over and under (1989)
the anvil chorus (1991)
press release (1992)
slow movement (1993)
the passing measures (1998)
men (2001)
the so-called laws of nature (2002)
the little match girl passion (2007)

STEVE MACKNEY (b. 1956)
It’s Good to Be Back (1991)

MICHAEL MAGUIRE
Seven Years (1988)

STEVE MARTLAND (b. 1959)
Drill (1987)
Horses of Instruction (1994)

MEREDITH MONK (b. 1942)
Double Fiesta (1986)

MICHAEL NYMAN (b. 1944)
Think Slow, Act Fast (1981)

STEVE REICH (b. 1936)
It’s Gonna Rain (1965)
Come Out (1966)
Piano/Video Phase (1967/2000)
Piano Phase (1967)
Pendulum Music (1968)
Four Organs (1970)
Music for 18 Musicians (1976)
New York Counterpoint (1985)
Electric Counterpoint (1987)
STEVE REICH CONT'D
2 x 5 (2009)

TERRY RILEY (b. 1935)
In C (1964)

DAVID ROSENBLOOM (b. 1949)
Requiem for the Fallen (1989)

JAMES SELLARS (b. 1940)
Get Hot or Get Out (1984)

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN (1928-2007)
Gruppen (1955-57)

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)
Agon (1953-57)

MICHAEL TORKE (b. 1961)
The Yellow Pages (1985)

JACK VEES (b. 1955)
John Henry (1985)

LOIS V VIERK (b. 1951)
Go Guitars (1981)
Tusk (1981)
Manhattan Cascade (1985)
Red Shift (1991)

DIDERIK WAGENAAR (b. 1946)
Tam Tam (1979)
Stadium (1981)

JULIA WOLFE (b. 1958)
Seamarks (1983)
Williamsburg Bridge (1987)
The Vermeer Room (1989)
JULIA WOLFE CONT'D
Early that summer (1993)
my lips from speaking (1993)
Lick (1994)
Steam (1995)
Believing (1997)
Big, Beautiful, Dark and Scary (2002)
Stronghold (2009)

MARY WRIGHT (b. 1960)
Lizard Belly Moon (1988)

IANNIS XENAKIS (1922-2001)
Psappha (1975)
Theraps (1976)

EVAN ZIPORYN (b. 1959)
Two Obsessions (1980)
LUV Time (1984)
Waiting by the Phone (1986)
Kekembangan (1990)
Night Bus (1990)
Tree Frog (1990)
Aneh Tapi Nyata (1992)
Tire Fire (1994)
A House in Bali (2009)
APPENDIX A
The Complete New York Bang on a Can Marathon Programs

Bang on a Can Marathon
May 10, 1987
Exit Art, New York, NY

2:00 PM
• Phill Niblock - Held Tones
  ◦ Barbara Held, flute
• Scott Lindroth - Relations To Rigor
  ◦ Mixed Ensemble
  ◦ Scott Lindroth, conductor
• Louis Andriessen - De Staat
  ◦ Piano Duo
• Iannis Xenakis - Theraps
  ◦ Robert Black, bass
• Lee Hyla - In Double Light
  ◦ Mixed Ensemble
  ◦ Lee Hyla, conductor
• John King - Immediate Music
  ◦ John King, electric guitar
• Martin Bresnick - String Quartet No.2 “Bucephalus”
  ◦ Alexander String Quartet

5:00 PM
• Laura Clayton - Simichaya
  ◦ Thom Bergeron, saxophone
• Pauline Oliveros - Tuning Meditation
  ◦ Pauline Oliveros and audience
• James Sellars - Get Hot Or Get Out
  ◦ Robert Black, bass
• John Zorn - Road Runner
  ◦ Guy Klucvevsek, accordion
• Igor Stravinsky - Agon
  ◦ Piano Duo
• Julia Wolfe - Williamsburg Bridge (World Premiere)
  ◦ Mixed Ensemble
  ◦ David Alan Miller, conductor
• George Crumb - Black Angels
  ◦ Alexander String Quartet

8:00 PM
• David Lang - frag
  ◦ Omni Ensemble
  ◦ David Lang, conductor
• Marjorie Hess - Theatre Piece
  ◦ Mimmi Fulmer, Soprano
• Aaron Kernis - Passacaglia - Variations
  ◦ Leslie Tomkins, viola
  ◦ Michael Barrett, piano
• Lois V Vierk - Manhattan Cascade
  ◦ Guy Klucevsek, accordion
• Jacob Druckman - Valentine
  ◦ Robert Black, bass
• Michael Gordon - Strange Quiet
  ◦ Michael Gordon Philharmonic
• Jeffrey Brooks - Chaconne
  ◦ Piano Duo

11:00 PM
• Milton Babbitt - Vision And Prayer
  ◦ Mimmi Fulmer, soprano
• Steve Reich - Four Organs
  ◦ S.E.M. Ensemble
  ◦ Petr Kotik, director
• Jon Deak - Readings From Steppenwolf
  ◦ Robert Black, bass
• Evan Ziporyn - Waiting By The Phone
  ◦ Evan Ziporyn, clarinet
• Diderik Wagenaar - Stadium
  ◦ Piano Duo
• Jay Rozen - Postures (World Premiere)
  ◦ Jay Rozen, electric tuba
• John Cage - Ryoanji
  ◦ S.E.M. Ensemble
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 8, 1988
R.A.P.P. Arts Center, New York, NY

2:00 PM
• Philip Glass - Music In Similar Motion
  ◦ Philip Glass, Michael Riesman, electronic keyboards
• Michael Gordon - Borinage, December 1878 (World Premiere)
  ◦ Michael Gordon Philharmonic
• Ge Gan-Ru - Yi Feng
  ◦ Ted Mook, cello
• John Cage - Three Dances
  ◦ Piano Duo
• Arthur Jarvinen - Goldbeater’s Skin
  ◦ David Ocker, clarinet
• Morton Feldman - The King Of Denmark
  ◦ Steve Schick, percussion
• Jeffrey Brooks - Composition For Amplified Instruments (World Premiere)
  ◦ Michael Gordon Philharmonic
• Jack Vees - John Henry
  ◦ Jack Vees, electric bass

5:00 PM
• Frederic Rzewski - Coming Together
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit
• Steve Martland - Drill
  ◦ Piano Duo
• Pauline Oliveros - New Sound Meditation (World Premiere)
  ◦ Pauline Oliveros and audience
• Julia Wolfe - On Seven-Star-Shoes
  ◦ Quintet of the Americas
• Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen - Din Tavshed (Your Silence)
  ◦ Bob Loughlin, electric guitar
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit
  ◦ David Alan Miller, conductor
• Guy Klucvevsek - Scenes From A Mirage
  ◦ Guy Klucvevsek, accordion
• Rand Steiger - Quintessence
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit

8:00 PM
• Lam Bun-Ching - After Spring
  ◦ Piano Duo
• Michael Torke - The Yellow Pages
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit
• Christian Marclay - Turntable Manipulations
  ◦ Christian Marclay, turntables
• David Lang - illumination rounds
  ◦ Rolf Schulte, violin
  ◦ Ursula Oppens, piano
• Lukas Foss - Curriculum Vitae With Timebomb
  ◦ Michael Pugliese, percussion
  ◦ Guy Klucevsek, accordion
• Terry Riley - In C
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit
• Linda Bouchard - Transi-Blanc
  ◦ Abandon; Linda Bouchard, conductor
• Mario Davidovsky - Synchronism No.6
  ◦ Yvar Mikhashoff, piano

11:00 PM
• Anthony Coleman - By Night
  ◦ Anthony Coleman and performers
• Iannis Xenakis - Psappha
  ◦ Steve Schick, percussion
• Tom Johnson - Failing
  ◦ Robert Black, bass
• Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson - Trumpetimage/Drumimage
  ◦ Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson, trumpet, percussion
• Eleanor Hovda - Coastings
  ◦ Libby Van Cleve, oboe
  ◦ Jack Vees, electric bass
• Alvin Curran - For Cornelius
  ◦ Yvar Mikhashoff, piano
• John Cage - Theatre Piece
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 7, 1989
R.A.P.P. Arts Center, New York, NY

2:00 PM

- Meredith Monk - Double Fiesta
  - Meredith Monk, voice and piano
  - Nurit Tilles, piano
- Arthur Jarvinen - Egyptian Two-Step
  - California E.A.R. Unit
- Maki Ishii - Drifting Island
  - Kazue Sawai, koto
  - Steven Schick, percussion
- Lois V Vierk – Go Guitars
  - David Seidel, electric guitar
- Cees Van Zeeland - Paraaf (World Premiere)
  - Piano Duo
- Evan Ziporyn - Luv Time
  - Sound Pressure
- Todd Brief - Idols
  - California E.A.R. Unit
- Bruno Degazio - The Road to Chaos
  - computer tape

5:00 PM

- World Saxophone Quartet
  - Hamiet Bluiett, Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake, David Murray, saxophones
- Tadao Sawai - Homura
  - Kazue Sawai Koto Ensemble
- Elena Kats - In Tension
  - California E.A.R. Unit
- Michael Maguire - Seven Years (World Premiere)
  - Abandon

8:00 PM

- Bunita Marcus - Adam and Eve
  - California E.A.R. Unit
- David Lang - dance/drop
  - Sound Pressure
- Ruth Crawford Seeger - String Quartet 1931
  - Cassatt String Quartet
- William Doerrfeld - Evening Chant
  - William Doerrfeld, voice and Emax
- Jeffrey Mumford - A Pond within the Drifting Dusk
  - Abandon
• K. Atchley - The Rabbit’s Song
  ◦ K. Atchley, voice
• Julia Wolfe - Sleeping Child (World Premiere)
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit
• David Mott - Oh! Mysterious Magnum
  ◦ Sound Pressure
• Steve Reich - Piano Phase
  ◦ Piano Duo

11:00 PM
• Ken Gaburo - Antiphony VIII (Revolution)
  ◦ Steven Schick, percussion
• David First - Plate Mass
  ◦ World Casio Quintet
• Charles Ives - Three Quarter-Tone Pieces
  ◦ Piano Duo
• Karlheinz Stockhausen - Stimmung
  ◦ California E.A.R. Unit
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 13, 1990
R.A.P.P. Arts Center, New York, NY

2:00 PM

- Steve Reich - Eight Lines
  - Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne
- Jalalu Kalvert Nelson - Music For 5 Tubas
  - Tubas: Rod Mathews, Steve Foreman, Kyle Turner, Nathan Durham, Andrew Seligson
  - Jalalu Kalvert Nelson, conductor
- Barbara Kolb - Looking For Claudio
  - William Anderson, guitar
- Michel Longtin Colere - Berlin 1961
  - Julien Gregoire, percussion
- Rob Zuidam - Three Mechanisms
  - Orkest De Volharding
- Linda Fisher - Big Mouth
  - Linda Fisher and Joshua Fried
- Kyle Gann - Hesapa Ki Lakhota Ki Thawapi
  - Relache

5:00 PM

- Shelley Hirsch/David Weinstein - Haiku Lingo
  - Shelley Hirsch, vocals
  - David Weinstein, electronics
- John Cage - Six Melodies
  - Alan Feinberg, piano
  - Curtis Macomber, violin
- Michael Gordon - Thou Shalt!/ Thou Shalt Not!
  - The Michael Gordon Philharmonic
- Paul Lansky - Idle Chatter
  - computer synthesized tape
- Eleanor Hovda - Borealis Music
  - Relache
- Gyorgy Ligeti - Kammerkonzert
  - Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne
- Maarten van Norden - Cookie Girl
  - Orkest De Volharding

8:00 PM

- Martin Bresnick - Trio
  - The Monticello Trio
- Mary Ellen Childs - Click
  - Jody Brieske, Peter O’Gorman, Cynthia Stevens, claves
• Conlon Nancarrow - String Quartet
  ◦ Cassatt String Quartet
• Iannis Xenakis - Rebonds
  ◦ Steve Schick, percussion
• Steve Martland - Shoulder To Shoulder
  ◦ Orkest de Volharding
• James Tenney - Critical Band
  ◦ Relache
• Julia Wolfe - The Vermeer Room
  ◦ Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne

11:00 PM
• George Lewis - Voyager
  ◦ George Lewis, trombone and electronics
• David Lang - orpheus is over and under
  ◦ Double Edge
• Dean Drummond - Different Drums For Different Strokes
  ◦ Dominic Donato, percussion
• Meredith Monk - Ellis Island
  ◦ Double Edge
Bang on a Can Marathon  
May 12, 1991  
La Mama, New York, NY

2:00 PM
• John Cage - Three Dances for Four Kotos  
  ◦ Kazue Sawai Koto Ensemble  
• Allison Cameron - Two Bits  
  ◦ Dan Kennedy, conductor  
• Elliott Carter - Riconoscenza  
  ◦ Gregory Fullkerson, violin  
• Robert Ashley - Outcome Inevitable (World Premiere)  
  ◦ Relache  
• Paul Reller - Carcass  
  ◦ Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble  
• Toshio Hosokawa - Melodia  
  ◦ Guy Klucevsek, accordion  
• Stephen Montague - At the White Edge Of Phrygia  
  ◦ Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne  
• Leroy Jenkins - Solo Violin  
  ◦ Leroy Jenkins, violin

5:00 PM
• Edgar Varese - Integrales  
  ◦ Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble  
• Ann Warde - A Glimpse  
  ◦ Ann Warde, piano  
• Kaija Saariaho - Lichtbogen  
  ◦ Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne  
• Armando Rodriguez - Linear (World Premiere)  
  ◦ Relache  
• Alan Lighty - Birds of Prey  
  ◦ Artek  
• Diderik Wagenaar - Tam Tam  
  ◦ Icebreaker  
• John Godfrey - Euthanasia And Garden Implements  
  ◦ Icebreaker

8:00 PM
• Rodney Sharman - In Deepening Light  
  ◦ Robert Black, bass  
  ◦ Anthony de Mare, piano  
• Mary Wright - Lizard Belly Moon  
  ◦ Mark Stewart, Bill Anderson,  
  ◦ John Tamburello, guitars
• Robert Black, bass
• Jose Evangelista - O Bali
  ◦ Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne
• Steven Mackey - It's Good to be Back (World Premiere)
  ◦ Steven Mackey, electric guitar
• Julia Wolfe - Four Marys (World Premiere)
  ◦ Cassatt String Quartet
• Somei Satoh - New Work (World Premiere)
  ◦ Relache
• Michael Maguire - Discipline, Obedience, And Submission (World Premiere)
  ◦ Relache
• Scott Lindroth - Duo for Violins
  ◦ Kate Light, Ruth Ehrlich, violins
• Michael Daugherty - Flamingo (World Premiere)
  ◦ Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
• Conrad Cummings - Excerpts from an Opera on Vietnam (World Premiere)
  ◦ Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble

11:00 PM
• Lois V Vierk - Red Shift
  ◦ A Cloud Nine Consort
• David Lang - the anvil chorus (World Premiere)
  ◦ Steve Schick, percussion
• Daniel Goode - Fiddle Studies
  ◦ Flute, Keith Underwood
  ◦ Oboe, Vicki Bodner
  ◦ Clarinet, David Krakauer
  ◦ Soprano Sax, Andrew Sterman.
• Frances White - Still Life with Piano
  ◦ James Pritchett, piano
• Mieczyslaw Litwinski - Everything Is In You/ Like the Sun
  ◦ Mieczyslaw Litwinski, vocals
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 17, 1992
New York Society for Ethical Culture, New York, NY

2:00 PM

- Daniel Lentz - Talk Radio
  - Present Music with Jessica Karraker, voice
- Tania Leon - Ritual
  - Clemens Leske, piano
- Erkki Sven Tüür - String Quartet
  - Cassatt Quartet
- Rocco Di Pietro - Three Black American Folksongs
  - Pam Smith, voice
  - Evan Ziporyn, alto saxophone
  - John Halle, piano
- Elizabeth Brown - Migration
  - Elizabeth Brown, shakuhachi
  - Mayuki Fukuhara, violin
  - Sarah Clarke, viola
  - Theodore Mook, cello
- Jack Vees - Colorized Chaplin
  - Jack Vees, electric guitar

5:00 PM

- Evan Ziporyn - Tree Frog
- Joshua Fried - Travelogue (excerpts)
  - Dora Ohrenstein, voice
- Gustavo Matamoros - In Memory of Gentle Giant
  - Michael Pugliese, percussion
- Lee Hyla - The Dream of Innocent III
  - Theodore Mook, cello
  - Jim Pugliese, percussion
  - Lee Hyla, piano
- Juliet Palmer - Skirt (World Premiere)
  - Present Music
- Phil Kline - Bachman's Warbler
  - Phil Kline, boom boxes
- Tom Johnson - Failing
  - Robert Black, bass

8:00 PM

- Steve Martland - Remix
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Mary Jane Leach - New Work (World Premiere)
  o Shannon Peet, bassoon
• Muhal Richard Abrams - String Quartet (World Premiere)
  o Cassatt Quartet
• Daniel Goode - Stamping In The Dark
  o Bang on a Can Festival Stompers
• Mario Davidovsky - Synchronism X
  o David Starobin, guitar
• Julia Wolfe - Muscle Memory (World Premiere)
  o Steven Mackey, electric guitar
• Mikel Rouse - Quick Thrust
  o Mikel Rouse Broken Consort

11:00 PM

• Allison Cameron - Blank Sheet Of Metal
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Eleanor Hovda - Ariadne Music
  o Present Music
• Phill Niblock - Early Winter
  o Susan Stenger, flute
  o Soldier String Quartet
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 30, 1993
The Kitchen, New York, NY

3:00 PM

- Charles Ives – String Quartet #1
  - Lydian String Quartet
- Frank Wigglesworth – Summer Music (World Premiere)
  - Evan Ziporyn, bass clarinet
- Philip Glass – Two Pages
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Linda Bouchard – Lung Ta (World Premiere)
  - Lydian String Quartet
- Orlando Garcia – Colores Ultraviolados
  - Pamela Warrick-Smith, mezzo-soprano; Elizabeth Brown, flute; Mary Rowell, violin; Jonathan Storck, bass

5:00 PM

- David Lang – press release
  - Evan Ziporyn, bass clarinet
- Scott Johnson – Confetti of Flesh
  - Dora Ohrenstein, soprano; Mary Rowell, violin; Kathleen Supové, piano; Jason Circker, percussion
- Morton Feldman – Vertical Thoughts 2
  - Rolf Schulte, violin; Martin Goldray, piano
- Michael Gordon – Industry
  - Maya Beiser, cello; Elliot Caplan, video
- Francis Thorne – Electrified Elan (World Premiere)
  - John Tamburello, electric guitar
- Elliott Carter – Duo
  - Rolf Schulte, violin; Martin Goldray, piano
- Alvin Singleton – Apple
  - Michael Lowenstern, Richard Faria, Marianne Gythfieldt, Charles Neidich, clarinets

8:00 PM

- Julia Wolfe – Early that summer (World Premiere)
  - Lark Quartet
- Eric Qin – Construction Et Démolition
  - James Pugliese, Dominick Donato, percussion
- Alvin Curran – Electric Rags 2 [Excerpts]
  - Rova Saxophone Quartet
• Michael Maguire – Tristan, Doris, and Geraldo – A Piano Concerto (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars, Michael Gordon, conductor
• John Carter – Colors
  o Rova Saxophone Quartet
• Elizabeth Brown – Orrery
  o Elizabeth Brown, shakuhachi; Jennie Hansen, viola d'amoré; Bill Hayes, percussion
• Bunita Marcus – The Rugmaker
  o Cassatt String Quartet
• Markus Trunk – raw rows
  o William Anderson, banjo; Mark Stewart, guitar; Robert Black, bass
• Charles Ives – String Quartet #2
  o Cassatt String Quartet

11:00 PM

• Rova Saxophone Quartet – Swapmeet! Swapmeet!; Steve Adams – Cage (For John Cage); Larry Ochs – When the Nation Was Sound
  o Rova Saxophone Quartet
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 8, 1994
Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, NY

2:30 PM
• John Cage – Third Construction
  o Talujon Percussion Quartet
• Michael Gordon – Yo Shakespeare
  o Icebreaker
• Giacinto Scelsi – Kya
  o Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne
• Chen Yi – The Points
  o Wu Man, pipa

4:00 PM
• Meredith Monk – Selections from Custom Made
  o Katie Geissinger, Meredith Monk, Nurit Tilles
• Zack Browning – Trilimital Adversary: Cold Cuts
• Chiel Meyering – Flying Buddhas (World Premiere)
  o The Netherlands Wind Ensemble
• Michael Torke – Vanada
  o Icebreaker

5:30 PM
• Butch Morris – A Chorus of Poets II
  o Butch Morris with A Chorus of Poets
• Damian Le Gassick – Evol
  o Icebreaker
• Eleanor Hovda – Snapdragon
  o The Netherlands Wind Ensemble
• Harrison Birtwistle – Secret Theatre
  o Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne

7:00 PM
• Robert Ashley – Empire
  o Robert Ashley with Sam Ashley, Thomas Buckner, Jacqueline Humbert
• Karlheinz Stockhausen – Zyklus
  o Steven Schick, percussion
• David Lang – spud
  o Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne
• Annie Gosfield – Nikolaievsky Soldat
  o Annie Gosfield, keyboards; Roger Kleier, guitar; Christine Bard, percussion

8:30 PM
• Javier Alvarez - Temazcal
  o Javier Alvarez, maracas
• Ralph Shapey – Constellations (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Giya Kancheli - Magnum Ignotum
  o The Netherlands Wind Ensemble
• Nick Didkovsky – Amalia’s Secret (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars

10:15 PM
• Philip Glass – Company
  o Cassatt String Quartet
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 21, 1995
Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, NY

2:30 PM

• Louis Andriessen – M is for Man, Music, Mozart
  o Orkest de Volharding
• John Cage – Six Melodies
  o Rolf Schulte, violin; Lisa Moore, piano
• Don Byron – Beyond the Fetus (World Premiere)
  o Don Byron, clarinet; Mari Kimura, violin; Uri Caine, piano; Sadiq, poet
• Frederic Rzewski – De Profundis
  o Anthony De Mare, piano
• Glen Velez – Doctrine of Signature
  o Glen Velez, frame drum; Jan Hagiwara, percussion; Eva Atsalis, voice

5:00 PM

• Hanna Kulenty – Air
  o Orkest de Volharding
• Hermeto Pascoal – Arapua
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Julia Wolfe – Arsenal of Democracy
  o Orkest de Volharding
• Petr Kofron – Enhexe
  o Agon
• Annea Lockwood - Thousand Year Dreaming
  o Art Baron, Conch Shell, Trombone, Didjeridu; Libby van Cleve, Oboe, English Horn; Charles Wood, Tam-Tam, Stones; Glenn Fittin, Tam-Tam, Clapping Sticks; Jon Gibson, Didjeridu; Annea Lockwood, Voice; J.D. Parran, Contrabass Clarinet/Clarinet; N. Scott Robinson, Conch Shell, Frame Drums, Camerooon Pod Rattle, Tam-Tam, Superball Harmonics; John Snyder, Didjeridu, Waterphone; Peter Zummo, Trombone, Didjeridu

7:00 PM

• Steve Martland – Horses of Instruction
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Mikel Rouse – Kiss Him Goodbye
  o Mikel Rouse, voice
• Miroslav Šimáček - Hard Life
  o Agon
• Michael Nyman - Bell Set #1
  o Agon
• Bobby Previte - Open World
o Tenor Sax, Steve Elson
o French Horn, Tom Varner
o Piano, Neil Kirkwood
o Tuba, Dave Hofstra
o Bass, Peter Herbert
o Drums, Bobby Previte

9:00 PM

- Alvin Singleton – Secret Desire to be Black
  - Cassatt Quartet
- Louis Andriessen – Hout
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Marin Smolka – Rent a Ricercar
  - Agon
- Victoria Jordanova – Requiem for Bosnia
  - Victoria Jordanova, harp
- Evan Ziporyn – Tire Fire
  - Gamelan Galak Tika
Bang on a Can Marathon
June 2, 1996
Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, NY

2:30 PM

- George Antheil – Ballet Mecanique
  - red fish blue fish
- Eve Beglarian – In the Machine Age IV: Ay mi!
  - Twisted Tutu
- Zack Browning – Breakpoint Screamer
  - Ensemble Screamer
- Pamela Z – The Muni Section; In Tymes of Olde
  - Pamela Z, voice and electronics
- Alvin Curran – VSTO
  - The Cassatt Quartet
- Henry Threadgill – Very (World Premiere)
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Anna Dembska – Coyote
  - Anna Dembska, Karen Goldfeder, Dora Ohrenstein, voice

5:00 PM

- Liu Sola – China Collage
  - Liu Sola, voice; Wu Man, pipa
- Annie Gosfield – The Manufacture of Tangled Ivory
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- John Luther Adams - …Dust into Dust…
  - Members of red fish blue fish
- David Claman – Loose Cannons
  - Matt Kaslow, Steve Mackey, Matt Wuolle, electric guitars
- Julia Wolfe – Tell Me Everything
  - SPIT Orchestra
- Kitty Brazelton – sanglikeabellikeafrog
  - Kitty Brazelton, voice; Danny Tunick, percussion
- James Sellars – Don’t Stop (World Premiere)
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Daniel Goode – Tunnel Funnel
  - Crosstown Ensemble

7:00 PM

- George Lewis – North Star Boogaloo
  - Steven Schick, percussion
- Michael Gordon – Lilies
  - Michael Gordon Philharmonic
• Toby Twining – Shaman; Richi Richi Rubel
  o Toby Twining Music
• David Lang – cheating, lying, stealing
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Charles Amirkhanian - Church Car I, Dumbek Bookache IV, Dutiful Ducks
  o Charles Amirkhanian, voice

9:00 PM

• Phil Kline – Whole Lotta
  o Phil Kline, boomboxes
• Frederic Rzewski – Piano Piece #4
  o Lisa Moore, piano
• Steve Reich – Drumming
  o red fish blue fish
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 18, 1997
Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, NY

2:30 PM

• Philip Glass – Modern Love Waltz
  o Margaret Leng Tan, toy piano
• Conlon Nancarrow – 3 Two-Part Studies
  o Margaret Leng Tan, toy piano
• Jerome Kitzke – Breath and Bone
  o Jerome Kitzke, vocals; Guy Klucevsek, accordion and vocals
• Eva Wiener – Prism
  o Anthony de Mare and Kathleen Supove, pianos
• Paul Dolden – The Frenzy of Bang on a Can (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Mary Ellen Childs – Kilter
  o Anthony de Mare and Kathleen Supove, pianos
• Edward Ruchalski – Burnt Umbrage (World Premiere)
  o The Recht Ensemble
• Qu Xiao-Song – Lam Mot
  o Pulse Percussion Ensemble
• Virgil Moorefield – The Temperature in Hell is Over 3000 Degrees
  o Virgil Moorefield Ensemble

5:00 PM

• Simon Shaheen – Samai Nahawand
  o Simon Shaheen, oud; Maya Beiser, cello; Steven Schick, percussion
• John Myers – Dive
  o Blastula
• Bunita Marcus – Julia
  o Lisa Moore, piano
• Martijn Padding – Fix-Us (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Scott Johnson - Stone
  o Scott Johnson Ensemble
• Leroy Jenkins – Hulapalula
  o Leroy Jenkins, violin; Pulse Percussion Ensemble
• Julia Wolfe – Believing (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Alvin Curran – Footprints of War (excerpts) (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
    ▪ Yoshiko CHUMA (Choreographer)
    ▪ Set Design by Tom Burckhardt
    ▪ Costumes by Gabriel Berry
    ▪ Lighting Consultant, Pat Dignan

• John Lindberg – Eleven Thrice
  o String Trio of New York

• James Emery – The Pursuit of Happiness
  o String Trio of New York

7:30 PM

• Michael Gordon – Trance
  o Icebreaker

• Ben Neill/DJ Spooky – Pentagram (La Mer Mix)
  o Ben Neill, mutantrumpet/electronics; DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid, turntables

• Peter Sculthorpe – From Ubirr
  o The Cassatt String Quartet with Simon Senen, didjeridu

• Laetitia Sonami – Has/Had
  o Laetitia Sonami, The Lady’s Glove

• David Watson – Eccentric Orbits (Slight Return)
  o Kilter Skelter

• Gavin Bryars – Jesus Blood Never Failed Me Yet
  o Icebreaker
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 2, 1999
Henry Street Settlement, New York, NY

2:00 PM

- Karlheinz Stockhausen – Mikrophonie I
  - red fish blue fish
- Patrick Grant – Everything Distinct
  - Patrick Grant Group
- Elena Kats-Chernin – Stur In Dur
  - Lisa Moore, piano
- Philip Bimstein – Casino
  - Curiously Strong Quintet
- Michael Gordon – XY
  - Steven Schick, percussion
- Stefan Weisman – Nervous People (World Premiere)
  - Miró String Quartet With Tom Hoyt, Trumpet

4:00 PM

- Ne Ne - [a][e][o]
  - Michiko Takatani, piano, percussion, voice
  - Yayoi Yoshida, marimba, percussion, voice
  - Mika Tanaya, drums, percussion, voice
- Judy Dunaway – Music for Tenor Balloon
  - Judy Dunaway, balloon
- Christopher Adler – Three Lai
  - Christopher Adler, khaen; Todd Reynolds, violin; Ralph Farris, viola
- James Rolfe – Railway Street
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars; with Todd Reynolds, violin
- John Halle – Operation Chaos (World Premiere)
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- David Lang – cheating, lying, stealing
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars

6:00 PM

- Maggi Payne – Hum
  - Patti Monson, flute
- Michael Lowenstern/ Herome Kitzke – 1954
  - Michael Lowenstern, bass clarinet; Jerome Kitzke, voice; Bohdan Hilash, contrabass clarinet
- Erik Griswold – Strings Attached
  - red fish blue fish
- Kato Hideki – Turbulent Zone
o Kato Hideki, electric bass
• Julia Wolfe – Dig Deep
  o Cassatt String Quartet
• Ingram Marshall – Dark Waters
  o Libby van Cleve, English horn

8:00 PM

• James Sellars – Stay with Me
  o Hartt Bass Ensemble
• Charles Gayle – Christ’s Creation
  o Charles Gayle, tenor saxophone; Rashid Bakr, drums
• Anthony Coleman – Mise en Abime (World Premiere)
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Tan Dun – Concerto for Six
  o Bang on a Can All-Stars
• David Krakauer's "KLEZMER MADNESS!"
  o David Krakauer
Bang on a Can Marathon
December 10, 2000
Brooklyn Academy of Music, Next Wave Festival, Brooklyn, NY

2:00 PM

- Hassan Hakmoun
  - Hassan Hakmoun
- Michael Gordon – imreadywhenyouare (World Premiere); my frig (World Premiere)
  - Michael Gordon Band
- Phil Kline – Yawp
  - Phil Kline
- Matthew Shipp - DNA
  - Matthew Shipp Duo (Matthew Shipp and William Parker)
- Tan Dun – Concerto for Six
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars

4:00 PM

- John Halle – Operation Chaos
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Scanner - Electropollution
  - Scanner
- Steve Martland
  - Steve Martland Band
- Pamela Z – Bone Music
  - Pamela Z
- Scott Johnson – Worth Having
  - Scott Johnson Ensemble

6:00 PM

- David Lang – sunday morning (World Premiere); heroin (World Premiere)
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars and Theo Bleckmann
- Talvin Singh
  - Talvin Singh and Steven Schick
- Petri Sirvio
  - Huutajat
- Louis V Vierk – Red Shift
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Elena Kats-Chernin – ProMotion
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
8:00 PM

- Iva Bittova
  - Iva Bittova
- Julia Wolfe – Keeper (World Premiere)
  - Lionheart
- John King – What Blues
  - Ethel and Evan Ziporyn, clarinet
- Evan Ziporyn – Aneh Tapi Nyata
  - Gamelan Galak Tika
- Dan Schmidt – A Dangerous Thing
  - Gamelan Galak Tika
Bang on a Can Marathon
October 28, 2001
Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY

2:00 PM
• Harry Partch – Castor and Pollux
  ◦ Newband
• Elizabeth Brown – Delerium
  ◦ Newband
• Joshua Fried – Headset Sextet
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Julia Wolfe – Early that summer
  ◦ Ethel
• Marc Mellits – 5 Machines
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Kyaw Kyaw Naing – Hsaing Chaik De Maung, Tiloun, Sein Osi
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Marti Epstein – She Fell into a Wall of Sorrows
  ◦ Kathleen Supové

5:00 PM
• Evan Ziporyn – Be In
  ◦ Ethel
• Diderik Wagenaar – Stadium
  ◦ Pianoduo
• David Lang – the so-called laws of nature
  ◦ So Percussion
• Trollstilt – Roulette
  ◦ Trollstilt
• David Chesworth - Badlands
  ◦ David Chesworth Ensemble
• Michael Gordon – X/Y
  ◦ Steven Schick, percussion
• Arnold Dreyblatt – Nodal Excitation; Meantime; The Adding Machine
  ◦ The Orchestra of Excited Strings

8:00 PM
• Wu Man and James Makubuya
• Dan Plonsey – The Plonsey Episodes 1-9
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Sussan Deyhim – Lost Exit
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Ivo Papasov
Bang on a Can Marathon
June 15, 2003
Symphony Space, New York NY

1:00pm
• Evan Ziporyn- Shadowbang
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Amy X Neuberg - My God Stone
  ◦ Amy X Neuberg
• James Tenney - Having Never Written a Note for Percussion
  ◦ Talujon Percussion
• Julia Wolfe - Dark Full Ride
  ◦ Talujon Percussion
• Frederic Rzewski - Winsboro Cotton Mill Blues
  ◦ Lisa Moore
• Ken Thomson - O.J. Bin Laden
  ◦ Gutbucket
• Ty Citerman - punkass rumbledink
  ◦ Gutbucket
• Eric Rockwin - Monkey Bacon
  ◦ Gutbucket
• Carla Kihlstedt - Rooting for the Shy Librarian; Gone; Flash Flood; Last Resort; Gravity
  ◦ Two Foot Yard

5:00pm
• Cenk Urgun – Ladybugbringmeluck
  ◦ Alarm Will Sound
• Kyaw Kyaw Naing - Latt Swam Pya - Burmese Drumming
  ◦ Kyaw Kyaw Naing
• Aphex Twin – Cock/Ver 10 (arr. Stefan Freund); jynweythek (arr. John Orfe); Mt. Saint Michel (arr. Payton MacDonald and John Orfe)
  ◦ Alarm Will Sound
• Michael Gordon - Yo Shakespeare
  ◦ Alarm Will Sound
• Mark Stewart/Rob Schwimmer – supercoolminimalisticextrasonicmotion
  ◦ Polygraph Lounge

7:00 PM
• Dennis De Santis – Shifty
  ◦ So Percussion
• Lukas Ligeti - Pattern Transformation
  ◦ So Percussion
• Giacinto Scelsi- Ko-tha I II III
  ◦ Robert Black
• David Lang – little eye
  ◦ So Percussion
• Don Byron performing his own works

9:00 PM
• Eve Beglarian - The bus driver didn't change his mind
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Louis Andriessen – Workers Union
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Baby Zizanie - The Slagroom Cycle
  ◦ Baby Zizanie
• John Zorn- Cat ‘o nine tails
  ◦ Ethel
• Anthony Gatto - Black Dog/Lucky Dog
  ◦ Ethel with Mark Stewart, guitar
• DJ Spooky – Variations and Themes
  ◦ DJ Spooky with Daniel Bernard Roumain
Bang on a Can Marathon
June 4, 2006
World Financial Center, New York, NY

11:30 AM—OVAL LAWN KIDS CAN TOO!
• Mark “Big Red” Stewart, the one-man band & his orchestra of wacky-phones, & So Percussion

1 PM—UPPER PLAZA
• Anthony Braxton - Composition no. 19*
  ◦ 100 Tuba Marching Band
• Dewa Ketut Alit – Pelog Slendro **
  ◦ Gamelan Galak Tika
• Evan Ziporyn – Ngaben (for Sari Club) **
  ◦ Gamelan Galak Tika & Tactus
• Julia Wolfe – my lips from speaking (Solo Version With Tape)
  ◦ Lisa Moore, piano
• Eric Rockwin - Circadian Mindfuck
  ◦ Gutbucket
• Ty Citerman – Money Management for a Better Life
  ◦ Gutbucket
• Eric Rockwin – Sludge Test
  ◦ Gutbucket
• Mayke Nas – La Belle Chocolatiere **
  ◦ Tactus

4 PM
• Anna Clyne – Rapture
  ◦ Eileen Mack, clarinet
• Music by Matmos & So Percussion
  ◦ Matmos & So Percussion
• Paul Lansky – A is for---
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Annie Gosfield - Overvoltage Rumble
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Yat Kha
• Dominic Frasca & Marc Mellits – Dometude; Dominic Frasca – Deviations
  ◦ Dominic Frasca, guitar

6 PM
• William Parker – Tears for the Children of Rwanda
  ◦ William Parker & Jerome Cooper
• Carlo Boccadoro – Bad Blood **
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• Filippo Del Corno L’uomo armato**
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• Paolo Coggiola – Hume**
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• Glenn Kotche/Steve Reich – Clapping Music Variations
  ◦ Glenn Kotche & David Cossin
• Steve Reich – Music for Pieces of Wood (for drums) [Arr. David Cossin]
  ◦ Glenn Kotche & David Cossin
• Michael Harrison – Excerpts from Revelation
  ◦ Michael Harrison, piano
• Michael Gordon – Weather One
  ◦ Weather Ensemble

8 PM
• Amiina
• Todd Reynolds – Outerborough (w/ film by Bill Morrison)
  ◦ Todd Reynolds – violin
• Don Byron – selections from A Ballad for Many
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars with Don Byron
• Michael Nyman (arr. Andy Keenam) – Manhatta* (with film by Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler)
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• David Lang – world to come
  ◦ Maya Beiser, cello
• John Adams – Coast (arr. Caleb Burhans); Aphex Twin – Cock/Ver 10 (arr. Stefan Freund); Aphex Twin – Four (arr. J. Johnson & P. MacDonald)
  ◦ Alarm Will Sound

• World Premiere
** New York Premiere
Bang on a Can Marathon 24 HOURS!
June 2-3, 2007
World Financial Center, New York, NY

June 2, 8pm
- Julia Wolfe – Lad *
  - Saffron United Pipe Band
- Evan Ziporyn – Drill
  - TACTUS with Evan Ziporyn, bass clarinet
- Christopher Adler – Signal Intelligence
  - red fish blue fish
- Marcelo Zarvos – Arrival and Memory from Nepomuk's Dances
  - Ethel
- Lois V Vierk – Jagged Mesa
  - TACTUS

10 PM
- Kyaw Kyaw Naing - Hsaing Kyaik de Maung
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars & Kyaw Kyaw Naing
- Sein Chit Tee/U Than Kyin – Sein Chit Tee a Mhat Ya Ya
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars & Kyaw Kyaw Naing
- U Hia Pe/ U Than Kyin – Japan Patsan – Taethit Muhan Gita Than
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars & Kyaw Kyaw Naing
- Kyaw Kyaw Naing – Sein Ozi
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars & Kyaw Kyaw Naing
- The Books – [to be announced from stage]
  - The Books with Todd Reynolds, violin
- Franco Donatoni – Arpege
  - eighth blackbird
- Michael Gordon – Gotham (with film by Bill Morrison)
  - TACTUS

June 3, 12 AM
- Fakhiriddin Sodigov – O’zbek Valsi (Uzbek Waltz)
  - Mashriq
- Gazal of Mashrabi – Talqinchai Savt kalon
  - Mashriq
- Fakhiriddin Sodigov – Vatan Marshi (March of the native land)
  - Mashriq
- David Lang - the anvil chorus
  - Steve Schick, percussion

1 AM
- Eno/Wyatt/Davies – Music for Airports (1/1) (arr. Michael Gordon)
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Brian Eno – Music for Airports (1/2) (arr. David Lang)
• Bang on a Can All-Stars
  • Brian Eno – Music for Airports (2/1) (arr. Julia Wolfe)
    ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
  • Brian Eno – Music for Airports (2/2) (arr. Evan Ziporyn)
    ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars

2 AM
• Galina Ustvolskaya – Composition #2
  ◦ Hartt Brass Band
• Edgar Varese – Ionization
  ◦ red fish blue fish
• Juana Molina – songs from Segundo, Tres Cosas and Son
  ◦ Juana Molina, voice and instruments
• John Luther Adams – Wail (from The Mathematics of Resonant Bodies)
  ◦ Steven Schick, percussion

4:30 AM
• Steve Reich – Music for 18 Musicians
  ◦ Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble
• Michael Harrison – Revelation: Music in Pure Intonation
  ◦ Michael Harrison, piano

7:00 AM
• Milind Raikar – Morning Ragas
  ◦ Milind Raikar, violin; Nitin Mitta, table; David Taylor, tanpura

8:00 AM
• Mary Ellen Childs – Srum
  ◦ Ethel
• John King – Lightning Slide (1 Swing, 2 Sweet, 3 Sweat)
  ◦ Ethel
• Lois V Vierk – River Beneath The River
  ◦ Ethel
• Mike Svoboda – Airbag; Zugserscheinungen; Hommage a Badesaison
  ◦ Mike Svoboda, trombone, conch shell and water
• John Fitz Rogers – Once Removed
  ◦ Meehan/Perkins Duo
• Mark Dancigers – Hanging There
  ◦ NOW Ensemble

10:00 AM
• Ha-Yang Kim – Oon
  ◦ Odd Appetite
• Iva Bittova – solos
  ◦ Iva Bittova, violin, voice
• Missy Mazzoli – Magic with Everyday Objects
  ◦ NOW Ensemble
• Dominic Frasca – Fixations #4 (Johns Not Taken)
  ◦ Dominic Frasca
• Clogs

Noon
• World Saxophone Quartet
• Jeffrey Brooks – Skeleton Crew
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Thurston Moore – Stroking Piece #1
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Phil Kline – Over and Out *
  ◦ Real Quiet
• Mark Stewart – Music for Plumbers
  ◦ Mark Stewart with Matt Pass & Melissa Fathman

2:00 PM
• JG Thirwell – music from Volvox and Radiolarian Ooze
  ◦ Manorexia (with Real Quiet)
• Dalek – music from Abandoned Language
  ◦ Dalek
• Matt Tierney – Cant
  ◦ Odd Appetite
• Mashriq – music of Mashriq
  ◦ Mashriq
• Traditional – music of Hojinoyoz; Mavrigi
  ◦ Mashriq

4:00 PM
• James Tenney – Having Never Written a Note For Percussion
  ◦ red fish blue fish
• Vijay Iyer – Tragicomic
  ◦ Vijay Iyer Quartet
• Judd Greenstein – Rock Me Samuels
  ◦ NOW Ensemble
• Don Byron – Beautiful Insults in Random Order*
  ◦ Don Byron, clarinet & Robert Black, double bass
• Galina Ustvolskaya – Symphony #5
  ◦ International Contemporary Ensemble
• Timbila – Xylophone music of Mozambique
  ◦ Timbila

6:00 PM
• Derek Bermel – Coming Together
  ◦ eighth blackbird
• Meredith Monk – Three Heavens and Hells **
  ◦ Young People’s Chorus of NYC
• David M. Gordon – Friction Systems
  ◦ eighth blackbird

7:00 PM
• Julia Wolfe – Dark Full Ride
  ◦ Talujon Percussion Quartet
• Alvin Lucier – Canon•
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Louis Andriessen – Workers Union
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Yo La Tengo – to be announced
  ◦ Yo La Tengo
• David Lang – men (with film “Elevated” by Matt Mullican)
  ◦ ICE and Mike Svoboda, trombone

• World Premiere
  ** New York Premiere
Bang on a Can Marathon
May 31- June 1, 2008
World Financial Center, New York, NY

6:00pm
• John Adams – Son of Chamber Symphony (3rd Movement)
  ◦ Alarm Will Sound
• Pamela Z – Chalky Crystal Liquid Cave
  ◦ Pamela Z
• Harrison Birtwistle - Carmen Arcadiae Mechanicae
  ◦ Alarm Will Sound
• Annie Gosfield – Lightning Singers and Dead Ringers
  ◦ Lisa Moore, piano
• Donnacha Dennehy – Gra agus Bas
  ◦ Crash Ensemble

8:00 PM
• Terry Riley – Loops for Ancient Giant Nude Hairy Warriors Racing Down the Slopes of Battle (3rd movement)
  ◦ Crash Ensemble
• Karsh Kale – Timeline
  ◦ Karsh Kale and Raj Maddela
• Chaya Czernowin – Sahaf
  ◦ Ensemble Nikel
• Caleb Burhans – no
  ◦ Caleb Burhans
• Julia Wolfe – Stronghold
  ◦ Hartt Bass Band
• Michael Gordon – Last Stop on the F Train (with film by Bill Morrison)
  ◦ Young People’s Chorus of New York

10:00 PM
• Evan Ziporyn – Shadowbang
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen – Convex-Concave-Concord
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Owen Pallett performing his own work
• Owen Pallett – Twelve Polearms
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars and Owen Pallet
• Lukas Ligeti – Glamour Girl
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Bora Yoon – ( ((Phonation))
  ◦ Bora Yoon and Luke Dubois (visuals)

12:00 AM
• Steve Reich – Daniel Variations
• Signal Ensemble
  • Arnold Dreyblatt – Resonant Relations
  • Crash Ensemble
  • The Beatles (arr. Matt Marks) – Revolution #9
    • Alarm Will Sound

2:00 AM
• David Lang – the so called laws of nature
  • So Percussion
• Marnie Stern performing her own work
• Sivan Cohen Elias - Riba
  • Ensemble Nikel
• Ruben Seroussi – Nikel
  • Ensemble Nikel

4:00 AM
• Dan Deacon – Ultimate Reality Part 3 (with visuals by Jimmy Joe Roche)
  • Dan Deacon, Kevin Omeara and Jeremy Hyman
• Brian Eno – Discreet Music (arr. Jenny Pergolesi) with film by Suzanne Bocanegra
  • Contact
• Karlheinz Stockhausen – Stimmung
  • Toby Twining Music
Bang on a Can Marathon  
May 31, 2009  
World Financial Center Winter Garden, New York, NY

12:00pm  
• Andy Akiho – Alloy  
  ◦ Foundry Steel Pan Ensemble  
• Michael Gordon – Trance  
  ◦ Signal Ensemble  
• Solo tabla performance by Sandeep Das  
• Eric km Clark – exPAT: Deprivation Music No. 4  
  ◦ Dither and Friends

2:00 PM  
• Meredith Monk – String Songs  
  ◦ Todd Reynolds String Quartet  
• Solo performance by Bill Frisell  
• Ted Hearne – We Didn’t Know; Snowball; Blacktop  
  ◦ Your Bad Self  
• Kevin Volans – White Man Sleep  
  ◦ Smith Quartet  
• Jeppe Just Christensen – Ground, vol. 3  
  ◦ Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen

4:00 PM  
• Phil Kline – John the Revelator (excerpts)  
  ◦ Lionheart & Ethel  
• Matt McBane – Imagining Winter; In the Backyard  
  ◦ Build  
• Henry Grimes and Andrew Cyrille perform their own works  
• Gavin Bryars – The Sinking of the Titanic  
  ◦ Smith Quartet  
• Bill Frisell – new work  
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars & Bill Frisell

6:00 PM  
• Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen – Three Stages  
  ◦ Ars Nova Copenhagen  
• Howard Skempton – Rise up, my love  
  ◦ Ars Nova Copenhagen  
• Jeppe Just Christensen – Braun KSM 2  
  ◦ Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen  
• David Lang – for love is strong  
  ◦ Ars Nova Copenhagen  
• Joe Cutler – Folk Music (Daithi’s Dumka)  
  ◦ Smith Quartet  
• Anders Nordentoft – On this Planet
- Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen

8:00 PM
- Wu Man performing 12th Century Pipa piece Night Thoughts
- Ken Thomson – Rut
  - 9-Headed Saxophone Monster
- Julia Wolfe – Thirst
  - Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen & Ars Nova Copenhagen
- Moritz Eggert – Haemmerklavier III: One Man Band
  - Shiau-uen Ding
- Missy Mazzoli – Like a Miracle, I am coming for my things
  - Victoire

10:00 PM
- Evan Ziporyn – Sulvasutra
  - Wu Man, Sandeep Das, Brooklyn Rider
- Solo performance by Ryuichi Sakamoto
- Ryuichi Sakamoto- new work
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars and Ryuichi Sakamoto
- Steve Martland – Horses of Instruction
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars
- Performance by Tortoise
Bang on a Can Marathon
June 27, 2010 12:00pm
World Financial Center Winter Garden, New York, NY

12:00pm
• John Hollenbeck – Perseverance
  ○ John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble
• Dorothee Hahne – Danse Macabre
  ○ Quartet New Generation
• Paul Moravec – Mortal Flesh
  ○ Quartet New Generation
• Moritz Eggert – Flea Walls
  ○ Quartet New Generation
• Kambar Kalendarov & Kutman Sultanbekov performing traditional songs from Kyrgyzstan
• Florent Ghys – Simplement
  ○ Florent Ghys
• Moritz Eggert – Hammerklavier III: One Man Band
  ○ Moritz Eggert

2:00 PM
• Graham Fitkin – Mesh
  ○ Face the Music
• Tristan Perich – new work
  ○ Tristan Perich
• Steve Coleman - Lunar Eclipse (Saros 120)
  ○ Steve Coleman, Jonathan Finlayson, David Millares
• Seung-Ah Oh – DaDeRimGil
  ○ Slagwerk Den Haag
• Marco Momi - Ludica
  ○ Slagwerk Den Haag

4:00 PM
• Iannis Xenakis – Tetras
  ○ JACK Quartet
• Evan Ziporyn – Tire Fire
  ○ Gamelan Galak Tika
• Michiel Mensingh – Oh, I am sorry, did I break your concentration?
  ○ Quartet New Generation with Moritz Eggert
• Mary Ellen Childs- Black Box
  ○ Quartet New Generation with Moritz Eggert
• Fred Frith – Snakes and Ladders
  ○ Bang on a Can All-Stars

6:00 PM
• Fausto Romitelli – Professor Bad Trip
  ○ Talea Ensemble
• Buke and Gass in performance
• Moritz Eggert – Hammerklavier V: Study in Fall; Hammerklavier XX: One Man Band 2
  ◦ Moritz Eggert
• Mayke Nas & Wouter Snoei – I Delayed People’s Flights By Walking Slowly In Narrow Hallways
  ◦ Slagwerk Den Haag

8:00 PM
• Vernon Reid – Ghost Narratives
  ◦ Vernon Reid, Mazz Swift, Leon Gruenbaum
• Kate Moore- Ridgeway
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Mira Calix in performance
• Mira Calix – spring falls back
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars with Mira Calix
• Tim Brady – Switch (Seconds/Liquid/Leaps/Singularity/Melismatic); Strumming (Hommage a John Lennon) with video by Martin Messier
  ◦ Tim Brady

10:00 PM
• Asanbai Karimov - Chyibyldyn Kyzynyn Koshogu; traditional song Tagyldyr Too; Nurlanbek Nyshanov- Ala Too Jazy
  ◦ Kambar Kalendarov & Kutman Sultanbekov
• Florent Ghys – 4
  ◦ Florent Ghys
• Burkina Electric in performance
• Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, David Lang – Shelter with libretto by Deborah Artman and film proections by Bill Morrison and Laurie Olinder
  ◦ Signal Ensemble conducted by Brad Lubman
Bang on a Can Marathon
June 27, 2010 12:00pm
World Financial Center Winter Garden, New York, NY

12:00pm
- John Hollenbeck – Perseverance
  - John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble
- Dorothee Hahne – Danse Macabre
  - Quartet New Generation
- Paul Moravec – Mortal Flesh
  - Quartet New Generation
- Moritz Eggert – Flea Walls
  - Quartet New Generation
- Kambar Kalendarov & Kutman Sultanbekov performing traditional songs from Kyrgyzstan
- Florent Ghys – Simplement
  - Florent Ghys
- Moritz Eggert – Hammerklavier III: One Man Band
  - Moritz Eggert

2:00 PM
- Graham Fitkin – Mesh
  - Face the Music
- Tristan Perich – new work
  - Tristan Perich
- Steve Coleman - Lunar Eclipse
  - Steve Coleman, Jonathan Finlayson, David Millares
- Seung-Ah Oh – DaDeRimGil
  - Slagwerk Den Haag
- Marco Momi - Ludica
  - Slagwerk Den Haag

4:00 PM
- Iannis Xenakis – Tetras
  - JACK Quartet
- Evan Ziporyn – Tire Fire
  - Gamelan Galak Tika
- Michiel Mensingh – Oh, I am sorry, did I BREAK your concentration?
  - Quartet New Generation with Moritz Eggert
- Mary Ellen Childs- Black Box
  - Quartet New Generation
- Fred Frith – Snakes and Ladders
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars

6:00 PM
- Fausto Romitelli – Professor Bad Trip
  - Talea Ensemble
• Buke and Gass in performance
• Moritz Eggert – Hammerklavier V: Study in Fall; Hammerklavier XX: One Man Band 2
  ◦ Moritz Eggert
• Mayke Nas & Wouter Snoei – I Delayed People’s Flights By Walking Slowly In Narrow Hallways
  ◦ Slagwerk Den Haag

8:00 PM
• Vernon Reid – Ghost Narratives
  ◦ Vernon Reid, Mazz Swift, Leon Gruenbaum
• Kate Moore- Ridgeway
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Mira Calix in performance
• Mira Calix – spring falls back
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars with Mira Calix
• Tim Brady – Switch (Seconds/Liquid/Leaps/Singularity/Melismatic); Strumming (Hommage a John Lennon) with video by Martin Messier
  ◦ Tim Brady

10:00 PM
• Asanbai Karimov - Chyibyldyn Kyzynyn Koshogu; traditional song Tagyldyr Too; Nurlanbek Nyshanov- Ala Too Jazy
  ◦ Kambar Kalendarov & Kutman Sultanbekov
• Florent Ghys – 4
  ◦ Florent Ghys
• Burkina Electric in performance
• Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, David Lang – Shelter with libretto by Deborah Artman, film by Bill Morrison, and projections by Laurie Olinder
  ◦ Signal Ensemble conducted by Brad Lubman
Bang on a Can Marathon
June 19, 2011 11:00am
World Financial Center, Winter Garden, New York, NY

11:00am
• STEW/Heidi Rodewald - Carlton
  ◦ Asphalt Orchestra
• Yoko Ono - Opus 81
  ◦ Asphalt Orchestra
• Matthew Welch – The Self and the Others
  ◦ Queens College Percussion Ensemble with Matthew Welch, Amanda Accardi, Michael Lipsey
• Gabriela Ortiz - Codigos secretos
  ◦ Alejandro Escuer, flute

12:00pm
• Anthony Gatto - Portrait of Eva Hesse (palindrome)
  ◦ Queens College Percussion Ensemble with Iktus Percussion
• Richard Ayers - Three Small Pieces for String Quartet
  ◦ JACK Quartet
• Kati Agocs - Hymn
  ◦ Prism Saxophone Quartet
• Todd Reynolds - Transamerica
  ◦ Todd Reynolds, violin
• Michael Nyman - Love Always Counts
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• Michael Daugherty - Sinatra Shag
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• Roshanne Etezady – Keen
  ◦ Prism Saxophone Quartet

2:00 PM
• Filippo Del Corno – Risvegliatevi!
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• Maura Montabetti – Brightness
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• Carlo Boccadora - Zingiber
  ◦ Sentieri Selvaggi
• David Byrne and Annie Clark – Two Ships
  ◦ Asphalt Orchestra
• Thomas Mapfumo- Ngoma Yekwedu
  ◦ Asphalt Orchestra
• Christine Southworth – Concerning the Doodle
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
• Bryce Dessner – O Shut Your Eyes Against the Wind
  ◦ Bang on a Can All-Stars
4:00 PM
- Michael Harrison – Hijaz
  - Young People’s Chorus of New York City with Maya Beiser, cello; Michael Harrison, piano; Payton MacDonald, percussion
- David Lang – warmth
  - Taylor Levine and James Moore, guitar
- Michael Gordon – Exalted
  - Young People’s Chorus of New York City and JACK Quartet
- Poul Ruders – Songs and Rhapsodies
  - Athelas Wind Quintet
- Frank Zappa – Zomby Woof
  - Asphalt Orchestra
- Björk – Hyper-ballad
  - Asphalt Orchestra

6:00 PM
- Goran Bregovic – Champagne
  - Asphalt Orchestra
- Fausto Romitelli – An Index of Heavy Metals
  - Talea Ensemble and soprano Tony Arnold
- Timo Andres – At the River
  - Timo Andres, piano

8:00 PM
- Julia Wolfe – Cruel Sister
  - Signal Ensemble
- Toby Twining – Eurydice (excerpts)
  - Toby Twining Music
- Philip Glass – Music in Similar Motion; Closing
  - Bang on a Can All-Stars and Philip Glass
- Sun Ra Arkestra performing their own work

10:00 PM
- Evan Ziporyn – Hive
  - Evan Ziporyn, Carol McGonnell, Joshua Rubin, Michael Lowenstern, clarinets
- Glenn Branca – The Ascension: The Sequel
  - Glenn Branca Ensemble