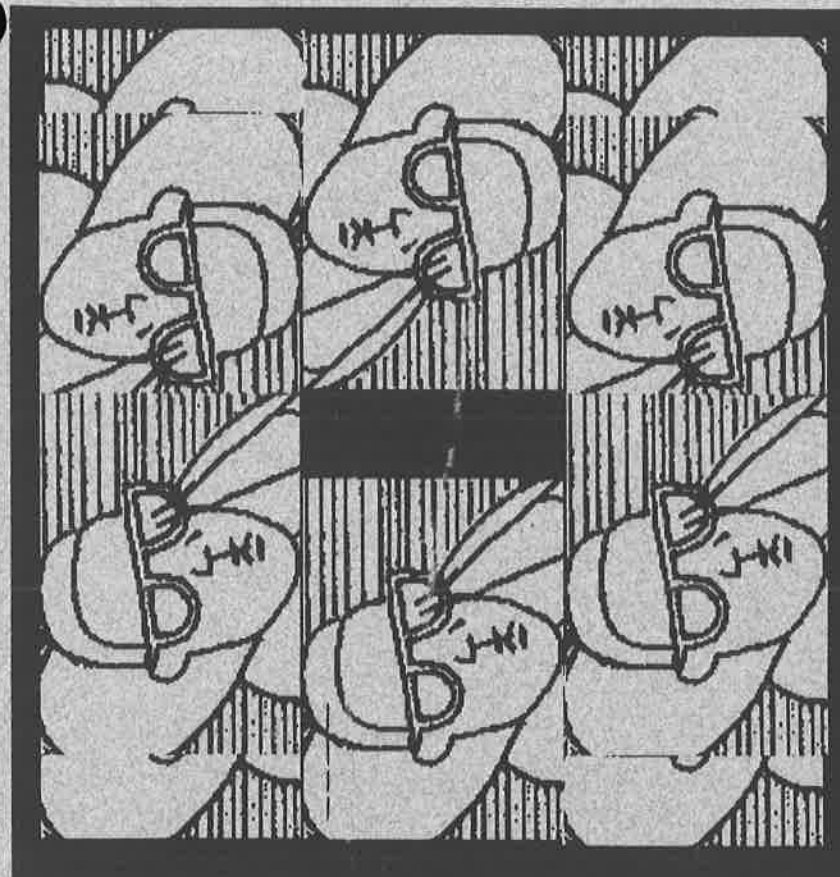


The Great Lakes Improvisation Project

Steve Nelson-Raney holds a Graduate Degree in Music from Bradley University. He has taught public school instrumental music in Peoria, Illinois, as well as Theory, History and Piano in the Department of Jazz Studies at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. He currently teaches Theory and Jazz Studies-related classes in the Music Department of UW-Milwaukee. Nelson-Raney is active as a composer, performer and lecturer throughout the country, working in both jazz and contemporary music idioms. His compositions have been performed throughout the United States and Europe. In 1979 Nelson-Raney founded Cody Books/Records as a means of distributing his work and since that time has released four audio recordings of his music and numerous publications of his writing. Steve Nelson-Raney currently performs as saxophonist in three ensembles: Taqsim, a world music trio; Dreamtime, a jazz trio; Live Electronics + Saxophone, a free improvisation trio. In 1997 Nelson-Raney co-founded, with Hal Rammel, the Great Lakes Improvisation Project which continues to present performances in the Milwaukee area.

Gary Verkade was born in Chicago and grew up in the south suburbs. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Music/Organ in 1976 from Calvin College. The Master of Fine Arts Degree in Organ Performance and Pedagogy followed in 1978 from the University of Iowa. From there Verkade went to Germany on a Fulbright Scholarship where he studied for six years and received the highest degree offered to the performing musician in that country. While continuing to live in Germany, Verkade finished doctoral work at Iowa, receiving the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Organ Performance and Pedagogy in 1987.

Ushers for Music Events are provided by:
Lambda Kappa Music Fraternity



POSTER BY KAREN ANDERMANN

presents

Steve Nelson - Raney, saxophones
Gary Verkade, organ

IMPROVISATIONS

SIEBERT CHAPEL
CARTHAGE COLLEGE
KENOSHA, WI
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1998
7:30 PM

from: Cornelius Cardew, Towards an Ethic of Improvisation (1968):

Music is Erotic

Postulate that the true appreciation of music consists in emotional surrender, and the expression music-lover becomes graphically clear and literally true. Anyone familiar with the basis of much near-eastern music will require no further justification for the assertion that music is erotic. Nevertheless, decorum demands that the erotic aspect of music be approached with circumspection and indirectly. That technical mastery is of no intrinsic value in music (or love) should be clear to anyone with a knowledge of musical history: Brahms was a greater composer than Mendelssohn, though it can be truly asserted that Mendelssohn displayed more brilliance in technical matters. Elaborate forms and a brilliant technique conceal a basic inhibition, a reluctance to directly express love, a fear of self-exposure.

...

Love is a dimension like time, not some small thing that has to be made more interesting by elaborate preamble. The basic dream---of both love and music---is of a continuity, something that will live forever. The simplest practical attempt at realising this dream is the family. In music we try to eliminate time psychologically---to work *in time* in such a way that it loses its hold on us, relaxes its pressure. Quoting Wittgenstein...: "If by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present".

Virtues that a musician can develop

1. *Simplicity* Where everything becomes simple is the most desirable place to be. But...you have to remember how you got there. The simplicity must contain the memory of how hard it was to achieve.

...

2. *Integrity* What we *do* in the actual event is important---not only what we have in mind. Often what we do is what tells us what we have in mind.

3. *Selflessness* To do something constructive you have to look beyond yourself. The entire world is your sphere if your vision can encompass it. Self-expression lapses too easily into mere documentation--'I record that this is how I feel'. You should not be concerned with yourself beyond arranging a mode of life that makes it possible to remain on the line, balanced. Then you can work, look out beyond yourself. Firm foundations make it possible to leave the ground.

4. *Forbearance* Improvising in a group you have to accept not only the frailties of your fellow musicians, but also your own. Overcoming your instinctual revulsion against whatever is out of tune (in the broadest sense).

5. *Preparedness* for no matter what eventuality (Cage's phrase) or simply *Awakeness*.

...

6. *Identification with nature* Drifting through life: being driven through life; neither constitutes a true identification with nature. The best is to *lead* your life, and the same applies in improvising: like a yachtsman to utilise the interplay of natural forces and currents to steer a *course*.

...the musical and the real worlds are one. Musicality is a dimension of perfectly ordinary reality. The musician's pursuit is to recognize the musical composition of the world...

7. *Acceptance of Death* From a certain point of view improvisation is the highest mode of musical activity, for it is based on the acceptance of music's fatal weakness and essential and most beautiful characteristic---its transience.

The desire to be right is an ignoble taskmaster, as is the desire for immortality. The performance of any vital action brings us closer to death; if it didn't it would lack vitality. Life is a force to be used and if necessary used up. "Death is the virtue in us going to its destination" (Lieh Tzu).