

DECIBEL: TAPE IT

William Burroughs: Electronic Revolution (1970)

William Burroughs is an American writer who explored the concept of the cut up technique in literature, in publications such as *The Naked Lunch* and *The Soft Machine*. *Electronic Revolution* is a collection of essays that proposes the cutting and sorting of news reports as a way to incite the masses into action and reinterpret facts. It effectively proposes an aural version of his cut up technique, cutting up audio recordings of text rather than the text itself. The essay concerns the power of alphabetic non-pictorial languages to control people by drawing attention to the dangerous possibilities of using human voice as a weapon of misinformation. Burroughs outlines ways to record words and cut them up, suggesting they can easily lead to the false news broadcasts or garbled political speeches causing confusion and even psychic control over individuals. Burroughs believed that everything is recorded, and if it is recorded, then it can be edited. In many ways, this is what the media does with the news today. *Decibel* has reworked this piece using live sampling and manipulation software - the modern cut ups - to treat examples of current TV news reporting. As Burroughs has remarked, "When you cut into the present the future leaks out."

Warren Burt: Another Noisy Lullaby (2009) world premiere

Another Noisy Lullaby is a piece for acoustic instruments, whispering and electronic sounds written especially for *Decibel*. Everything is soft, balanced and hopefully, creating a delicate suspended atmosphere. The piece originates as a series of anagrams that are translated into notes and electronic sounds. Everything comes from the same source, but the differing media mean that the relationships are impossible to perceive. Nonetheless, the quiet texture of diatonic melodies, whispers, and noise bands will hopefully ask the question: if noise music is supposed to have an element of aggression and confrontation to it, how tender, how delicate, how nurturing can we make something, and still have it be noise?

Warren Burt is a composer, performer, video artist, writer and a few other things. He lives and works in Wollongong, NSW. Currently, he is an ARC Postdoctoral Fellow in Music Research at the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. More information about him can be found at www.warrenburt.com.

Cat Hope: In the Cut (2009) world premiere

This piece is a study in decline, in particular pitch decline, and the decline of structure and melody. The work begins in the high range of instruments and journeys constantly downward in pitch until the instruments have no tuning left at all, just a loose string or open embouchure. The turntable has a 10" record that plays a descending tone (made especially for the work) that links the bass guitar to the acoustic instruments. *In the Cut* is a novel by Susanne Moore published in 1999, later adapted into a film directed by Jane Campion. This piece is inspired by the slow burning eroticism that accompanies the disintegration that takes place in that story.

Cat Hope is a Western Australian composer, performer and researcher who creates works of sound, video and performance art. She is a vocalist, bassist and flautist. She has worked in pop music (in *Gata Negra*), noise (solo as well as in *Lux Mammoth* and *Abe Sada*), new classical music and free improvisation. Her works are published internationally and she tours often.

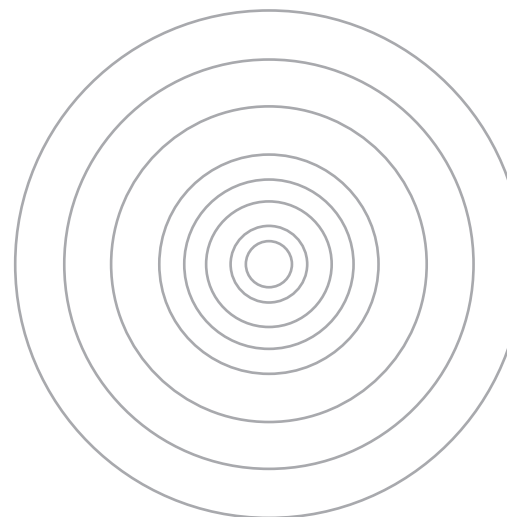
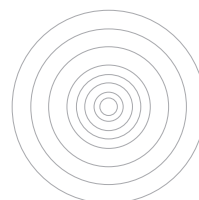
<http://www.cathope.com>

Mauricio Kagel: Prima Vista (1962/64) Australian Premiere

Most of Kagel's works have their structural basis in subversive rhetorical gestures such as paradox and disjunction, and use regular instruments used in unusual ways. *Prima Vista* is no exception. It is written for "slide pictures and undefined sound sources", and involves an elaborate set of instructions for the arrangement and reproduction of the score and sounds. The musicians are divided into two groups, and record their first rehearsal. This recording is played back and manipulated in the performance, each group's material manipulated by the opposing group.

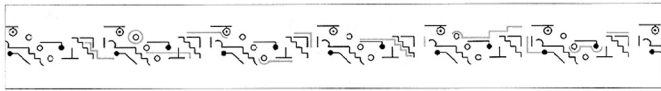
Mauricio Raúl Kagel (1931 –2008) was a German-Argentine composer who was notable for his interest in developing the theatrical side of musical performance. Although he took private lessons on piano, organ and cello, as well as in singing, conducting and theory, he was self-taught as a composer. He is often thought of as a 'postmodernist' before the evolution of the term. By temperament a dadaist and provocateur, Kagel drew on the musical examples of composers like John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen during his life. He also made films, such as "Ludwig van" (1970), whose soundtrack derives from pages of Beethoven's music plastered on the walls of a set representing the composer's studio.

INTERVAL





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The score for 1/1 as presented on the album *Music for Airports*.

Brian Eno: *Music for Airports* 1/1 (1978)

Music for Airports is thought to be the first album of ambient music, low-volume music designed to modify one's perception of a surrounding environment. The first track from the album, 1/1 was a collaboration with Eno, Robert Wyatt and Rhett Davies and designed to be continuously looped as a sound installation, with the intent to defuse the tense, anxious atmosphere of an airport terminal. The phasing of tape loops of different length is a key to this work – they come in and out of synchronisation due to different lengths of the tape and the natural movement of the medium. A single piano melody is repeated and at different times other instruments will fade in and out in a complex, evolving pattern created by the phasing. At some point the sounds clump together, and at other points, be spread apart. Decibel have kept true to this concept by recording their own tape loops and playing them on the stage, yet have reinvigorated the work by performing live with the tape machines.

Brian Eno is an English musician, composer, record producer, music theorist and singer. Eno's solo work pioneered innovative production techniques. In 1972, together with Robert Fripp, Eno developed a tape-delay system described as 'Frippertronics'. He was a member of the glam/art rock group Roxy Music and despite being a self-professed "non-musician", Eno has contributed to recordings by artists as varied as Nico, Genesis and David Bowie in various capacities such as use of his studio/synthesizer/electronic treatments, vocals, guitar, bass guitar, and as just being 'Eno'. He also composed the Windows 95 start-up 'chime'.

Lindsay Vickery: *Transit of Venus* (2009)

In astronomy a Venus transit occurs when the planet can be observed passing directly in front of the Sun. The event is rare, a pair of transits occur eight years apart but only once every 243 years. Similarly, in this work the orbits of the three performers revolve around one another rarely aligning into unison. *Transit of Venus* utilises a non-linear score, live sound processing and independent click tracks to control the quasi-improvised performance by the players. In addition to following the tempo of their individual click track, each player must also follow a mobile set of symbols that dictate the evolution of the dynamics, changes in the texture, the pitch class resources that they should use to realize the score, and finally the period of time over which these changes should occur. For example, the textures indicated are arranged in a continuum from silence through to free improvisation a chaotic state in which all note-forms and noises have escaped each other's gravity. The three players have periods of relative independence from one another and others where they are brought together in a tempo/texture unison.

Lindsay Vickery is active as a composer and performer across Europe, the USA and Asia. His music includes works for acoustic and electronic instruments in interactive-electronic, improvised or fully notated settings, ranging from solo pieces

to opera and has been commissioned by numerous groups for concert, dance and theatre. He is a highly regarded performer on reed instruments and electronics, touring as a soloist and with ensembles in many parts of the world. He was a founding member of Alea, Magnetic Pig, SQUINT and HEDKIKR: presenting new music by Australian and international composers for over 20 years.

Ernie Althoff: *Front Row* (1991)

Front Row is a piece that uses sounds as a kind of notation. The performers work with the score operators to choose signals that indicate the sounds they will create during the performance. These sounds are put onto cassette loops and manipulated by the operators for the performers to follow. Althoff considers the cassette recorder as his 'virtuoso instrument', and uses it to explore a large range of timbres through manipulation.

Ernie Althoff is a composer/performer/instrument builder/artist who has worked in Melbourne, Australia since the mid-1970s, when he bought his first vari-speed cassette recorder. During his years as one of the stalwarts of the legendary Clifton Hill Community Music Centre in Victoria he pioneered an array of techniques for this device in the field of low-budget live electro-acoustic performance. Besides numerous tracks on compilations since the late 1970s, Althoff has released three full-length solo albums. His recent work explores sound installation and kinetic sculpture.

"Our culture, until relatively recently, has forgotten how to explore other musical landscapes. In Althoff's case, his machines are like surveying instruments which aid him in mapping out a section of this little-known land for himself."

LARRY WENDT, SAN JOSE. 1994

Daniel Thorne: *We'll never know* (2009) Decibel composers commission, world premiere

We'll Never Know is a meditation on the idea of 'what might have been.' I have recently been fascinated by choice and its consequences - left instead of right, up instead of down, here instead of there. In this piece the soundtrack acts as a sort of window into other possible forms that this piece could have taken had different choices been made while composing it, starting with a few short glimpses at this 'parallel' composition before the live performance and the soundtrack eventually combine. The catalyst for these thoughts was the passing of my aunt, who this piece is dedicated to.

Daniel is WAAPA's composer in residence for 2009. In 2006 Daniel was the recipient of the WAYJO Bendat Family Trust Scholarship for musical and professional excellence, and in 2007 was commissioned by the Australia Council to compose a new work for the Mace Francis Orchestra. In 2008 he was awarded the WAYJO/Department of Culture and the Arts scholarship, and was commissioned to compose a new work as part of the orchestra's 25th anniversary celebrations. Daniel's compositions have been recorded by the ABC, and appear on recordings by the Mace Francis Orchestra and WAYJO. He is also a passionate performer of new music, and is a founding member of two of Perth's leading new music ensembles, the Mace Francis Orchestra and the Johannes Luebbers Dectet.

<http://decibel.waapamusic.com>

