

born: July 28, 1942

some teachers:

Percussion/Jack McKenzie and Hugh Soebbing

Composition/Benjamin Johnston and Salvatore Martirano

Recording Techniques/Lowell Cross *Music Theory*/Kenneth Gaburo

Performance of 20th Century Music/James Dixon and William Hibbard

Electronic Music/Herbert Brun, Lejaren Hiller and Peter Lewis

Tape Editing and Mixing/Michael Lytle *Administration*/Richard Hervig

Bigband Jazz/Tom Davis, John Garvey and Dale Oehler

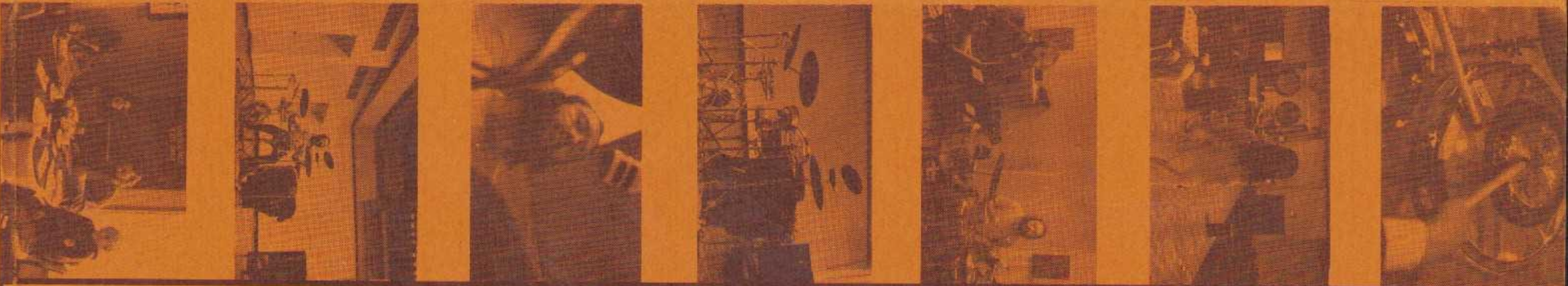
Small Group Jazz/Tom Curran, Ron Elliston and David Sanborn

Improvisation/Karl Berger, Eric Jensen and Sal Martirano

African Music/Gary Gray *Latin Percussion*/Glenn Cronkhite

Hand Drums/Warren Kreuger *Amplification*/Jon English and Michael Lytle

Mallet Percussion/Danlee Mitchell and Tom Siwe



an inventory of possibilities

This 'brochure-resume' is intended to announce my availability for concerts, clinics, lectures, workshops, residencies and full or part-time teaching/performing positions.

It also serves as a catalog of courses of private and group instruction.

Expansions, work samples, letters of reference and fees for various services may be obtained by writing me at the address stamped below.

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WILL PARSONS
DRUMMER/PERCussionIST/TEACHER
COMPOSER/RECORDING ARTIST & PRODUCER

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TEACHING/LEARNING POSSIBILITIES

The following list of subjects and methods of study has been evolved over twenty years of professional teaching and playing experience. Many have been offered (although frequently with other course titles) at the University of Iowa. The possibilities listed below each of the nine general headings exist potentially as separate courses or individual lectures, workshops be mixed and matched to form either separate courses or individual lectures, workshops and playing sessions; as determined by the goals of students and myself. It has been my experience that practical performance experience (with an audience) will help any student to make the necessary step from abstract concept to usable knowledge. Consequently, many of the "Subject-Methods" connect with entries on the list of "Performance Possibilities."

MUSIC THEORY AND COMPOSITION

General Categories of Musical Information and Knowledge

Acoustics, Composition, Duration, Dynamics, Eartraining, Electronics, Emotion in Music, Ensemble Techniques, Envelope (sound shape), Harmony, History, Improvisation, Instrument Classification, Melody, Music Business, Musical Form & Content, Pitch, Phrasing, Practice Methods, Reading and Writing Music, Rhythm (including Meter, Tempo, Subdivision), Scales, Singing, Silence, Styles, Timbre, Technique, Teaching/Learning Methods, Theory, Tuning, Vocabulary. The goal is to tune the students into their own already existent understanding of music. The method: student lectures, pedagogic games, open discussion.

Composition for People

All compositions written specifically for performance by the class. Criticism becomes less abstract when one is "forced" to learn and perform/teach and direct.

Composition for Percussion: What, With What, How, Where and Why?

The sound of any struck object varies with the particular choice and condition of instrument (including: *damping, tuning* and *preparation*, i.e., snares, sizzles, etc.), the choice of striking object; the mode of attack; and the position of the attack on both striking object and struck object. John Cage has remarked that every sound is of some loudness, duration, shape, pitch and timbre. In the case of many percussion instruments, the qualities of *pitch* and *timbre* are perceptible as endpoints in a continuum *pitchness*. On one hand, composers might describe the sounds they want and leave the choice of instruments, mallets, etc. to the percussionist. On the other hand, William Hibbard, in his composition *Parsons' Piece*, employs four groups of related instruments (gongs, almglocken, cymbals and low drums). Through the use of specific mallet indications (specified by notehood shape), he is able to project audible envelope lines that can contradict the simultaneously heard timbral lines. Class method: improvisation and experimentation with the instruments, individual consultation, preparation of composition in class.

Analysis of Twentieth Century Music

Traditional analytic methods may be employed by the students as they dissect (and present to the class) pieces of their own choice. Discussion of the presentations both in terms of plausibility of analysis and manner of presentation. Practical applications of analysis to student's self-defined goals emphasized.

PERCUSSION LITERATURE

Percussion Methods, Materials and Performance Practices

Section 1: Percussionists; Section 2: non-percussionists.

The *methods* one uses depend upon what it is one is trying to do and who's trying to do it. The test of a method is: *Does it work?* The *materials* of this class are the sound-producing objects that we bring or find, the people who join together to pursue their related but different goals and the available literature of percussion. *Performance practices* vary, ideally they should grow from the particular requirements of whatever it is one is trying to perform and not simply reflect some historically derived generalization. As with traditional Music Theory, the rules are made to be broken (see: **Media Coordination**)

Drumset Overview

The tremendous expansion of drumset study materials in recent years requires that one select, adapt, apply materials from within the whole available range towards the solution of individual problems relative to intelligently chosen fields of specialization. (survey)

MUSIC HISTORY AND APPRECIATION

History of Jazz, Rock, Blues, Rhythm 'n Blues, Disco, Funk, Salsa, C&W, etc. . . . The Continuum of Popular Based American Art Forms (survey, listening & discussion)

Twentieth Century Euro-American Music. . . Sheltered from the Marketplace (survey)

Music of Other Cultures (survey)

IMPROVISATION

Music as Communication: Make Your Own Ear Music

Especially effective for nonmusicians, this course recreates the conditions that may have originally precipitated the evolution of composition (as a positive reaction to redundancy). A recognition of the possibility (and value) of returning to point zero in the history of performance; without being taught *how*, start playing! Fulfilling a need for unity left untouched by words; we don't need to talk about music, we can talk through it.

Freejazz/Freeclassical

Playing music without *a priori* structure one encounters his own conditioned structure. *Freejazz* could be interpreted as an attempt (by jazz musicians) to free jazz—from its own historically evolved structures and rules. Jazz seems by now to have moved beyond this necessity, but for the classically trained musician (still unaccustomed to simply *playing music*) the benefits of only self-conditioned musicmaking still wait to be discovered.

Panidiomatic Improvisation

In the practice of *avoidance* as a positive virtue, *freeform jazz* and *avant-garde improvisation* occupy a place in the history of improvisation analogous to that of the twelve tone composers in the history of composition. Now that our ears have been reopened, it's possible to use those forbidden relationships to new effect. Panidiomatic improvisation allows all idioms, the problem is to hear and respond . . . style itself becomes a communicative element. (Advanced improvisors only) The Record **IOWA EAR MUSIC** (Cornpride/JCOA) provides examples of Ear Music, Freejazz/Freeclassical and Panidiomatic Improvisation. (*Eartext* for above three courses).

PRIVATE INSTRUCTION: ONE ON ONE

Unstructured Encounters

We are the structural. Too often teachers merely hide behind elaborate *a priori* classplans. The challenges of finding (and losing) our way together, of testing the timelessness of our knowledge, standards and experience; of rising to the occasion (or failing to) can't be ignored out of existence. We're all floundering on the edge of necessity. (What is necessary?) WE MUST KEEP CHANGING!

Structured Encounters

Structures created with a knowledge of their limitations AND COMMUNICATED AS SUCH. (Percussion, Composition, Improvisation, Record Production, Media Coordination or you name it. . .)

Music as Social Process: A Correspondence Course

Lesson #1: "Music is both the organization of sounds and the social structure necessary to produce it. For too long the second aspect of musicmaking has been thought necessarily to follow from the first. The problem here is to communicate the kinds of social processes we should be working with, without actually being there to see what happens."

JAZZ STUDIES (ALSO ROCK, BLUES, ETC.)

Experimental Chamber Jazzband

Without limits on enrollment, experimentation becomes not an interesting possibility but a necessity. Already available repertoire includes selections from my *Music for Citizen's Band*, pieces from Karl Berger's Creative Music Studio and various works for indeterminate instrumentation.

Group Coaching

This course presupposes the existence of *groups* (no matter the particularities of idiom). Based upon years of putting together groups and concerts, the approach is straight-forward: the group rehearses, performs, records; I watch, listen, make suggestions, perhaps join in. It's an ancient method that works!

Bigband Jazz

Already a highly formalized medium, *bigband* training is an indispensable educational tool allowing for the meeting of composition and improvisation. An often overlooked intermediate size compositional resource.

see also: History of Jazz, Rock, Rhythm 'n Blues, etc. (**MUSIC HISTORY & APPRECIATION**)

and: Freejazz/Freeclassical (**IMPROVISATION**)

ENSEMBLE COACHING

Percussion Ensemble

Useful ensemble training for percussionists and composers (as a corollary to *Composition for Percussion*).

Twentieth Century Chamber Ensemble

A pool of performers from which diverse ensembles are assembled.

see also: **Group Coaching, Bigband Jazz and Experimental Jazzband (JAZZ STUDIES)**

INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS

Media Coordination: The Many to the One/The One to the Many

The history of art is the history of mixed media; the first time a violin and a piano performed together, for example. Making art is a matter of putting together the uncombunable and pulling apart the indivisible; To fail is to confirm the already agreed upon. (!)The interdisciplinary counterpart of *Composition*.

RECORD PRODUCTION: HOW TO PRODUCE AND MARKET YOUR OWN RECORD

One of the great difficulties in music is to find opportunities to demonstrate your abilities, especially if what you do is original enough to demand its own context. An effective and personally rewarding solution to this problem is to make a *good* record and to do an equally good job of getting it around. The experience of two self-produced and distributed records (and many recording dates) provide the foundation for a general lecture and/or series of in-depth lectures on the subject. Included: Planning, Writing, Early Experimentation, *Commercial* versus *Amateur* Recording; Tape Study & Experimental Editing; Final Mixing, Editing, Modification and Mastering; Financing, Publicity, Distribution; Bookkeeping, Pressing, Copyrights; Coverart, Graphics and Linernotes, etc. . . .



will parsons

drummer/percussionist/teacher

composer/recording artist & producer

MM, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
ASSOCIATE IN PERFORMANCE, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

PRODUCER:
Iowa Ear Music, Iowa artists (Cornpride/JCOA)
Tree, Experimental Jazz/Rock (Goatfarm) and
Dancetime, Lyle Drollinger (Century)

L's G.A., Salvatore Martirano (Polydor)
Cucumber Music, Donald Jenni (CRI)

Gestures, Herbert Brun (CRI)

recorded performances:
Computer Cantata, Lejaren Hiller (Nonesuch)
Underworld, Salvatore Martirano (Nonesuch)

RECORDING ARTIST/PRODUCER
Extensive experience in multitrack recording, tape editing and mastering, all aspects of private record production and distribution.

COMPOSER/IMPROVISER
Works for chamber ensembles, soloists, films, dance, theatre, tape, jazzbands & small groups, percussion ensemble, mixed media, LP disc, prose, citizen's band. Performances in New York, Seattle, Minneapolis, Oberlin, Chicago, Urbana. Recorded compositions and improvisations on *Iowa Ear Music*.

PERCUSSIONIST/DRUMMER

JAZZ, ROCK, 20th CENTURY CHAMBER & SOLO PERFORMANCES in Koln, Warsaw, London, Paris, New York, Darmstadt, throughout Midwest with The Center for New Music/New Performing Arts, Contemporary Chamber Players, Harry Partch, Asher Gad Percussion, Mother Blues, Jazzboat, Dale Oehler, David Sanborn and others.

86 SELECTED COMPOSITIONS (1964-77)

AFFECTIVE THINGS TO SAY AND DO—CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES (1968) outer-media
AIJQ (1976) pattern music for jazz quartet
ALCHEMY MINE (1966) trio, anything
A MINUTE MORE OR LESS (1968) solo violin
ARRIVAL MUSIC CONCERT SERIES (1975-76) four pre-concert variety shows
ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES (1966) percussion sextet with optional tape
AS SATIRED (1968) graphic score, jazz quintet
BEST WISHES, WILL PARSONS (1976) photograph with inscription, for anybody doing anything
BICENTENNIAL TRIBUTES (1976) portfolio of compositions, various mediums
CHUCK BERRY PRINCIPLE (1973-p) for visiting virtuoso and local talent
COMBINATIONS 2a-c (1976-p) pictorial composition with instructions altered for specific groups of performers
CONCERT PIECE #1 (1968) instructions for anybody wishing to perform
CONVALESCENCE I (1971) five untrained singers and conductor
D.A.B. #2 (1967) intermedia—lights, dance and music
DAZZLEPLUS (1968) any fourstringed bowed and plucked instrument capable of doublestops
DO IT (1975) duet for any two people
DO IT YOURSELF (1976) anybody doing anything
EL CHEAPO CONTACTO (1976) improvisations for low-budget electronics and percussion
ELECTRIC TEETH (1976) speed monitor function, improvisation tempo control
EMPTY HORIZONS (1969) male and female voice with narrator, cartoon score
EVENT 4 HOOM (1968) untrained dancers
FALSE EXPECTATIONS I & II (1974) two surprises
FONTANA MIX REALIZATION (1968) John Cage score realized for twenty performers
FOUR DUCHAMP (1976) quartet for Marcel DuChamp's birthday
FOUR (LOCAL) BARS (1976) music for citizen's band
FOUR ROOM SESSION (1972) four channel recording session in eighteen timed sections—samples on *Iowa Ear Music*
FRAGMENTS FOR PIANO (1967-p) piecemeal music by mail, no two sets alike
FUNFREE (1976) ensemble density scheme for improvising quintet
GAMES (1968-p) pedagogic entertainments, a collection
GEEEEP CONCERT SERIES (1968-69) group for the experimentally entertaining exploitation of existent prowess
GOODBYE, GOODLUCK (1968) card piece for solo violin
GRAPH (1968) graphic score for percussion quartet
HAWKEYE WRESTLING (1974) recruiting film score, featuring Jon English
HIDIM LOBRIGHT'S SIESTA TIME (1974-77) midwest salsa for bigband
HISTORY OF AN AUDIENCE (1974) audience piece
HUM (1972) dancers and percussionists, a group structured improvisation
I CHING (1968-2006) in process translation of I Ching into music, fixed deadline
INTERESTING MISCELLANY (1942-p) mail piece (no two alike)
IOWA EAR MUSIC (1976) record
IT AIN'T JUST A BEAT IF YOU MOVE YOUR FEET (1976) drumset solo, dedicated to Duke Ellington
JELLY F (1973) piece for Pat Purswell, myself and John O'Keefe
KEOKUK (1974) outdoor performance for artshow
LAUGHS (1972) quartet for laughs, from Sal Martirano's Underworld
LAYERS FOR PLAYERS (1976) for citizen's band
LOVE SONG FRAGMENTS (1969) assemble your own lovesong from fragments by mail, no two alike
MAKE YOUR OWN EAR MUSIC (1976) guidelines
MONA LISA'S MUSTACHE (1971) percussion solo extracted from William Hibbard's *Parsons' Piece*
MUSIC FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS (1973-p) an offer to compose for specific occasions
NATURAL DISASTER (1976) anti-periodic drumset solo improvisation
NEGLECTED LOCATIONS (1975) walk through event for performers in unexpected locations
144,000 CHRISTIANS MISSING (1974) large work for nine trained performers and others
OUTLINE FOR SMALL DIFFERENCES (1964) percussion solo, excellent subject for lecture
PAGES (1968) percussion quartet
PERFORMANCE PLEASURE (1971) six instrumentalists
PERFORM: \$25.00 AND UP (1976) open commission
PRAY & PLAY—RALAGADINGAI (1975) meditation and improvisation, Will & Grace
PRODUCING YOUR OWN RECORD (1976) lecture with background music
PROGRESSIVE STEPS TO SYNCOPATION (1977) performance instructions to accompany Ted Reed's drum-book—pattern music, any number of performers
QUARTERED (1965) duet for two hands and two feet, one performer
QUARTET POSSIBILITIES (1976) four anythings
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AUDIENCE (1968-76) questionnaire for audience
RAFUNK (1976) piano ostinato to serve as basis for improvisation, to Sun Ra
RHYTHM FRAGMENTS (1964-p) assemble it yourself, no two sets alike, no instructions
SAFETY IN NUMBERS—MICKEY TO NEOMICKEY (1976-77) film: Lyle Drollinger Orchestra
SCORPIO 69 (1969) celebrating Neptune leaving Scorpio for Jon English
SEPARATE SOMETHINGS (1968) article on and of intermedia
SERMON & NOTSERMON (1967-76) prose chant with Percussion synthesizer, on *Iowa Ear Music*
SHAKEYSIDE TO DIRTYSIDE (1976-7) coast to coast concert series for solo percussionist and local Citizens
SHORTBUTT SUITE (1976) six pieces for Asher Gad Percussion
SHRAPNEL (1968) guerrilla poetry collection, to leave in select coat pockets
SIX? (1972) prose anthology in oracle form, published by Aware Press
SOSLOMOJO (1970) pattern solo for an amplified and modified electric piano—LOUD!
SPIRIT OF '76 (1976) falsestarts for Ear Ensemble
TEN TANGRAMS (1972) patterns on an Eskimo song for solo percussion and solo dance
THEATRICAL VARIATIONS (1967) half the music from D.A.B. #2, cello, soprano, percussion and flute with stage movements and gestures in strict rhythm
THIRTY-SIX SOLO BACKDROPS (1976) for soloist and citizen's band
THIS IS IT—A LECTURE ON TIME IN TIME (1969) duet lecture
TICKLE TOUCH (1976) miked snare drum through wah-wah pedal
TITLES (1942-p) list of unattached titles, pieces by commission
TRIO FOR WILL, GRACE & OILCHANGE (1975) ongoing attempt to surpass Coltrane & Rashied Ali
U.R. ME!—R.U. ME? (1975) solo percussion with improvising meditators
WEIRD MINUS ONE (1976) play-along with Iowa Ear Music, instructions
WHY YOU NEED NEW MUSIC (1967) radio event for David Sanborn and myself, taped
WHAT, WITH WHAT, WHERE AND HOW? (1976) sound study for solo snare drum
WINDEYES (1969) vibraphone and two readers, text by M.C. Hollway
ZENON CRODECKI MUSIC (1968) television satire for extremely extrovert performers
SPIRAL BOUND CATALOG (WITH SCORE SAMPLES, EXPANDED DESCRIPTIONS & FIVE COMPLETE COMPOSITIONS) \$3.25 . . .

