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INTRODUCTION
Lawrence Kumpf

In the late 1960s, the American trumpet player and free jazz pioneer Don Cherry (1936–1995) and the Swedish visual artist and designer Moki Cherry (1943–2009) began a collaboration that, lasting over a decade, imagined an alternative space for creative music and rethought the conditions in which this music was experienced. This book focuses on the couple's joint projects, from Movement Incorporated to Organic Music Theatre, which took Don's music out of exploitative and commercially driven jazz circuits and integrated it into a total art and life project that broke away from convention. *Organic Music Societies* takes its name from the landmark album *Organic Music Society* (Caprice Records, 1973). Recorded by Göran Freese, Jan Bruér, and Rita Knox in 1971 and 1972, mostly on a portable recorder, the resulting double LP features Cherry performing improvised music inspired by forms and traditions from around the world: "North Brazilian Ceremonial Hymn" is based on a melody credited to Brazilian musician and songwriter Nelson Angelo Cavalcanti; "Terry's Tune" refers to the American minimalist composer Terry Riley; "The Creator Has a Master Plan" was written by American saxophonist Pharoah Sanders and vocalist Leon Thomas; "Bra Joe from Kilimanjaro" is by South African composer and pianist Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand); and "Manusha Raga Kamboji" is an interpretation by Hans Isgren, a Swedish student of Ram Narayan, of a traditional Indian raga. These pieces exist on the album alongside Cherry's own compositions: "Elixir," "Relativity Suite," "Hope," "Sidhartha," "Utopia & Visions," and "Resa." The sounds anthologized on *Organic Music Society* show a remarkable shift away from the idioms of jazz, which over a decade earlier had brought Cherry acclaim, toward solidarity with a global, multicultural sound that complemented and expanded ideas he had been developing about improvisation and music making.

The album's gatefold features a painting by Cherry's wife, Moki. Born Monika Karlsson, Moki experimented with variations on her names before her legal marriage to Don in 1978. Prior to that she had gone by her first name only, spelled "Moqui" on Don's *Where Is Brooklyn?* (Blue Note, 1969) and "Moki" on his compilation *"Mu" First Part / "Mu" Second Part* (BYG Records, 1971), released three years later. The cover she made for *Organic Music Society* evokes the environments and installations housing the sounds collected on the record, all subsumed under the banner of "organic music." The album title is an adaptation of the name the couple gave the concerts they had been presenting together since 1967, Organic Music Theatre, originally called Movement Incorporated. The painting is closely aligned with the tapestries and visuals Moki had created for Happenings in the preceding years. Rendered in vivid colors with Flashe—a vinyl paint from France, used for theater sets and outdoor murals—the work depicts stylized versions of the musicians: Naná Vasconcelos playing the berimbau, a doubled Don Cherry in the foreground and background playing tabla and trumpet respectively, Moki herself playing tanpura.

The scene is set in a flattened, orientalist garden: fanciful characters mingle with the musicians–a red-haired Krishna plays the flute and a female figure sits sideways on an Indian elephant. The landscape is interspersed with a geodesic dome and the Sanskrit letters for *Om*; the phrases ORGANIC MUSIC and DON CHERRY stretch across the top. Though Moki had been collaborating with Don on album covers since 1969 and would continue to do so through the early 1980s, *Organic Music Society* is the document that comes closest to encompassing the full range of their collaborative undertakings, which included not only music, visual art, intermedia performance, theater, and dance but also educational workshops for children and adults and new spiritual practices–an ambitious effort to create a new social space for creative music.

Don Cherry was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, but moved with his family to Watts in 1940, when he was four. He was introduced to Ornette Coleman when he arrived in Los Angeles through Coleman's first wife, the poet Jayne Cortez, who was originally from the area. At that point, Don had already formed his own group, the Jazz Messiahs, with Billy Higgins. They were performing bebop and cool jazz in clubs around town and had done several tours of the West Coast, going as far north as Vancouver. Coleman would recruit both Don and Higgins for his quartet, along with bassist Charlie Haden. While Don was performing some of the most innovative music of the era, he and the rest of Coleman's ensemble were struggling with financial hardship, racial discrimination, and, with the exception of Coleman himself, heroin addiction. They had a limited audience and received little recognition for the groundbreaking work they were doing. When Don met Moki in 1963, while on tour in Sweden, he was already an established musician known as an innovator of free jazz. Moki, born in the village of Koler in the far north of Sweden, was an aspiring clothing designer who had worked as an apprentice for couturière Anna Greta Bloom in Kristianstad and was just starting her first year at the design college Beckmans Designhögskola. By the time she completed her studies three years later, she had already embarked on a life with Don that would involve an expansive collaborative practice uniting spiritualism and the arts.

For a number of reasons, this period in Don Cherry's career is underdocumented, as is the work of Moki Cherry in general, and nothing in the scant literature on these years considers the couple's cross-disciplinary projects within a larger historical context or even as a collaborative endeavor. While Don is well known as an inspired sideman for the New Thing, especially for his work in Coleman's first quartet, his work outside of or adjacent to jazz receives little attention: his personal philosophy and his attempts to reshape not only the formal content of improvised music but also the spaces in which it is apprehended are hardly understood. There is little critical framework, then, for Don's early engagement with world music, a term that he used early on and the meaning of which would change as it became codified and marketed in the 1980s. One of the goals of this book is to foster better understanding of what Don and his collaborators meant by "world music."

Apart from her record covers for Don, the work of Moki Cherry has been largely ignored by art critics, historians, and institutions over the past fifty years,

with the exception of a 2016 solo exhibition at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. In part, the general and persistent marginalization of women artists, especially those working in design or craft, has contributed to Moki's lack of recognition—but the nature and especially the *function* of her work has played a role as well. Though Moki Cherry showed her paintings, tapestries, and sculptures in a number of modest art exhibitions during her lifetime—at Galleri 1, Stockholm (1973); LAX 814 Gallery, Los Angeles (1979); and Gallery Erichs, Malmö (1984), among other venues—for the most part they appeared outside traditional art institutions, serving instead as environments for other creative activities: as design elements at the couple's home in Sweden, as clothing for musicians to wear during performances, or as backdrops for productions by Movement Incorporated, Organic Music Theatre, and the children's drama collective Octopuss Teater.

The publication of this book anticipates an exhibition likewise focused on the collaborative work of Don and Moki that was originally scheduled to open in New York in the fall of 2020. Due to complications resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic, the show is now slated for the spring of 2021. The work highlighted in the exhibition and this book offers an expanded view of Don and Moki's collaborations by presenting and assessing relevant materials, from music and correspondence to little-seen archival news stories and conversations with the principal actors in the story—the artists, friends, and family members who helped these complex practices to flourish.

In this volume, new critical essays by Ruba Katrib, Fumi Okiji, Ben Young, and myself in collaboration with Magnus Nygren–Don Cherry's biographer–explore the work, teaching, and thought of the Cherrys within the context of its production and with a view toward its lasting impact. These texts join previously unpublished primary documents. While Moki Cherry did not publish any of her writing, it is present here in the form of diary entries from the late 1960s and early 1970s as well as a series of reflections she produced from 2004 to 2006, while enrolled in a creative writing workshop for artists in New York led by feminist educator and art historian Arlene Raven. The selections were made by Neneh Cherry and Naima Karlsson—Moki's daughter and granddaughter—who have additionally contributed their own thoughts about her writing, life, and work. The Swedish musician Christer Bothén met Don Cherry in Gothenburg when Don showed up unannounced at Bothén's house. Don had seen him play the donso ngoni, a traditional guitar from Mali, on Swedish television. The two artists became close, and Bothén would go on to perform with Don and Moki throughout the 1970s. To the current publication he has contributed both existing and new short writings that reflect on his own work, his travels to Africa, and his extended collaboration with the Cherrys. Together, his texts provide a unique perspective on the Swedish music scene at large and specifically the culture that animated the Cherrys' home in Tågarp in southern Sweden. Bothén was both Don's teacher—on the donso ngoni—and student, as well as a close

friend of Moki; himself a visual artist, Bothén shared with Moki an interest in the artistic practices and strategies of the avant-garde.[1]

The English physicist and jazz critic Keith Knox, who moved to Stockholm with his wife, the chemist and photographer Rita Knox, late in 1965, provided an important foundation for this book. In addition to reporting on the Cherrys' collaborative efforts, starting in 1967 with a review of the first Movement Incorporated Happening, Keith assiduously recorded and transcribed the couple's–in particular Don's–words, thoughts, and actions during the years of Organic Music Theatre. Rita, too, documented this important history through her photography, audio recordings (which appear on the *Organic Music Society* album), writings, and interviews with key figures, including Terry Riley, Pandit Pran Nath–who taught and performed in Stockholm on multiple occasions during this time–and Steve Roney, a curator, concert organizer, and close friend of the Cherrys. In September 1970, Don and Moki purchased a large schoolhouse in Tågarp. The following fall, Keith, who was at the time working in sales for an English electronics company while contributing to the journals *Jazz Monthly* and *Jazz Forum*, moved into an empty room in the building and compiled *Tågarp Publication No. 1* (1971), the first and only issue of the planned periodical, reproduced here in full. The publication is broken into two sections–"Prose Writings, Articles and Interviews" and "Poetry and Aphorisms"–with a third section, "Drawings and Photographs," stamped out in purple ink as NOT AVAILABLE.[2] Most of the contents in the first section were prepared by Keith or Rita, with the exception of an article titled "Being and Doing" by Iris R. Orton and a "report" by Åke Holmquist, "Greatest Sensation of All Time." The "Poetry and Aphorisms" section includes contributions by Pran Nath, John Esam, Michael Lindfield (via Alice Bailey), Iris R. Orton, Sidsel Paaske, George Trolin, and Alan Halkyard, in addition to Keith Knox. The eclectic anthology provides a vivid picture of Don's social and intellectual milieu during his time in Sweden.

Keith met Don in 1967 through Steve Roney, a mutual friend who had approached him about conducting an interview that Don wanted to see published. It is said that Don and Steve had tried to conduct the interview themselves a number of times but ended up getting too stoned to put anything to paper; since Keith didn't indulge, he was able to make it happen. The result, "Don Cherry's Symphony of the Improvisers," reprinted here, came out in the August 1967 issue of *Jazz Monthly*. As Keith describes it in a brief introduction, "Apart from occasional dates etc. which I have inserted in brackets, the story is just the way Don told it. Don Cherry talked

1 While Don referred to his instrument as a donso gnoni, it might also be classified as a kamele ngoni, a smaller, related instrument with two additional strings. For more on this distinction and the changing tradition of hunter's harp music, see Bothén's texts in the current volume, pp. 373–88 and pp. 351–70.

2 The journal was intended to have a cover illustration by Moki and a back-page photograph by Olle Tesch.

until there were no more words—the rest is music."[3] Don was interested in finding an outlet for his ideas, and over the next few years Keith recorded a number of interviews with him, creating a set of valuable primary documents in which Don speaks about his life and practice as well as his approach to teaching, an activity that played a central role in his collaborations with Moki. Included in *Tågarp Publication No. 1* is a lengthy description of the couple's time with Johnny Dyani and Okay Temiz at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, where Don served as artist-in-residence at the invitation of the composer Jon Appleton. Also included in the current publication is a report, again compiled by Keith in Don's voice, to the Swedish Workers' Education Association, or ABF [Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund], written between the *Jazz Monthly* interview and *Tågarp Publication No. 1*, and previously unpublished. Keith, who had become interested in Turkish music through his association with Maffy Falay and Temiz, later published records by Don (*Eternal Now*, 1974 and *Live in Ankara*, 1978; both on Universal Folks Sounds, a sub-label of Sonet Records) and by the group Sevda—composed of Falay, Temiz, Björn Alke, Salih Baysal, Gunnar Bergsten, and Ove Gustavsson—and helped Don to organize performances and compile his resumé during the early 1970s.

This compendium would not have been possible without the generous support of Don and Moki's family, especially Naima Karlsson, who has provided endless guidance and oversight along the way and allowed us access to the family home in Tågarp and Moki's archive there. Magnus Nygren, the coeditor of this volume and coauthor of its opening essay, has been researching and writing on Don's life and work for the past ten years; reflecting a wealth of knowledge on the subject, his forthcoming biography on Cherry will provide a much-needed critical document on one of the most singular voices in American music. Ingrid Knox, in addition to offering her thoughts and recollections on the period, helped us to locate Rita Knox's photo archive, an incredible collection of images documenting the jazz and experimental music scene in Sweden in the early 1970s, many of which are featured in this publication. Steve Roney provided us with a copy of *Tågarp Publication No. 1*, a magazine I was unaware of before meeting him. Christer Bothén, Neneh Cherry, and Bengt Berger all supported this project through their generosity and willingness to share their stories about Don and Moki. Thanks are also due to Roger Bergner at Musikverket, and to Lisa Freese and Anna Freese for their support with the release of *The Summer House Sessions*, one of two archival releases of Don's music that will accompany the exhibition. Mats Gustafsson has provided endless enthusiasm and invaluable insight into Don's life and work. Special thanks to Bjarke Svendsen, David Reid, Eagle-Eye Cherry, David Cherry, Christian Cherry, Patrícia

3 In this volume: Keith Knox, "Don Cherry's Symphony of the Improvisers," 129.

Vasconcelos, Tonie Roos, Bernt Rosengren, Åsa Engel, Gérard "Doudou" Gouirand, and Arto Lindsay. Thanks also to Lucy Flint, for her assistance with editing "The Revolution is Inside." Elina Arbo, Janet Chuang, Max Gibson, Morgan Levine, Madeline McCormack, and Draye Wilson performed research, transcribed primary documents, and scanned slides, negatives, posters, and photographs.

As part of this project, Blank Forms has started to work with Don and Moki's family to set up a nonprofit organization in Sweden dedicated to advancing the couple's work, and a legal entity that will oversee the rights and licensing of Don's music. As is the case for many musicians, especially those working in jazz, there has been ambiguity around ownership of this work. Through the establishment of these two organizations, it is our hope that this book and exhibition project will be the first of many to come. There is a huge amount of material that deserves to be seen and a substantial history that has yet to be written.

Lawrence Kumpf
New York, Winter 2020

Don Cherry in front of a painting by Moki Cherry, 1967.
Photo: Philippe Gras.

THE REVOLUTION IS INSIDE

Lawrence Kumpf and Magnus Nygren

> I wanted to play different instruments in environments not man-made for music–natural settings like a catacomb or on a mountaintop or by the side of a lake. I wasn't playing for jazz audiences then, you realize. I was playing for goat herders who would take out their flutes and join me and for anyone else who wanted to listen or to sing and play along. It was the whole idea of organic music–music as a natural part of your day.[1]
>
> –Don Cherry

Organic Music Theatre was a collaborative intermedia initiative of the American musician Don Cherry and the Swedish artist Moki Cherry. Their idealistic vision came together in the early 1970s against a backdrop of intense division and conflict in the United States. Though Don had distanced himself from most overt political actions, believing music itself should not be political, his collaborative work with Moki cannot be separated from the larger social context in which it was made. "These days politics just slaps you in the face. As a Negro raised in a mixed neighborhood, white people put me down, and black people put the white people down. I soon discovered hate–and I soon learned that we have to fight hate."[2] Appalled by the US bombing of Cambodia as well as the state of race relations in America, the couple left the country in the spring of 1970 and by the fall had settled in the Swedish countryside. Committed to leading a healthy and spiritually rich life structured by the teaching and practice of the arts, they made Sweden their base until 1977 and lived there occasionally after that, until they separated in the mid-1980s.

The decision to move to Sweden in part reflected personal struggles Don was facing back home and in part Moki's need to find creative outlets for her own work while raising a family and tending to domestic life. Elevating and aestheticizing ordinary experience was central to developing Organic Music. Don saw music "as a natural part of your day," and Moki explained that, for them, "the stage is home and home is a stage."[3] They built a sense

1 Don Cherry, quoted in Francis Davis, "Don Cherry: A Jazz Gypsy Comes Home," *Musician*, March 1983, 54.

2 Don Cherry, quoted in Mike Hennessey, "Cherry's Catholicity: The Kaleidoscopic View of Jazz," *DownBeat*, July 28, 1966, 15.

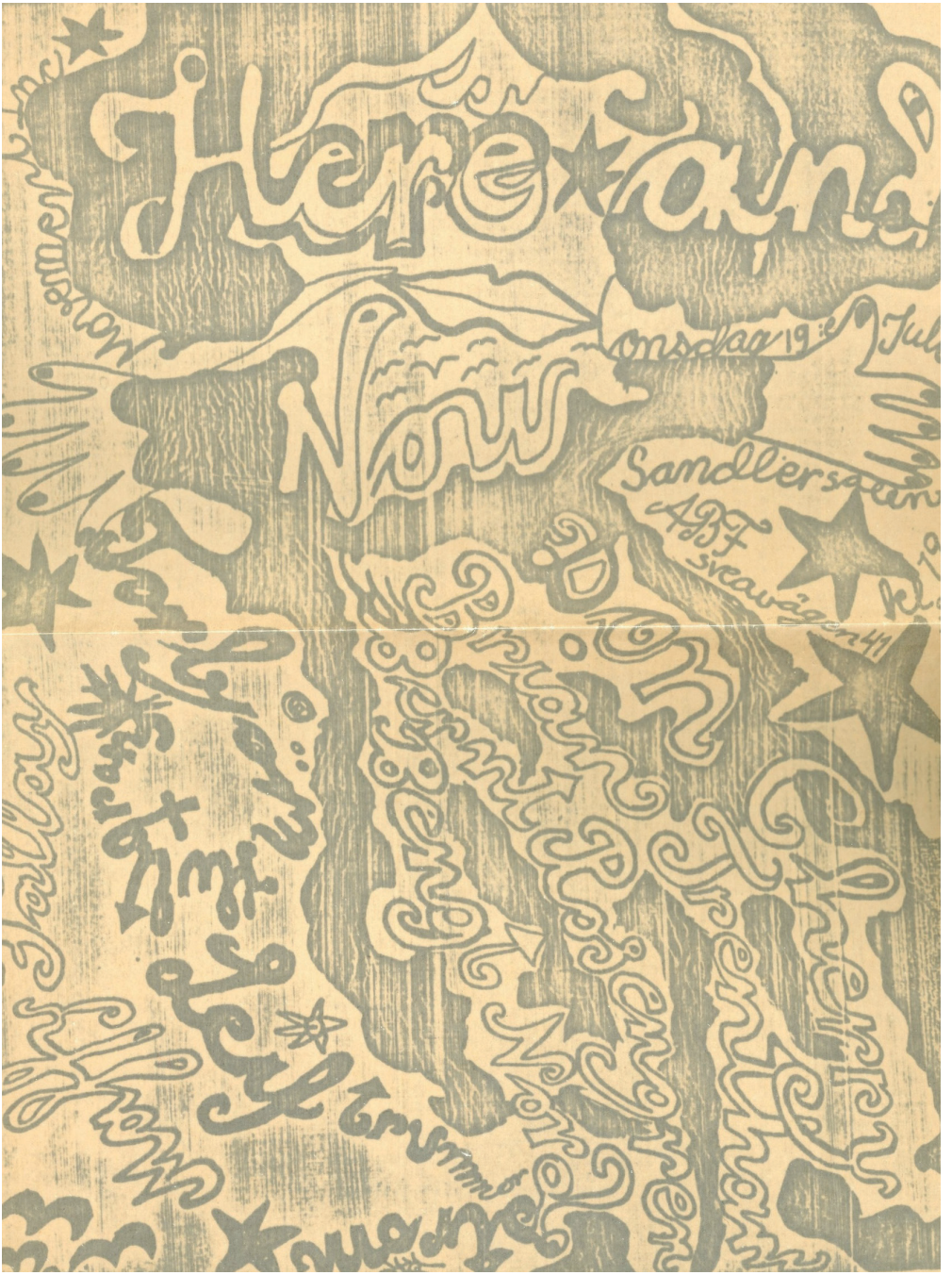
3 In this volume: Moki Cherry, "Life Writings, Diaries, and Drawings," 282.

of community by creating an open space for the collective production of art and music, whether at their home, in workshops for children and adults, or in concerts and other public events. Their aspirations were global in scope. Don's early interest in world music was piqued by his engagement with Turkish musicians Maffy Falay and Okay Temiz, and, later, South African pianists Johnny Dyani and Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), as well as by his travels to North Africa and India and his studies with Indian string players Ram Narayan and Zia Mohiuddin Dagar. Don and Moki coined the term "movement incorporated" as an alternative to the standard phrase "mixed media," and they used the phrase to title a series of their immersive concerts. Here, *incorporation* refers not only to the integration of the auditory and the visual but also to the act of combining Western and non-Western music into a single practice that was collectively produced–one of the essential ideas behind what Don had called "collage music." His repeated insistence that "it's not my music" reflects a radical position: decentering the role of composer, he redefined the larger world of music and makers. This deemphasizing of authorship was tempered by his sensitivity to the exploitation and imbalance of power at the heart of appropriation: "It's still incredible sometimes, what's happening to black folks with the music itself. I mean the way the white pop world uses the roots of black music that they listen to and then put on dresses and makeup and bring in a negative thing that has nothing to do with the music."[4]

For Don, one reason to stop "playing for jazz audiences" was to remove himself from the commercial realm and open up his practice to sharing, exchange, and pedagogy. It is telling that Don and Moki's first collaborative endeavor, Movement Incorporated, emerged at a workers' association in Sweden. In this space, he and Moki could engage directly with their fellow musicians and with the audience, eliminating some of the boundaries and hierarchies that not only structured the world of jazz but had become increasingly prevalent in the commercialization and homogenization of music in the Western world.

4 Don Cherry, quoted in Peter Occhiogrosso, "Don Cherry, Emissary of the Global Muse," *DownBeat*, October 9, 1975, 15.

Don Cherry in the Alps, 1975. Photo: Moki Cherry.



Flier by Moki Cherry for July 19 Movement Incorporated concert at ABF Hall, Stockholm, Sweden, 1967.

Movement Incorporated

On July 19, 1967, Don and Moki presented a concert under the banner of Movement Incorporated at the Sandler Salon, a classroom in Stockholm's Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund Huset (ABF Hall), founded by Swedish trade unions and the Social Democratic Party.[5] During the concert, Don's songs developed into long suites with themes flowing into one another and reemerging in an ever-changing musical montage. Within and around the themes were spaces for improvisation by some of the most skillful Swedish jazz musicians of the era: Bernt Rosengren on tenor saxophone and oboe, Torbjörn Hultcrantz on bass, Leif Wennerström on drums, with Bengt "Frippe" Nordström on a wounding soprano saxophone.[6] The band also comprised the American Brian Trentham on trombone and, on trumpet, Maffy Falay, who brought in Turkish melodies and rhythms. In a review of the performance for the British magazine *Jazz Monthly*, Keith Knox–a friend and chronicler of the Cherrys–wrote that Don was "wailing unbelievably on Indian flute." The sound "ranged across the most complete gamut of Cherry's music. . . . Much of the music was polyphonic in nature with a great deal of call and response, and there was an underlying exoticism which appeared strikingly in the peculiar, but very natural rhythms."[7]

Don saw the 1967 Movement Incorporated concert as the first successful iteration of his and Moki's effort to present music in a noncommercial environment.[8] Describing the event, Knox recalls that Don and Moki replaced the hall's chairs with carpets to encourage the audience to sit on the floor with the musicians. "Around the walls above the audience were Moqui's flamboyant paintings, startling in the subdued light. In the center of the room was the band, replete with candles and incense burners, disporting on a

5 The Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (Workers' Education Association) was founded in 1912 as an educational wing of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Sweden. It provided workshops in a variety of fields, including music.

6 Bengt "Frippe" Nordström was a self-taught saxophonist. Most Swedish jazz musicians did not understand his playing and Don Cherry was one of few admirers of his intuitive, untrained sound. Nordström often sat in on sessions uninvited, and he released Albert Ayler's first LP, *Something Different!!!!!!*, on his record label Bird Notes in 1963.

7 Keith Knox, untitled review, *Jazz Monthly*, September 1967, 21.

8 In this volume: Christopher R. Brewster, "An Interview with Don Cherry," 251–52.

magic carpet."[9] Don considered the use of slides (and later, film) in the Movement Incorporated concerts equally integral to their realization as the music. In addition to fusing the visual and the sonic, Movement Incorporated relied on Don's combining international music traditions with jazz to create "collage music" when working with his first long-term group, Togetherness. The concepts that informed Movement Incorporated would eventually be developed into Organic Music Theatre, which drew in equal parts from Don's musical experimentations and Moki's work as a visual artist and clothing designer.

In a private note, Moki detailed her own contributions to the event: "We found the space and invited all of the musicians and some dancers. I made posters, designed the stage, and did live painting with the music. It sold out and was well-received on every level, so we were very encouraged. We were onto something that seemed to work and was great fun."[10] After the first Movement Incorporated concert in Stockholm, Don, Moki, and Maffy Falay traveled together to Copenhagen for another show. Moki recalls: "We rented a beautiful old hall at Charlottenborg, the Academy of Art, and did the same thing–invited the musicians, made the posters, etc. I remember I used a park to paint huge chunks of fabric for the stage, and designed and made costumes. Some of the musicians were insects, Don was a tiger, some had simple face paint."[11]

Moki's handmade poster for the Copenhagen concert (see p. 71), which took place on August 23, 1967, was an invitation to a *symfoni* for improvisers, with "sound by Don Cherry" and an "environment by Moki," urging audience members to "bring your own carpet." In the days leading up to the concert, Don met up with friends and other musicians while teaching themes and melodies to his group in preparation for the performance. The ensemble was composed of around twenty performers–professional musicians including Falay, Albert "Tootie" Heath, John Tchicai, and Hugh Steinmetz playing alongside amateurs Don had just met in town and invited to perform. In an interview given a few days before the gig, Don reiterates Moki's message: "When people come on Wednesday, they should bring themselves and bring a carpet or a

9 Knox, untitled review, 21. Moki Cherry went by the mononym Moqui at the time.

10 Cherry, "Life Writings," 282.

11 Cherry, "Life Writings," 287.

Movement Incorporated concert for French Television, 1967.
Photo: Philippe Gras.

pillow—there are no chairs—or flutes, if they have any."[12] The concert was called Welcome Live-in, and like the Movement Incorporated performance in Stockholm it included Moki's art as well as a fireworks display and a screening of *Herning 1965* (1966), an experimental film by Danish Situationist Jens Jørgen Thorsen.

A newspaper review describes the concert as an "orgy in rhythm" that was attended by a hundred of the city's hippies and youth, with "oriental carpets, children, bells, reading materials, and bare feet."[13] While the record *Symphony for Improvisers* had been released that same month on Blue Note, featuring an expanded ensemble of Cherry's working group—Leandro "Gato" Barbieri, Karl Berger, Ed Blackwell, Henry Grimes, Jean-François Jenny-Clark, and Pharoah Sanders—the music Don presented in Copenhagen under the same title, with a mix of professional and amateur players, was perhaps a more literal embodiment of the name.

After Denmark, Don and Moki went to France. They wanted to do something similar in Paris, but had no clear plans. Running out of money to pay for their hotel, they were out on the street. As Moki recalls, Don took his cornet and one of her paintings to the Place de l'Odéon and started to play. A producer from French television took note and invited his ensemble to perform on air.[14] "We went there for a concert and we couldn't find a place and didn't have time to stay in Paris long enough to do that, but we did a color television show under the title of Movement. The decor was all done by Moki, and I used a trio at that time. The guitar player, Pedro Urbina, a classical guitar player who improvises, also. And the drummer, who is also in electronic music, Jacques Thollot."[15]

While Movement Incorporated existed only from July to September 1967, it laid the groundwork for the collaborative multimedia experiments Don and Moki would pursue over the next decade. As Moki remarks in her journals, her "spiritual experience" in Europe inspired her decision to abandon plans for her career in New York and put all her creative energy into this collaboration with Don.[16] That December, Don traveled briefly to the United States to

12 "Don Cherry på Charlottenborg," *Berlingske Tidende*, August 20, 1967.

13 Henrik "Iv" Iversen, "Musikalisk 'live-in' på Charlottenborg," *Berlingske Tidende*, August 24, 1967.

14 There is no known documentation of this broadcast, which most likely aired on Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française (ORTF).

15 Brewster, "An Interview with Don Cherry," 252–53.

16 Moki Cherry, "Moki Cherry Writings Early Life Diaries," Cherry Archive, Tågarp, Sweden.

seek opportunities for Movement Incorporated, but having no luck he returned to Sweden in February 1968. He was already committed to the interweaving of the arts as a governing concept: "There has to be a new presentation of music, a complete environment."[17] With Movement Incorporated, he and Moki set the idea in motion.

17 Knox, untitled review, 21.

Don Cherry's International Quintet at Le Chat Qui Pêche, Paris, ca. 1966–67.
Left to right: Karl Berger, Don Cherry, Jean-François Jenny-Clark.
Photo: Erich Klemm.

Don, Moki, and the International Quintet

Don and Moki met on January 17, 1963, when Don was performing in Stockholm while on tour with the Sonny Rollins Quartet.[18] Moki had seen the Rollins Quartet at the Konserthuset and, after the show, headed to the smaller Golden Circle, where Johnny Griffin's group was playing. Don and the rest of Rollins's band were already there, and some of them were sitting in with Griffin. According to Moki, Don approached her group of friends and asked to speak with her; the two immediately hit it off and spent the evening talking. When they parted that night, Don told Moki he would come back to see her.[19] Moki was nineteen and just starting her studies at Beckmans Designhögskola, an alternative art and design college in Stockholm. A young painter with a strong interest in free jazz, she regularly attended concerts at the Konserthuset and the Golden Circle, which was more experimental and hosted artists such as Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, and, later, Cherry's group. She was familiar with Don's music through his recordings with Coleman and was excited for Don to meet the saxophonist and composer Albert Ayler, whom she had befriended on his trips to Sweden in 1962 (and who later took her up on her offer to let him use her painting studio as a place to rehearse).[20]

For the next couple of years, Don and Moki's reunions occurred sporadically, on the occasions when Don was on tour and performing at the Golden Circle, first with New York Contemporary Five

18 Sonny Rollins on tenor saxophone, Don Cherry on trumpet, Henry Grimes on bass, and Billy Higgins on drums.

19 Cherry, "Life Writings," 277.

20 In an interview with French writer Daniel Caux in 1971, Don says that hearing Ayler play during a jam session at Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen was like the feeling he'd had as a child at church when part of the congregation would speak in tongues. "It is this whole feeling of the spirit being in the room and this feeling of bliss, and it happened this night in me hearing Albert Ayler play." Daniel Caux, "Don and Mocqui Cherry interview with Daniel Caux," 1971, disc 9, track 38 of Albert Ayler, *Holy Ghost*, Revenant, 2004, compact disc. In 1964, Don and Ayler occasionally gigged in New York, where they recorded the music for Michael Snow's film *New York Eye and Ear Control* (1964), together with Gary Peacock, Sunny Murray, Roswell Rudd, and John Tchicai. Ayler then invited Don on a Scandavian tour that included two weeks at Jazzhus Montmartre followed by a week elsewhere in Denmark, a week at the Golden Circle in Stockholm, and a short interlude in the Netherlands. They also recorded the album *Ghosts* (Debut, 1965) in Denmark and made radio recordings. The sojourn lasted from the beginning of September until mid-November 1964.

in November 1963 and then with Albert Ayler in October 1964.[21] Though Moki and Don had spent relatively little time together, they soon became close. After the tour with Ayler, Don traveled to Denmark and from there made his first trip to a non-Western region, to Joujouka, Morocco, with the Danish artist Åge Delbanco (also known as Babaji). During his brief stay he met and performed with the Master Musicians of Joujouka.[22] On his return trip to Europe in December, he went to Stockholm to see Moki and they decided, in her words, "to find a way to share our lives together."[23]

In the summer of 1965, Don and Moki took their first trip together, to Munich, where Don recorded the soundtrack for George Moorse's film *Zero in the Universe* (1965).[24] After Munich, the couple continued to Paris, where Don had an engagement at the jazz club Le Chat Qui Pêche with his newly formed quintet and Moki explored the fresh food market Les Halles and the plentiful fabric shops of the city.

Paris served as the center of Don's activity for much of 1965. While there in April, he assembled the group Togetherness, also known as the Don Cherry Quintet, the Complete Communion Band, and the International Quintet, comprising Karl Berger on vibraphone and piano, Gato Barbieri on tenor saxophone, Jean-François Jenny-Clark on bass, and Aldo Romano on drums. Cherry and the ensemble had a lengthy engagement at Le Chat Qui Pêche in April, June, and July, and returned several times in 1966 and 1967. During these years, they also toured extensively in Europe and recorded a number of releases for Blue Note.

21 The New York Contemporary Five included Don Cherry on trumpet, Archie Shepp on tenor, John Tchicai on alto, Don Moore on bass, and J. C. Moses on drums. With Ayler, Don was joined by Gary Peacock on bass and Sunny Murray on drums.

22 In an interview by Mike Hennessey in *DownBeat*, July 28, 1966, Don recalls that the trip lasted two months, though according to his stamped passport it lasted just six days.

23 Cherry, "Life Writings," 278.

24 Long out of circulation, *Zero in the Universe* was a completely improvised film framed as a science-fiction story about a group of secret agents in the future. Moorse wanted not just Don but the entire film crew to make creative contributions as artists, finding their own way to improvise. Moorse felt that Don's improvisatory musical style would be right for the film's soundtrack. George Moorse, interview by Christian Braad Thomsen, *Frederiksborg Amts Avis*, July 14, 1965, 7. (Don said he thought the film was "made under LSD." Quoted in Keith Knox, "Don Cherry's Symphony of the Improvisers," *Jazz Monthly*, August 1967, 9.)

The Quintet represented something new in the world of jazz in at least two notable respects. First, it was international in its constitution, with each member hailing from a different country: Don from the United States, Barbieri from Argentina, Berger from Germany, Jenny-Clark from France, and Romano from Italy. This was important to Don, who commented on the value of the musicians teaching and sharing songs from their respective nations–how it brought them closer together not only musically but also personally.[25] Don already had a strong interest in international music and song, and the band's diversity, the nature of its dynamic, and the relationship of the individual musicians to the larger ensemble would all powerfully inform his creative and educational practice. He imagined a band whose members could be "alone together," merging solo performances into a unified whole.

The second distinctive attribute of the Quintet had to do with "collage music." Unlike the suites of Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus–where the different parts would be planned and arranged–Don's "collage" compositions were built entirely on improvisation. Not just the solos, but the entire piece. The parts, order, duration, and tempo were never decided in advance. Everything emerged as the musicians played–no signs, as Romano says, "no nothing." The live recordings from Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen in 1966 demonstrate how the material changed and was reworked over the span of the band's engagement. The song "Complete Communion," for instance, was played each night, always with new variations on its length and structure.[26]

No matter how involved he was, Don never thought of the group's compositions as his own. Berger recalls that at this time, Don was constantly listening to a shortwave radio, with which he could tune into music from all around the world; this access, combined with what Ornette Coleman used to say was Don's "elephant memory," provided the basis for the group's compositions. As Berger says, Don "could hear a melody once and just know it and be able to reproduce it. Then he would come to the rehearsal, and whatever he had just heard he would pound out on the piano three, four times. He also expected us to have an elephant memory. . . . We were just trying to catch whatever we could."[27] According to Romano, Don would "play a few notes and then we would know

25 "Don Cherry's Drei Monologe," *Jazz Podium*, February 1966, 38–39.

26 Don Cherry, *Live at Café Montmartre 1966*, 3 vols., ESP-DISK, 2007, 2008, 2009.

27 Karl Berger, recorded interview with Magnus Nygren, June 19, 2013.

Don and Moki Cherry with Neneh Cherry
in Gamla Stan, Stockholm, 1967. Photo: Peter Bjorkegren.

what to do."[28] Don later observed that his compositional process mirrored urban life, where "you go around a corner and there's another life beginning, another whole environment."[29] In a sense, this is the idea of collage: bringing together pieces, each containing its own history and stories, to make something larger, rather like blocks composing a city.

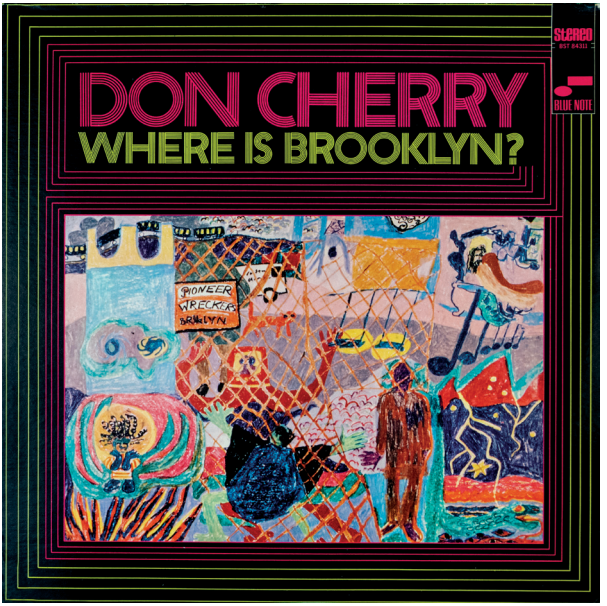
In the fall of 1965, Don's Quintet played for two weeks at the Golden Circle. Moki, who was still in design school, created a unified aesthetic for the performance by dressing the band all in white. One of the evenings was recorded on video by Hans Isgren and, subsequently, Swedish artists Ture Sjölander and Bror Wikström turned it into one of the first-ever works of video art, *Time*, 1965–66, which was shown on Swedish television. Moki credits this performance as marking the start of her active involvement with Don's music, a collaboration that would increase in rigor and complexity as their working relationship grew over the years.

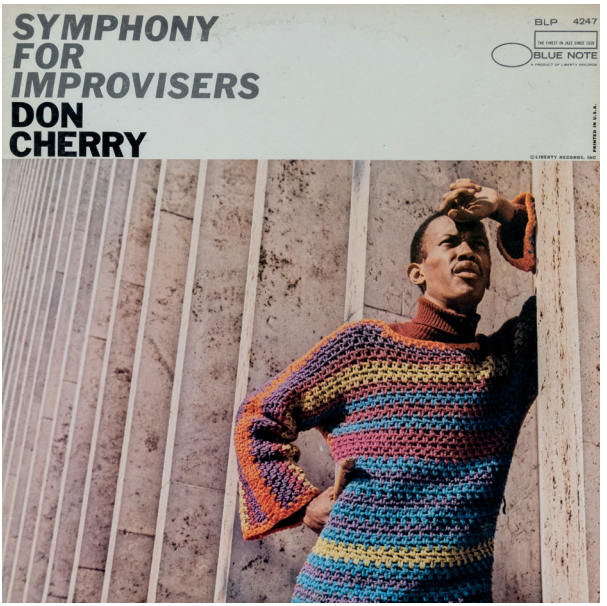
Toward the end of 1965 and throughout 1966, Don traveled back and forth between Europe and New York. During this time, he recorded three albums for Blue Note: *Complete Communion* (1966) in December 1965, *Symphony for Improvisers* (1967) in September 1966, and *Where Is Brooklyn?* (1969) in November 1966. Moki's work animates the cover of *Symphony for Improvisers*, which features a photograph of Don wearing a colorful striped sweater she designed for him, and the cover of *Where Is Brooklyn?* (see p. 50), on which one of her intricate drawings depicts an abstract cityscape. In 1966, Moki and her two-year-old daughter Neneh went with Don to New York, where Moki pursued a career in fashion and design, selling her clothing to shops including Design Research and Henri Bendel. She continued to design clothes and costumes for Don's ensembles, and her diaries from this time are full of sketches and ideas. She eventually met the American fashion photographer and filmmaker Bert Stern, known for his film *Jazz on a Summer's Day* (1959), which documents the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival. Reminiscing in the early 2000s, Moki remembers how Stern "wanted to sponsor me as an artist-designer. The fact that I got the recognition and a huge opportunity was good for my identity. I guess it gave me the courage to choose to live and work with Don and to simultaneously be with my child, soon children."[30]

28 Aldo Romano, recorded interview with Magnus Nygren, October 23, 2013.

29 Howard Mandel, "Eternal Traveller," *The Wire*, December 1995, 26–29.

30 Cherry, "Life Writings," 280. Don and Moki's son Eagle-Eye was born in 1968.





Above: Album cover for Don Cherry's *Where is Brooklyn?* (Blue Note, 1969), illustration by Moki Cherry.

Below: Album cover for Don Cherry's *Symphony for Improvisers* (Blue Note, 1967).

Toward the end of 1966, the couple rented the midtown New York venue Town Hall to put on a concert called "Elephantasy," a title they would use on several occasions in the coming years. The performance required four different sets of musicians over the course of the evening, among them Gato Barbieri, Karl Berger, Pharoah Sanders, Henry Grimes, Ed Blackwell, Rashied Ali, and a few others. The show mostly consisted of Don's compositions, but included a single work by Ornette Coleman, called "Lighthouse."

Though Moki had made a promotional poster and taken out an advertisement in the *Village Voice*, very few people showed up. While the concert succeeded in other respects, the lack of attendance signaled the difficulties that Don and Moki would face in New York. Among other issues, Don was fighting a heroin addiction he would battle for the rest of his life. In her diaries, Moki alludes to the situation without addressing it directly. In a reflection from 2008, she remarks, "Arriving in NY, I had no idea the struggles the musicians were still enduring in the US."[31] Beginning to spend more and more time away from urban centers in the States and abroad, by launching Movement Incorporated, the Cherrys hoped to create a sheltering and inclusive space: "The idea was to create an environment/atmosphere, the stage being the home and the audience part of it."[32]

From December 1968 to February 1969, Don and Moki rented a loft at 55 Chrystie Street in New York. Soon finding it impossible to live on the Bowery with two children, they set off for upstate New York, settling in Congers in March. Don, Moki, Neneh, and Eagle-Eye were joined by Don's two other children, Janet (born in 1956) and David Ornette (born in 1958), for the summer. Moki decorated and painted the house, as she had her previous apartment in Stockholm, but by the end of the summer the family was forced to vacate the property, the prejudice against interracial couples making it impossible for them to buy it.[33] Don and Moki took Neneh and Eagle-Eye with them to Amsterdam, purchasing a van and driving north for concerts in Norway and Sweden, collecting Okay Temiz along the way. Eventually, they made their way to Turkey, stopping off in Istanbul and heading on to Ankara. In Istanbul, the family

31 Moki Cherry, "Fabric of Memory," draft of a wall text for the 2008 Sant'Anna Arresi Jazz Festival, Cherry Archive, Tågarp, Sweden.

32 Moki Cherry, "Fabric of Memory."

33 Moki Cherry, timeline, ca. 2005, Cherry Archive, Tågarp, Sweden.

would meet James Baldwin, who engaged Don to make music for a production of John Herbert's play *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (1967).[34]

Before these travels, Don had been offered a teaching residency at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire through the musician Jon Appleton for the winter of 1970. The family returned to the States that January and settled in Norwich, Vermont, just across the river from the college. Don taught one course that was reserved for instrumentalists and one that was open to all students. He described the focus of the class for musicians as "Orchestra of free form. Exploring mysticism of sound. Vibrations. Harmony. Form. Rhythm. Abstract Sound" and the one open to the general student body as "Possibilities. Impression. Expression. Feelings and Forms."[35] The classes were so popular that he was asked to repeat them in the spring. In addition to teaching, Don had a residency at the college's Hopkins Center for the Arts and presented a number of concerts in and around the area.

Following the models he used for workshops in Sweden and for instructing young children, Don's classes consisted of listening to and playing melodies and compositions from around the world. He invited Abdullah Ibrahim, Johnny Dyani, and Okay Temiz to visit as guest lecturers.[36] Don also shared and taught pieces from Ornette Coleman, Alice Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, and Leon Thomas, along with his own music.

Don referred to one class's final performance as "living opera," borrowing the language and spirit of the New York avant-garde troupe the Living Theatre. To realize this concept, Moki collaborated with students to create carpets, costumes, and backdrops, as she did for the classes, concerts, and lectures Don gave on campus. The couple's 1967 collaborations seemed to be very much on Don's mind. As he describes it, one of the concerts he and Moki held at Dartmouth, titled "Elephantasy," featured scenography by Moki that recalled the earlier Movement Incorporated concerts[37] (as did

34 For a fuller account, see: Moki Cherry, liner notes for *Live in Ankara* (Sonet Records, 1978), and Magdalena J. Zaborowska, *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade: The Erotics of Exile* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 178–80.

35 Don Cherry to Jon Appleton, September 26, 1969, from Paris.

36 According to Jonathan Sa'adah, a student participant, more than two hundred students enrolled in the second class. They were often separated into smaller sections that met two or three times a week, with classes lasting 120–150 minutes. Jonathan Sa'adah, recorded interview with Magnus Nygren, January 8, 2014.

37 Brewster, "An Interview with Don Cherry," 251–52.

another performance, Peace Piece, held at the New England Life Hall in Boston).[38]

Having witnessed, on the first day of class, the self-segregation of white and black students, Don sought to break down the racial divide through music: "We did certain things . . . where everyone had a sensitivity of touch, becoming close to each other."[39] He and Moki also opened their home to students on weekends so they could all get to know one another. It was essential to Don's vision that each musician contribute uniquely to the shared creation, and he used his spontaneous conducting approach to advance that ideal. Speaking with Keith Knox, he said, "It worked out fine because it leaves the freedom for the musicians to use their own individual self-expression collectively. And it still creates a completeness in form." Later, he added:

> And it's not really "ours" because we're getting into that "mine" and then there's also this "mine" of "mine." But we're actually trying to realize this universal awareness of himself. I feel like the revolution is inside–revolution, revolution–because that's the journey, the most dangerous journey. The hardest journey is the journey inside. It's strange me saying that, being a traveler like I am, but the revolution is really inside.[40]

The experience at Dartmouth left a lasting impression on Don and Moki that would solidify the next stage of their collaboration. When the residency came to an end in the summer of 1970, they returned with their family to Sweden. Buying another van, they looked for a permanent home there. After looking into purchasing property in the north, Moki learned of the abundance of decommissioned schoolhouses in the south and contacted a real estate agent in Hässleholm about a property in the locality of Tågarp, forty miles from where they were at the time; when they arrived, there was a rainbow over the schoolhouse. They bought the building, and it became the base for their activities. It provided ample space for visiting friends and artists, rooms for their own respective studios, a stage for presenting concerts, and a place where they could host educational classes and workshops for children.

38 Roderick Nordell, "Don Cherry's Fantastic 'Peace Piece,'" *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 1, 1970, 4.

39 In this volume: Keith Knox, "Don Cherry at Dartmouth," *Tågarp Publication No. 1* (1971), 469.

40 Knox, "Don Cherry at Dartmouth," 477.

Above: Gathering at Tågarp Schoolhouse. *Left to right, descending*: Steve Roney *(standing on top step)*, Anita Roney, Don Cherry, Jane Robertson, Moki Cherry, Kerstin McNeil, Eagle-Eye Cherry *(standing near bicycle on right)*, ca. 1973.

Below: Event at Tågarp schoolhouse, ca. 1977.

A confluence of influences shaped the development of Organic Music Theatre, among them rejection of the conditions black artists were offered in the States; exposure to other music cultures–Turkish, Indian, and North African; and the benefits of the welfare system the Social Democrats had established in Sweden. As Knox writes about Movement Incorporated: "There was concern for the environment and the real status of improvised music. They decided to get together to teach each other and learn how to dissolve the artificial boundaries imposed on music by commercial requirements."[41] While Movement Incorporated represented the development of Don's concept of collage music, Organic Music Theatre embodied an increasingly holistic approach to the production and distribution of music, treating it as integrated with the living environment in which it was presented. His thinking about the organization of individual parts within the whole reflected the ideological outlook he brought to his pedagogy. The creation of Organic Music Theatre was as much a marker of the evolution of his artistic concept as it was tied to the couple's new home in Tågarp.

Ornette Coleman, with whom Don played throughout his career, offered a model for creating an alternative space for music. In April 1968, Coleman had acquired a loft at 131 Prince Street in lower Manhattan, later known as Artist House, that would serve as his home, rehearsal space, concert hall, and gallery. In the early 1970s in New York, especially SoHo, musicians were opening their own multifunctional residential and performance spaces. Jitu Weusi and Aminisha Black's The East–a performance site and Black Nationalist educational complex that hosted the children's program Uhuru Sasa Shule (Freedom Now School)–was founded in Brooklyn in 1969, right before Don started teaching at Dartmouth. The music wing of the organization hosted concerts by Pharoah Sanders and Leon Thomas as well as other musicians close to Don, such as Dewey Redman and Abdullah Ibrahim. While Don did not have a direct connection to the institution or to Black Nationalism, he was undoubtedly aware of efforts underway in the States to promote the concept of self-reliance, especially in relation to education.

Don and Moki were urgently concerned with protecting Don from his addiction, and the Swedish countryside seemed to be the ideal place for recovery. In a 1971 interview with the jazz drummer Art Taylor, Don explains, "I had lived in cities most of my life,

41 Knox, "Don Cherry's Symphony of the Improvisers," 21.

and I reached a point where I had a polluted brain, a polluted soul. The only cure for me was nature. I settled in a forest, on the earth, without boundaries."[42] Don's desire to live a healthier lifestyle and to play his music in places other than urban nightclubs and bars would become central to his thinking and his music. The idea of health—and health food—runs through compositions from this period such as "Hummus," "Brown Rice," and "Elixir." In Tågarp, Don and Moki began growing their own produce, and Moki would prepare meals in a communal setting that welcomed friends and family. Everyday activities began to take on the theatricality of the space, where Moki's artwork functioned as frame and backdrop. Moki's saying "The stage is home and home is a stage" takes on a double meaning when considered in relation to her dedication to helping Don overcome addiction. An alternative environment for music was combined with the discipline and rigor required to promote wellness within it. The centering activities taking place at the schoolhouse–communal living, educational classes, and workshops–slowly began to replace the stress and discontinuity of touring.

During the summer of 1971, less than a year after acquiring the schoolhouse, Don and Moki were invited to participate in "Utopier och visioner 1871–1981" ("Utopias and Visions 1871–1981"), an exhibition held at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Organized by Pontus Hultén, the museum's director, and Tonie Roos, a close friend of Moki, the project was accommodated in a geodesic dome where the Cherry family lived and worked for seventy-two days. As there were no "concerts" or public performances in the traditional sense, the event simply transposed the activities taking place in Tågarp to a public institution.

Hultén proposed "Utopias and Visions" as an exemplar of "living art."[43] The museum took out ads in the local papers inviting the public to "be part of creating a musical-aesthetic situation with Moqui and Don Cherry."[44] The dome stood just outside the museum building, and the family spent their evenings in the old Navy prison next to it, where they had access to a kitchen and rooms to sleep in. During the day, Don and Moki worked and performed inside

42 Arthur Taylor, "Don Cherry," in *Tones and Notes: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1993), 178.

43 Hultén would later invite Don and Moki to create two additional projects at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

44 Announcement for the exhibition "Utopier & Visioner" at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, run in *Svenska Dagbladet*, June 12, 1971, 20.

Don Cherry with the Taj-Mahal Travellers during “Utopias and Visions”
at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1972.

the dome, engaging visitors in live music workshops. The daily performances featured members of the Swedish jazz scene, including saxophonists Rosengren and Tommy Koverhult, bass player Ove Gustavsson, and trumpeter Falay, as well as forward-thinking musicians like Bengt Berger, Fluxus artists Bengt af Klintberg and Takehisa Kosugi, and the Taj-Mahal Travellers, who were touring Sweden that summer. Setting up his drums, Okay Temiz stayed for almost the entire length of the project. In addition to hanging her tapestries and installing her soft sculptures in the performance space, Moki painted a large mandala on the floor over the course of the residency.

Don started working with children as early as 1968, giving concerts at public schools in the Bronx and Sweden.[45] In addition to conducting ABF workshops that year he visited several summer camps for young musicians, giving concerts and workshops alongside Falay, Torbjörn Hultcrantz, and Leif Wennerström, playing the same material they would have performed in concert. In the fall of 1971, a six-episode children's music program by Don and Moki called *Piff, Paff, Puff* was filmed for Swedish national television. Set at the schoolhouse decorated with Moki's scenography, the show featured Don, Moki, Neneh, and Eagle-Eye along with children from a nearby school. It aired the following spring in collaboration with the Swedish producer Björn Lundholm. Each of the ten-minute episodes, essentially non-narrative, opens with Don blowing a conch shell to greet the children as they arrive in a van before gathering in the schoolhouse. The kids play and learn with Don and Moki, making collages, sewing clothing, baking, and playing music. Don accompanies the children on a variety of instruments, including the piano, cornet, tablas, flute, and kalimba; in one episode, Moki is seen painting drums while a three-year-old Eagle-Eye plays them. The musical material is by Abdullah Ibrahim or Don himself (compositions such as "Desireless" and "March of the Hobbits," two pieces he would workshop with professionals a few years later for his 1970 Jazz Composer's Orchestra commission, *Relativity Suite*).

Elefantasi was a radio program whose segments, running a little under ten minutes each, were broadcast by Swedish national radio in 1972. It is somewhat more narrative in approach and features music by Don and a voiceover by Moki inviting children to join them and their friend Fantasimon, a flying elephant, in an imaginative journey over the sea. Fantasy and creativity were key concepts for Don

45 Dick Idestam-Almquist, "Jag vill helst spela för barn säger Don Cherry," *OrkesterJournalen*, May 1968, 6–7.

Production photos for *Piff, Paff, Puff* (1971).

and Moki, in both their practices and their pedagogy. For Don, the children "are still free to use their imagination, to listen and take part, which I think is important in music. To be able to listen and take part."[46] The Cherrys believed that young people could access the essential elements of music very quickly and directly; in many ways they were more adaptable than adults to Don's modes of composing, playing, and teaching.

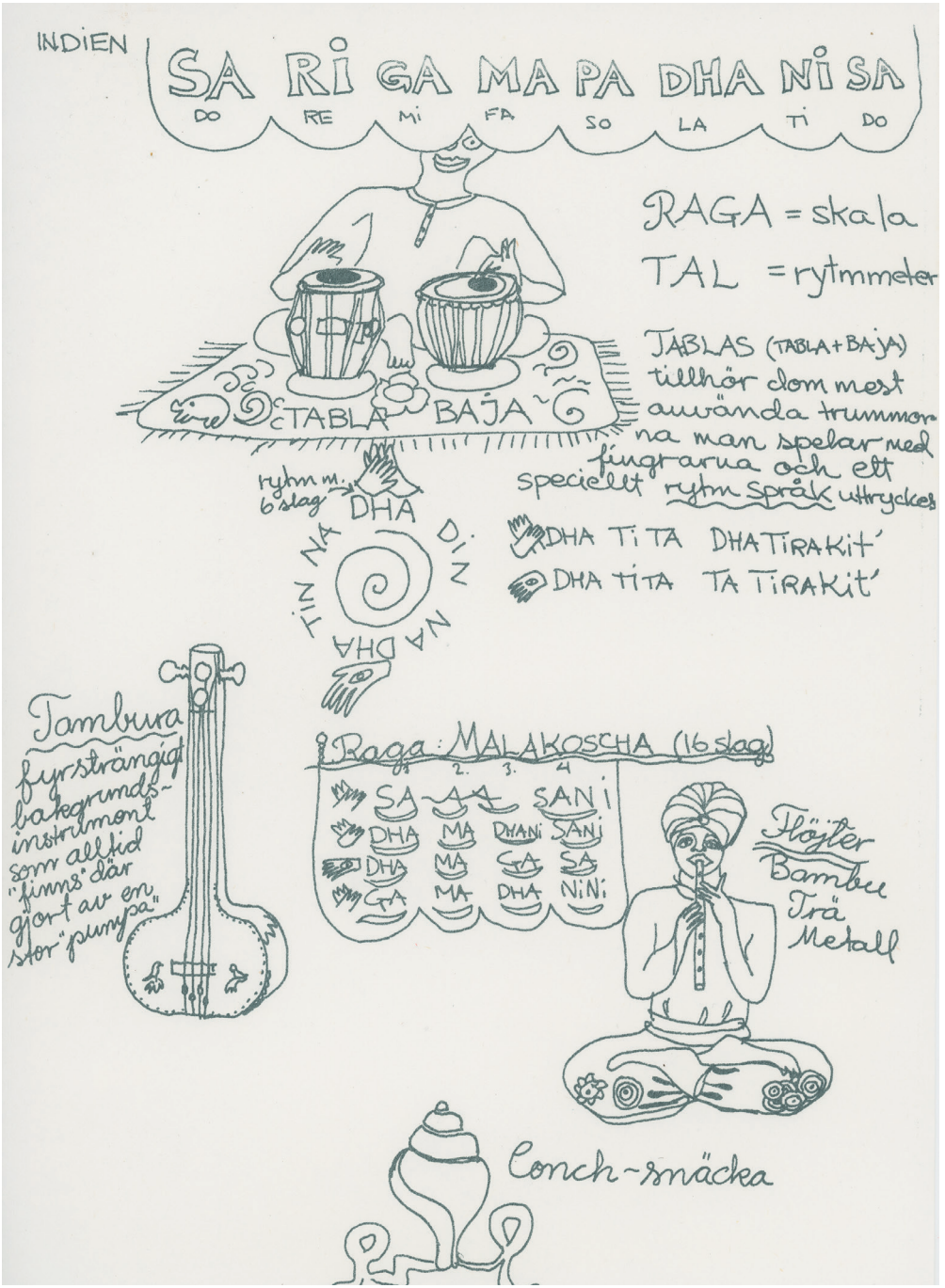
The couple traveled together in 1971, touring in France with Han Bennink in August and then Don continued his independent work that year recording *Science Fiction* (CBS, 1972) with Coleman in September, and leading the New Eternal Rhythm Orchestra in Donaueschingen, Germany, in October.[47] He resumed his collaboration with Moki in the summer of 1972 with the first Organic Music Theatre concert at the Festival de jazz de Chateauvallon and a workshop and concert in late November 1972 at New York University called "Relativity Suite," followed by a concert at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1973.[48]

During 1973, Don and Moki were joined in their educational work by Christer Bothén (whom Don had met in Gothenburg in 1972), Bengt Berger, and Annie Hedvard. Over the course of at least three tours of Swedish schools financed by the Swedish governmental organization Rikskonserter, the group, in different formations, conducted nearly ninety workshops in locations as disparate as the far north and remote south of the country. During the sessions, children sang along to simple lyrics legible on vividly colored fabrics sewn by Moki. The schools would prepare for the group's arrival using creative teaching material sent along beforehand. These included stencils of Moki's annotated drawings of instruments from Africa, India, Tibet, and elsewhere. The atmosphere of these workshops was casual and open. They were all about playing, conversing, and listening to music. A central part of Don's own playing, he said, was maintaining a feeling from his childhood:

46 Don Cherry quoted in Idestam-Almquist, "Jag vill helst spela för barn," 6–7.

47 P. Gros-Claude, "Don Cherry, Carpentras, Festival," *Jazz Magazine* 193 (1971): 49–50.

48 For more information on the Chateauvallon concert, see Magnus Nygren's liner notes in the forthcoming release Don Cherry's New Researches featuring Naná Vasconcelos, *Organic Music Theatre Festival de jazz de Chateauvallon 1972* (Blank Forms Editions, 2021). On "Relativity Suite," see Ben Young's essay in the current volume, pp. 391–413.



Children's workshop handout depicting instruments from around the world with illustrations by Christer Bothén and Moki Cherry, ca. 1973.

> The music that I play, that I've always been known to play, I have always tried to remember the first thing, the time when my mother first gave me a horn, the feeling of having it and this thing of going to play music, so that feeling to me, through as much music as I've learned, I still remember just that feeling when I first got that horn. And that's what's important to me. That's what music is really about–the infant happiness, the infant happiness, beautiful![49]

The way Don taught children was not that different from his process with adults. In the mid-sixties, he had worked with many European jazz musicians who would later become famous, such as Joachim Kühn from Germany, François Tusques from France, and Bo Stief from Denmark, among others. He taught by showing, without written scores, and with minimal lecturing. In the 1968 ABF workshops he focused on overtones, "ghost sounds," Turkish time signatures, tones–in breathing, singing, and droning–collective improvisation, silences, "surprises," and Indian scales.[50] Many of his students were musicians in his band.[51] The workshops took place in February and March, and at the beginning of April he recorded parts of a newly written suite, *Feelings and Forms*, for Swedish national radio. Listening to the recording, one can hear the principles of the workshops in the odd meters, held tones, and group improvisations; an abbreviated version of a Turkish folk melody shows its distinctive rhythms.

One of the tracks on the record *Organic Music Society* (Caprice, 1973) is the result of a workshop led by Cherry and Temiz at the Bollnäs Folkhögskola (Bollnäs People's High School). They led a group of musicians who were studying European classical music for the summer in a performance of work by Terry Riley and Abdullah Ibrahim. This is one of the few recordings of such sessions aside from a collection of tapes made during the ABF workshops in Göran Freese's collection at the Centre for Swedish Folk Music and Jazz Research in Stockholm.[52]

49 Knox, "Don Cherry's Symphony of the Improvisers," 129.

50 In this volume: Keith Knox, "Report to ABF," 143.

51 The band members included Don Cherry on cornet; Tommy Koverhult on saxophone; Torbjörn Hultcrantz on bass; Maffy Falay on trumpet; Leif Wennerström on drums; and Bernt Rosengren on saxophone.

52 For more details on Freese's recordings, see the introduction to Knox, "Report to ABF," 141.

The period of 1973–76, when Organic Music Theatre cohered as Don and Moki's way of bringing together music, art, and life, was also a time when Don slipped under the media radar. Playing music for its own sake rather than only in paid concerts was of paramount importance to Organic Music Theatre. Swedish drummer Bengt Berger, who worked frequently with Don during the 1970s, says of his visits to Tågarp: "There was no difference between gigs and practicing. It was about creating music all the time. And it was about learning all the time. [Don] was very fond of learning new songs and making music of it right away."[53]

The Cherrys were constantly either on tour or getting ready to go on tour. According to Moki, "Before these tours all the musicians used to come to Tågarp for rehearsals and preparations. I used to work on sets, clothes, cooking, mulch the garden for there to be one by the time we were returned home, make dukiburgers[54] for the road, packing the bus with all the various gas stoves etc."[55] One of the major performances was in Alassio, Italy, in September 1973. The group had now expanded to become a septet.[56] Italy became the most popular host of Organic Music Theatre, with concerts attracting thousands of fans during three national tours from 1974 to 1976.[57] In October 1973, the group performed in Poland with Bobo Stenson joining on piano and Moki on tanpura. The first half of 1974 was spent traveling: between January and March, Don was in India studying with Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar, the great master of the rudra vina, and in May, the whole family went to Japan. While Don would continue to use elements of Organic Music Theatre (as well as the naming convention "Organic Music")

53 Bengt Berger, interview with Magnus Nygren, 2013.

54 Vegetarian sandwiches made with adzuki bean patties.

55 Cherry, "Life Writings," 300.

56 Don Cherry on piano, vocals, and cornet; Bengt Berger on drums and percussion; Gérard "Doudou" Gouirand on reeds; Bernt Rosengren on tenor sax; Christer Bothén on donso ngoni and bass clarinet; Palle Danielsson on bass; and Jane Robertson on cello.

57 For the June 1974 tour: Don Cherry on cornet, vocals, donso ngoni, flute, and percussion; Moki Cherry on tanpura; Naná Vasconcelos on berimbau and percussion; Bengt Berger on drums and percussion; Kjell Westling on saxophone. For the July 1975 tour: Don Cherry on cornet, vocals, donso ngoni, flute, and percussion; Moki Cherry on tanpura; Frank Lowe on saxophone; Bengt Berger on drums and percussion; Johnny Dyani on bass. And for an early 1976 tour: Don Cherry on cornet, vocals, and donso ngoni; Moki Cherry on tanpura; Gian Piero Pramaggiore on guitar; and Naná Vasconcelos on berimbau and percussion.

for a wide variety of projects throughout the seventies–including smaller collaborations and duets featuring Moki's tapestries with Ed Blackwell, Han Bennink, and Naná Vasconcelos–the underlying preparatory process was not as present. By the autumn of 1977, Don and Moki had purchased a loft space in Long Island City, New York. About that time, the story of Organic Music Theatre had nearly faded away, and with his new groups, the trio Codona and the quartet Old and New Dreams, Don altered his musical path again.

Above, top row: Bobo Stenson (*seated on far left*), Jan Robertson (*cello*), Christer Bothén (*sax*), Eagle-Eye Cherry (*seated in foreground*); *bottom row*: Don Cherry (*horn*), Palle Danielsson (*bass*), Moki Cherry (*tanpura*).

Below: Christer Bothén (*sax*), Moki Cherry, Eagle-Eye Cherry, Don Cherry.

Don Cherry at Daisy Cherry's house in Watts, Los Angeles, California, ca. 1976.
Left to right: Don Cherry, Daisy Cherry, Eagle-Eye Cherry, Neneh Cherry,
Lisa Lawrence. Photo: Moki Cherry.

> The international jazz critics selected Don Cherry as this year's [1963] trumpet talent deserving of greater recognition. This award of *DownBeat* magazine will hardly help him find more work, now that he is no longer with the Sonny Rollins group. Winning such an award might help Cherry work if he also wanted to play like Miles Davis et al, or maybe, said he did, or at least could spin a bass on his head while holding a note (as Roland Kirk did recently at the Village Gate). But, unfortunately, all Cherry's got going for him is his musical intelligence, which mostly will lead to starvation on the New York jazz scene. Club owners do not care especially for intelligent black musicians.[58]
>
> –Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)

Though jazz critics realized the depth of Don's talent early on, his life was one of struggle. Amiri Baraka's wry summation appeared in the French journal *Africa Latin America Asia Revolution* in 1964, a few years before the Cherrys felt compelled to relocate to Europe.[59] In New York and Los Angeles, Don endured hard times, financially and psychically, as he wrestled with addiction, leading to arrest and jail time. Throughout his life he contended with racial inequality on a deep and personal level. In an interview with Knox from 1970, Don breaks his usual silence on political issues to address black activism and his understanding of the dialectical relationship of politics and spirituality:

> In America now there are many, many programs. One of the joyful things that happened is in Newark, where many people had worked to have a black Mayor [Kenneth Allen Gibson], and it worked out. And that's a way, you know, I mean that's one way. Then there are many people working, both black and white, to expose the injustice that is happening to the Black Panthers. Even myself,

58 LeRoi Jones, "Don Cherry: Trumpet of the Year," *Africa Latin America Asia Revolution* 1, no. 9 (1964): 137.

59 This review initially appeared as a feature in the November 21, 1963, issue of *DownBeat* and was reprinted in Baraka's *Black Music* (1967). The phrasing here appears only in the version adapted for *Revolution*.

> I have done things, worked on it. But that's this thing of problems, problems come from the mind. It's like politics, politics has to be problems because politics is all from the mind. You don't feel in politics, you just have to think about, the action is from the mind. But to contradict politics is spiritualism you know and that's the balance, they're both essential. I say that in regard to the black movement in America, I think it is very essential. I'm really involved in music and I feel that music should be free of politics, because it's a direction which I say is contradictory, so it should automatically be free of politics and also free of culture. Culture is culture-for-sale.[60]

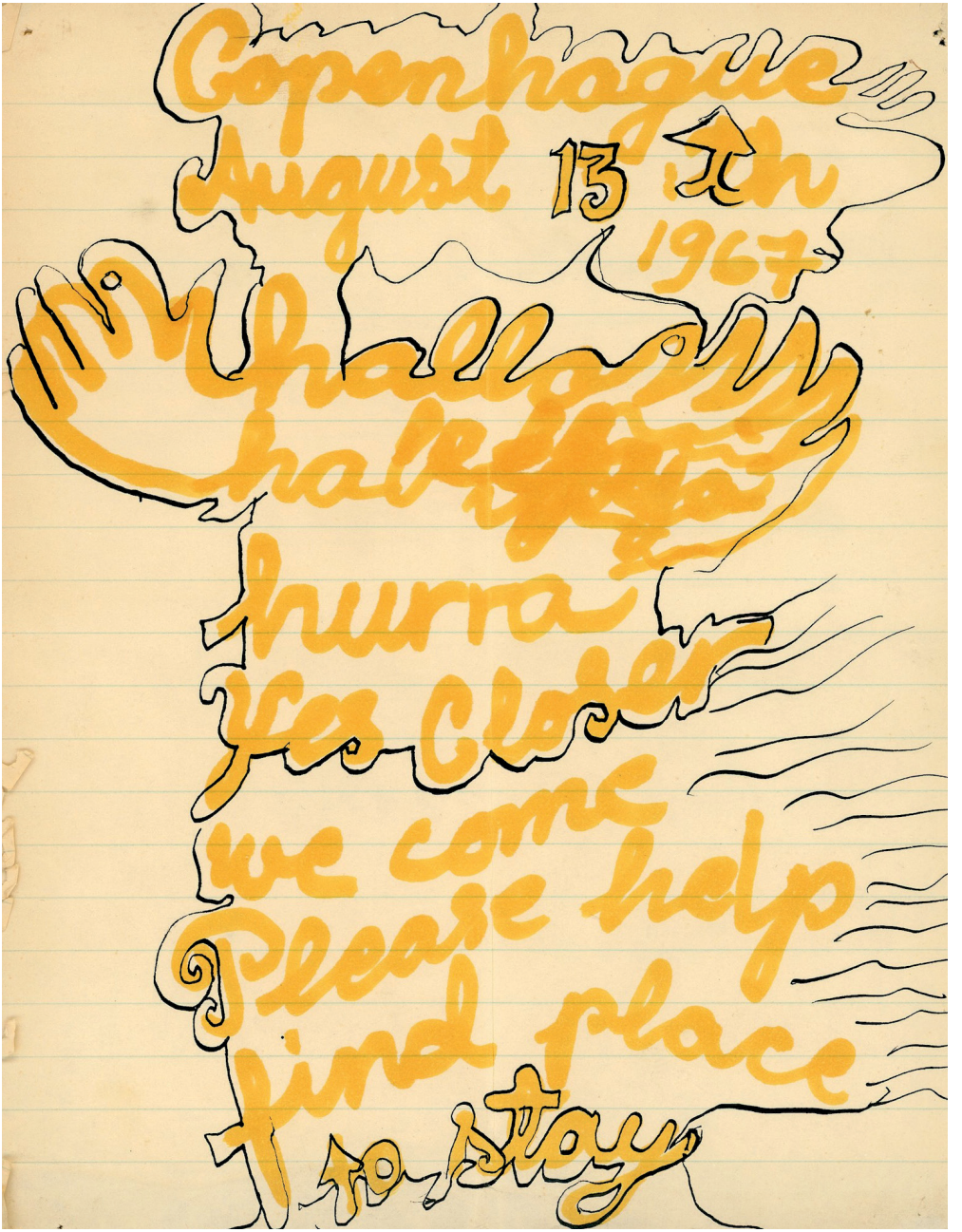
While Don here insists that music is free of politics and aligned with spirituality, he stresses the need for the two domains to exist in mutual opposition. Remembering his time at Dartmouth, he touches on the war in Southeast Asia while explaining that he did not himself participate in the student strike. Condemning police violence against people of color and US laws prohibiting interracial marriage, he proposes that the most effective resistance to structural racism lies in establishing an alternate social environment—paralleling Moki's dictum, "The stage is home and home is a stage." His outlook brings Buddhist pacifism to the militancy of the Nation of Islam.[61] "[Elijah Muhammad] believes that Islam is the nature of the black people and Islam is a beautiful way of life for use in the home. It starts in the home, if there's anything that's going to happen in society, it must start in the home. Once it starts in the home it then vibrates and radiates out."[62] Don and Moki's home, and the ethos that emanated from it, were founded in their deeply held belief that art and education can bring people together in a communal social arrangement that will be beneficial to all.

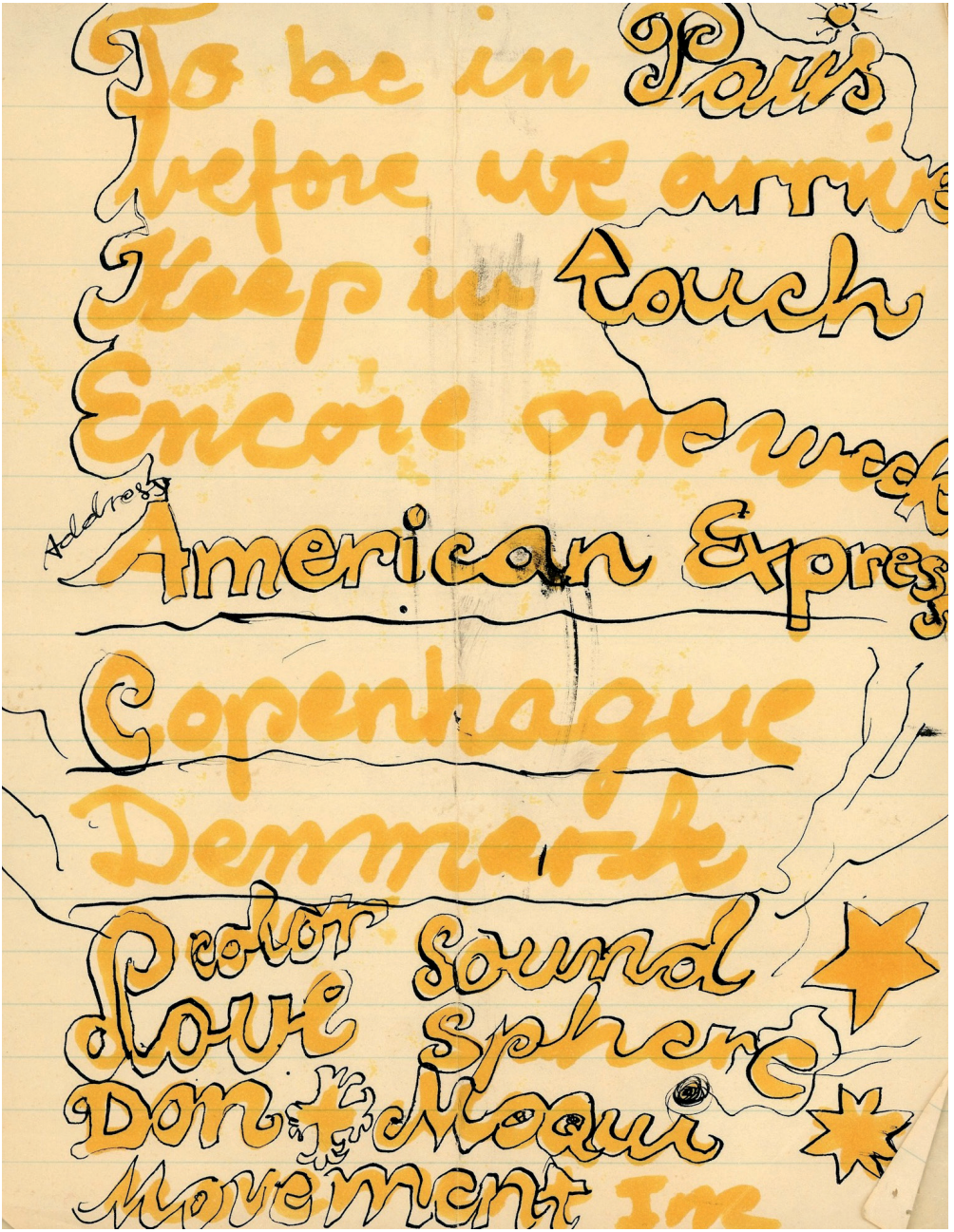
60 Knox, "Don Cherry at Dartmouth," 474–75. Mayor Kenneth Allen Gibson is the subject of bitter reflection in the "Home" chapter of Amiri Baraka's *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones / Amiri Baraka* (New York: Freundlich Books, 1984), 230–313. Baraka had been closely involved in Gibson's election campaign, but the two fell out over Gibson's about-face regarding the construction of the Kawaida Towers housing project in Newark during 1970–72, named after a Black Nationalist ideology pioneered by Baraka. In 1969, Cherry played on Kuumba-Toudie Heath's album *Kawaida* (O'be Records, 1970), which featured liner notes by Baraka. Cherry and Baraka had also appeared together four years earlier, on Sunny Murray's *Sonny's Time Now* (Jihad Productions, 1965).

61 Cherry's longtime friend and collaborator Ed Blackwell had been arrested in New Orleans with his wife, Frances, on the charge of miscegenation in 1960.

62 Knox, "Don Cherry at Dartmouth," 475.

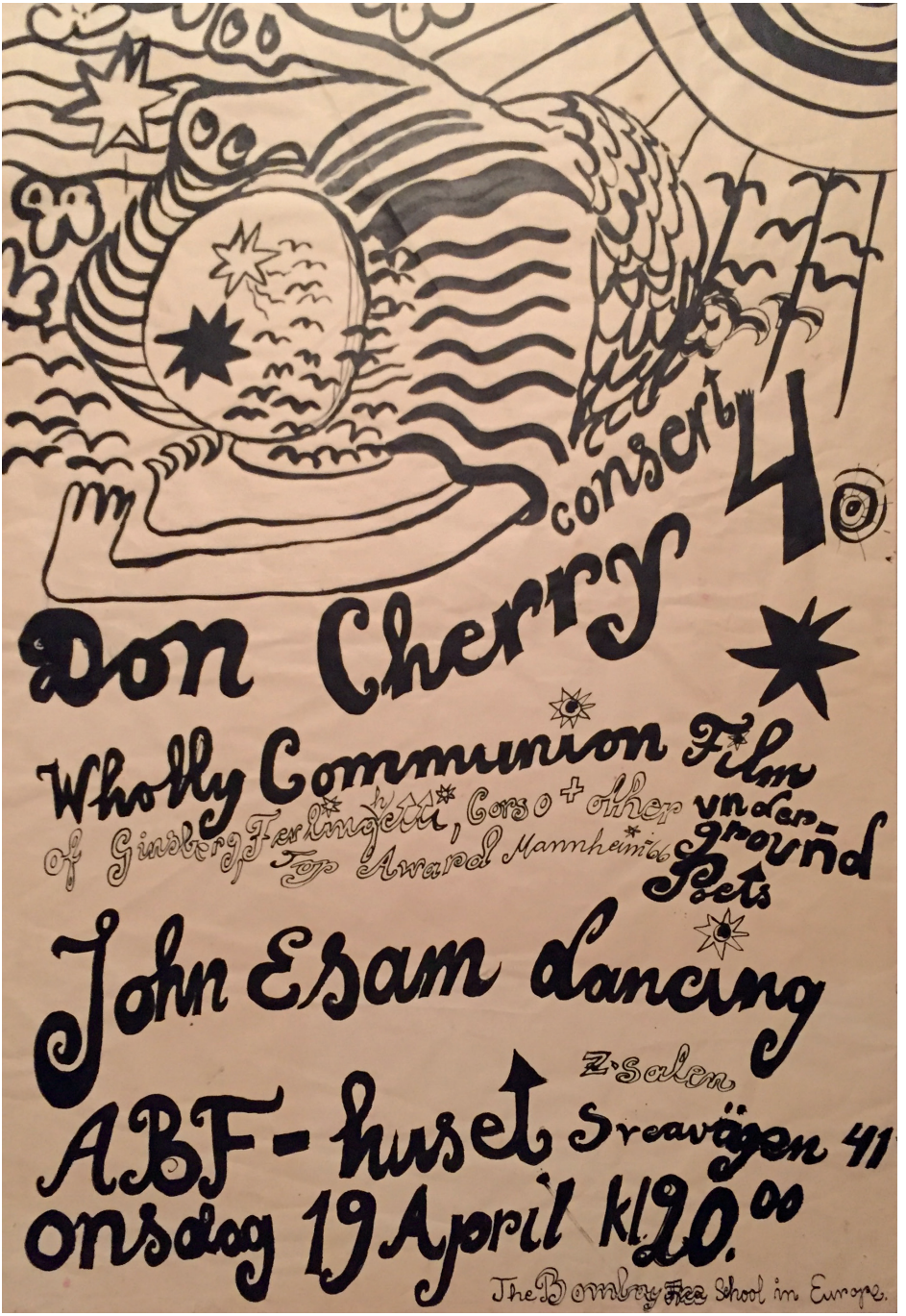
Flier by Moki Cherry for August 23, 1967, Movement Incorporated concert at Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark.


Copenhague
August 13th
1967
hallo
hurra
Yes Closer
we come
Please help
find place
to stay



Above and left: letter from Moki Cherry to Philippe Gras regarding Movement Incorporated tour, August 13, 1967.

Flier by Moki Cherry for 1967 Movement Incorporated concert.



Flier by Moki Cherry for April 19, 1967, Don Cherry concert with screening of Peter Whitehead's *Wholly Communion* (1965) in Stockholm.

Above, below, and left: Movement Incorporated concert featuring Don Cherry (*trumpet, piano*), Pedro Urbina (*guitar, drum*), and Jacques Thollot (*drum kit*) on France Télévisions, 1967. Photos: Philippe Gras.

Exhibition at Tågarp Schoolhouse, ca. 1979. Photo: Rita Knox.

 Don Cherry, Steve Roney, and Moki Cherry in Tågarp, 1979. Photo: Rita Knox.

Steve Roney (*on stepladder*) and others installing an exhibition at Tågarp Schoolhouse, 1979. Photo: Rita Knox.

Gathering at Tågarp Schoolhouse, ca. 1974. *Top row:* Don Cherry, Nils Edström, David Cherry, Eagle-Eye Cherry; *bottom row:* Åge Delbanco (Babaji), Rita Knox, Marco Cristofolini.

Workshop at Tågarp Schoolhouse, ca. 1974. *Left to right:* Åge Delbanco (Babaji), Naná Vasconcelos, Don Cherry, and Eagle-Eye Cherry.

Don Cherry, David Cherry, and Åge Delbanco (Babaji)
at Tågarp Schoolhouse, 1974.

Gathering at Tågarp Schoolhouse featuring Åge Delbanco (Babaji), Don Cherry, and an unidentified musician (*third from the left, facing forward*), ca. 1973. Photo: Rita Knox.

Don Cherry and Eagle-Eye Cherry practicing music
at Tågarp Schoolhouse, ca. 1971.

Above: Don Cherry playing donso ngoni for Maria Hillfon and children, 1979.

Below, left to right: Don Cherry, Tonie Roos, unidentified child, Neneh Cherry, Moki Cherry, Marianne Karlsson, and Werner Karlsson. Photo: Rita Knox.

Above: Don Cherry and Curt Hillfon performing at Tågarp Schoolhouse, 1979.

Below: Steve Roney with a painting by Åke Holmqvist at an exhibition, 1979.
Photo: Rita Knox.

Exhibition at Tågarp Schoolhouse, August, 1979. Photo: Rita Knox.

Gathering at "Utopias and Visions," Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1971.
Left to right: Okay Temiz (*drums*), Eagle-Eye Cherry (*standing right of drums*), Don Cherry. Photo: Gunnar Smoliansky.

 Moki Cherry caring for Eagle-Eye Cherry and Neneh Cherry, 1971.

Moki Cherry with Bengt Berger (*tabla*) and Don Cherry (*tanpura*), 1971.
Photo: Harriet Szabady.

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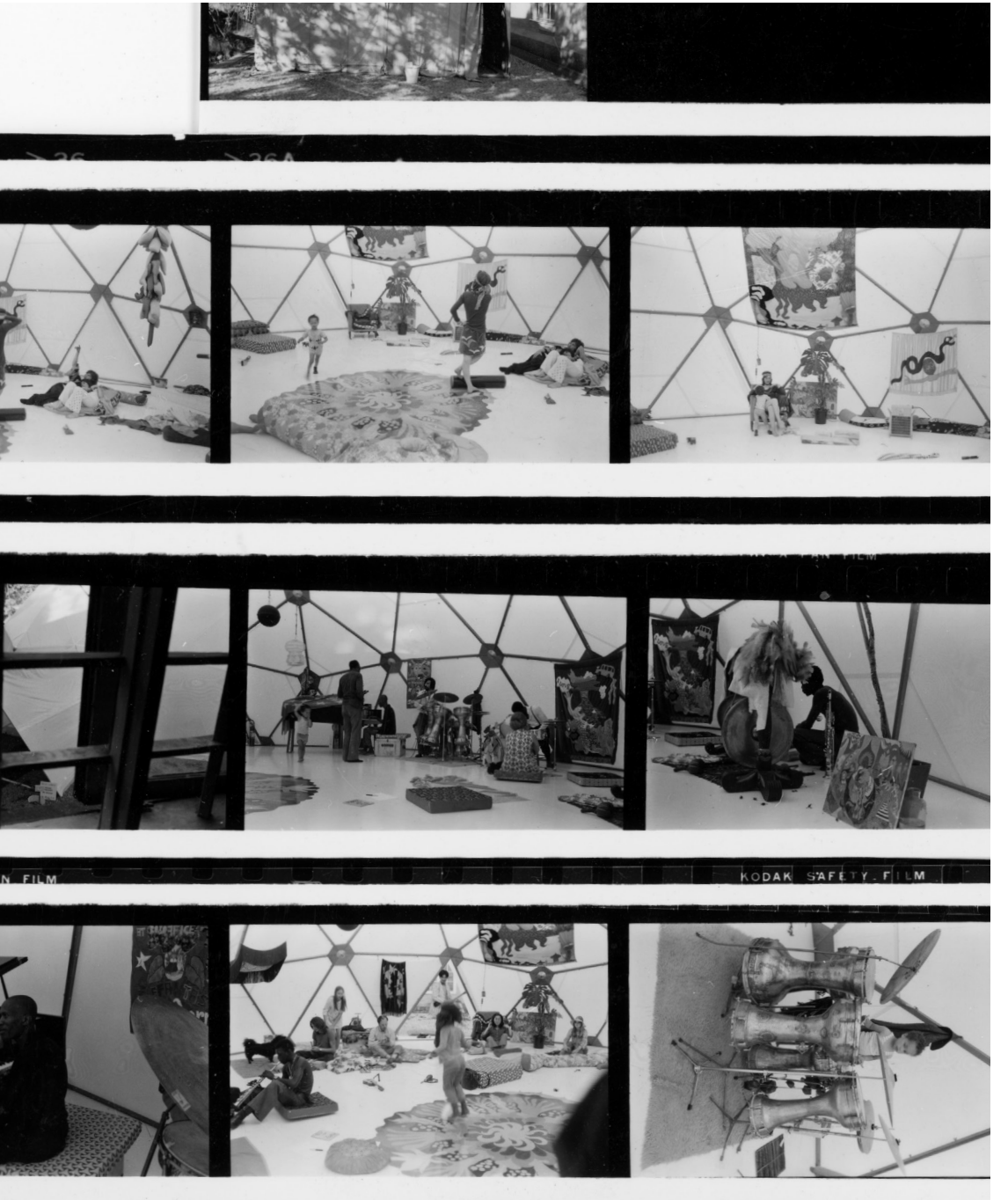
KODAK SAFETY FILM
KODAK TRI X PAN FI



Contact sheet from “Utopias and Visions,” 1971. Photo: Rita Knox.

Contact sheet from “Utopias and Visions,” 1971. Photo: Rita Knox.

Don Cherry and Eagle-Eye Cherry with members of the Taj-Mahal Travellers, 1971.

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

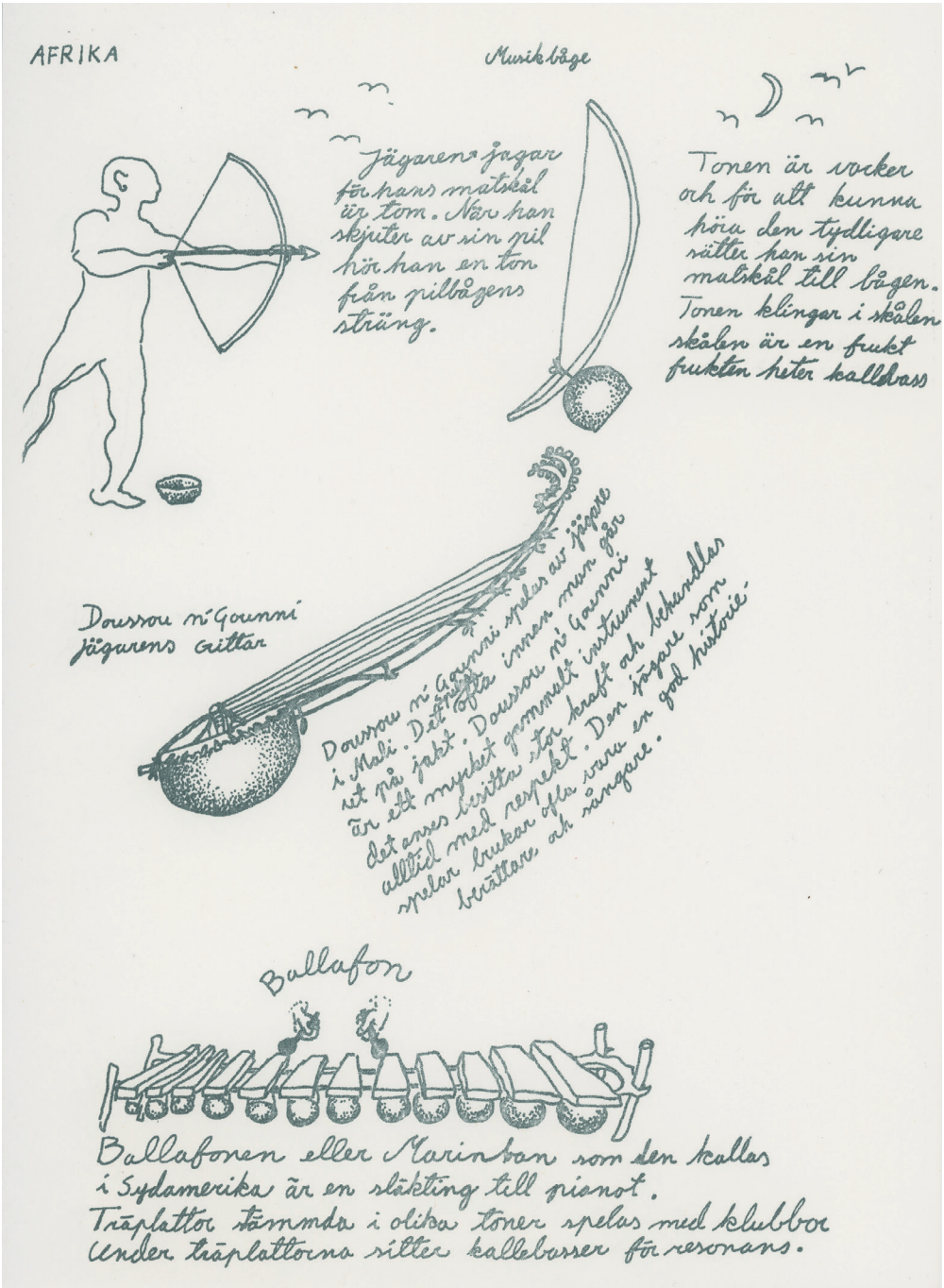
(101–107)

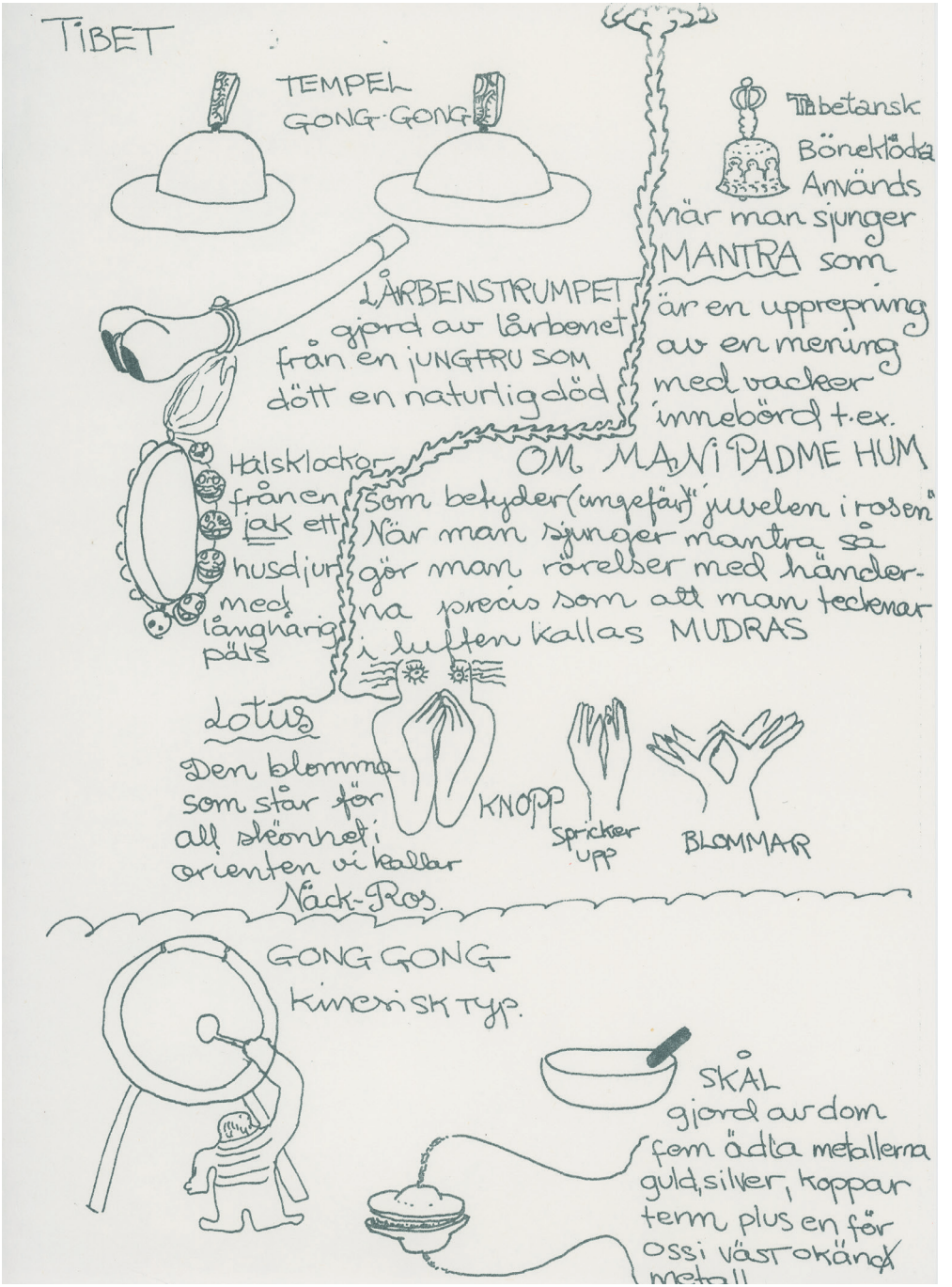
Don Cherry leading a workshop, location unknown, ca. 1971–73.
Photo: Rita Knox.

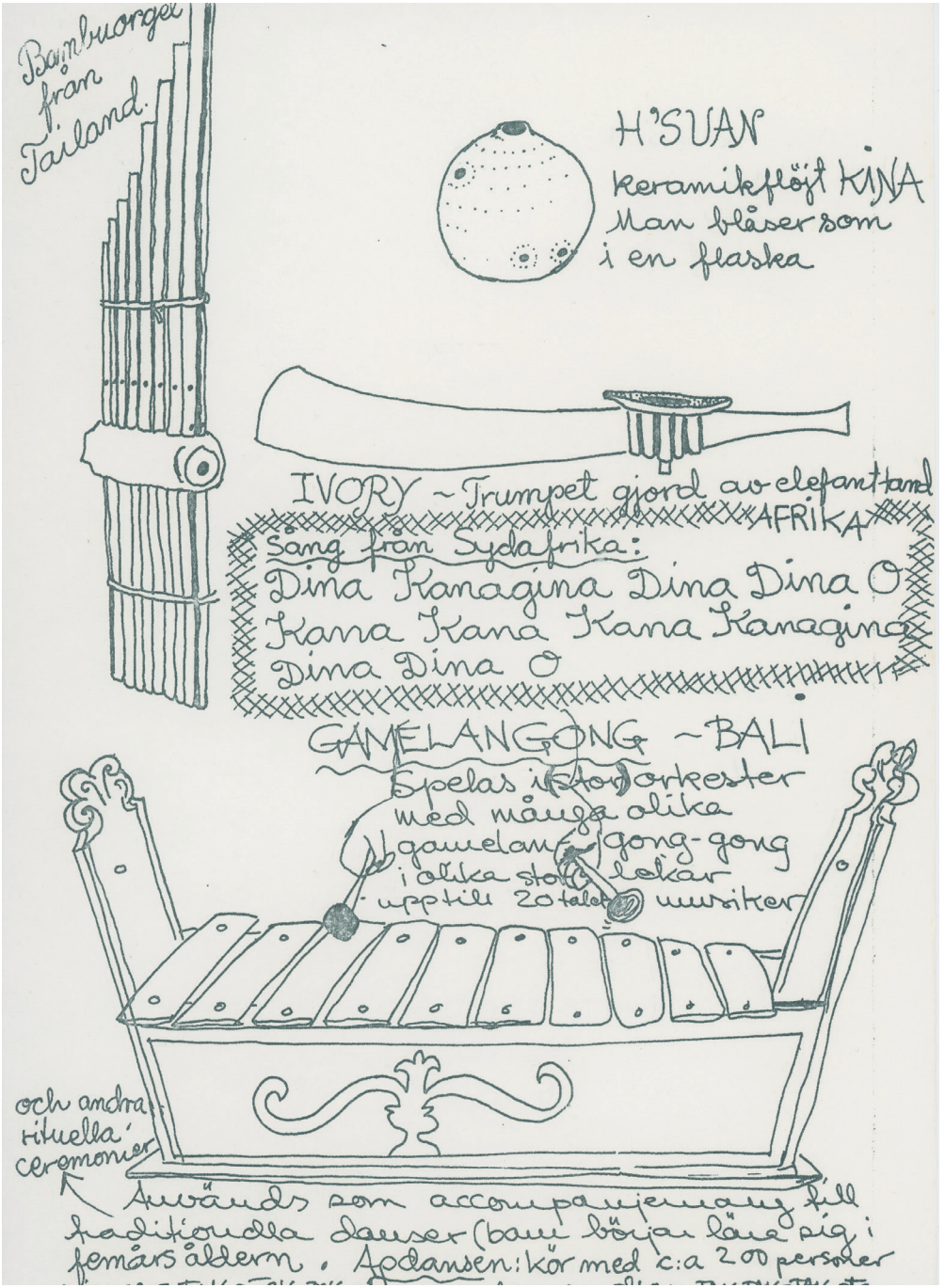
SA RI GA Ma PA Dha
C D E F G A

Above, below, and left: Don Cherry, Moki Cherry, and Christer Bothén hosting children's workshops, locations unknown, ca. 1973.

Don Cherry and Christer Bothén hosting a children's workshop, location unknown, ca. 1973.

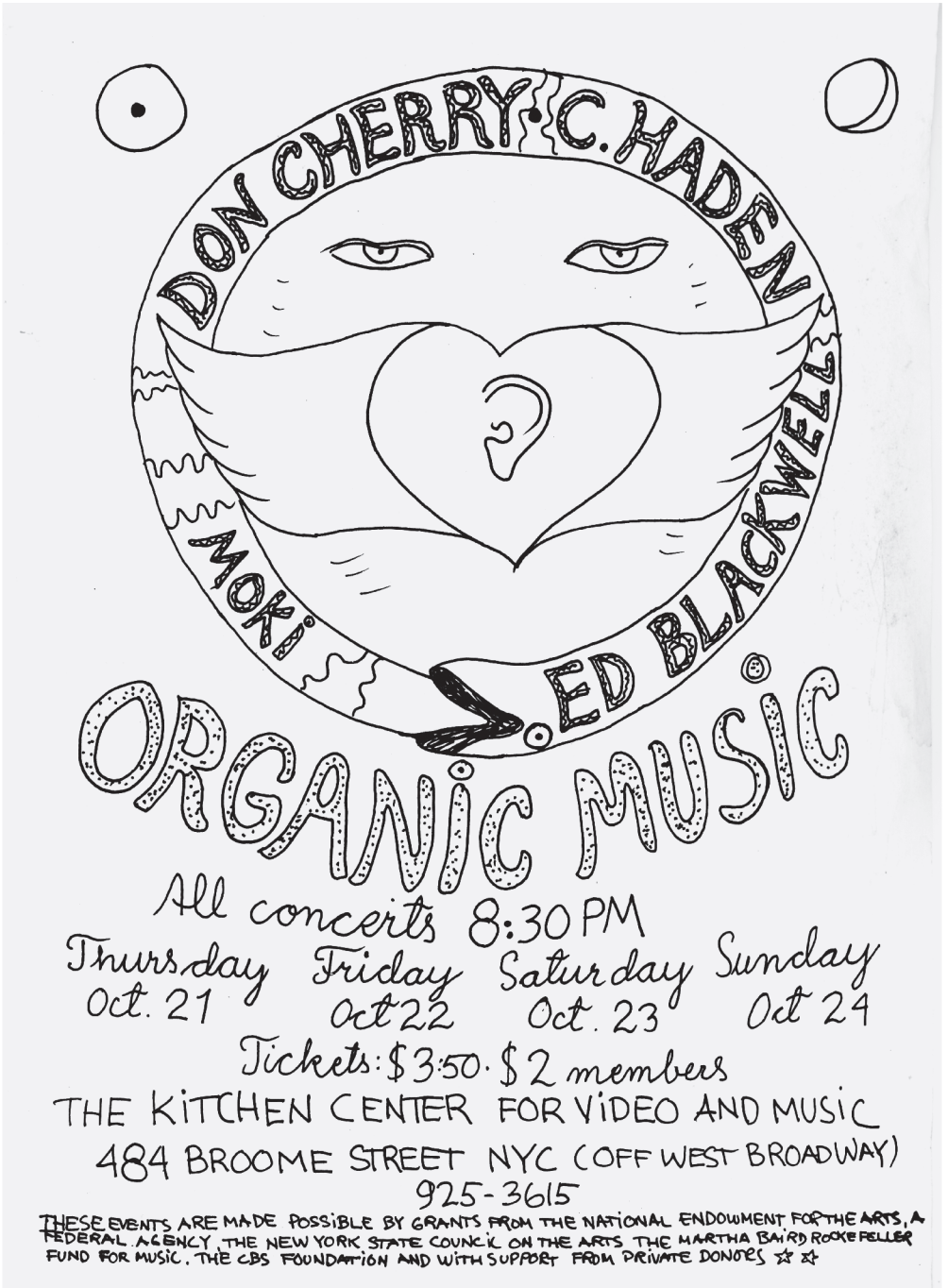

AFRIKA
Musikbåge
Jägaren jagar för hans matskål är tom. När han skjuter av sin pil hör han en ton från pilbågens sträng.
Tonen är vacker och för att kunna höra den tydligare sätter han sin matskål till bågen. Tonen klingar i skålen skålen är en frukt frukten heter kallebass
Doussou n'Gounni jägarens cittar
Doussou n'Gounni spelas av jägare i Mali. Det spelas ofta innen man går ut på jakt. Doussou n'Gounni är ett mycket gammalt instrument det anses besitta stor kraft och behandlas alltid med respekt. Den jägare som spelar brukar ofta vara en god historie-berättare och sångare.
Ballafon
Ballafonen eller Marinban som den kallas i Sydamerika är en släkting till pianot. Träplattor stämmda i olika toner spelas med klubbor under träplattorna sitter kallebasser för resonans.


TIBET
TEMPEL
GONG-GONG
Tibetansk
Bönekloda
Används
när man sjunger
MANTRA som
är en upprepning
av en mening
med vackeer
innebörd t.ex.
OM MANI PADME HUM
LÅRBENSTRUMPET
gjord av lårbenet
från en JUNGFRU SOM
dött en naturlig död
Halsklockor
från en
lak ett
husdjur
med
långhårig
päls
Som betyder (ungefär) "juvelen i rosen"
När man sjunger mantra så
gör man rörelser med händer-
na precis som att man teckenar
i luften kallas MUDRAS
Lotus
Den blomma
som står för
all skönhet i
orienten vi kallar
Näck-Ros
KNOPP
Spricker
upp
BLOMMAR
GONG GONG
kinesisk typ.
SKÅL
gjord av dom
fem ädla metallerna
guld, silver, koppar
tenn plus en för
ossi VÄST okänd
metall

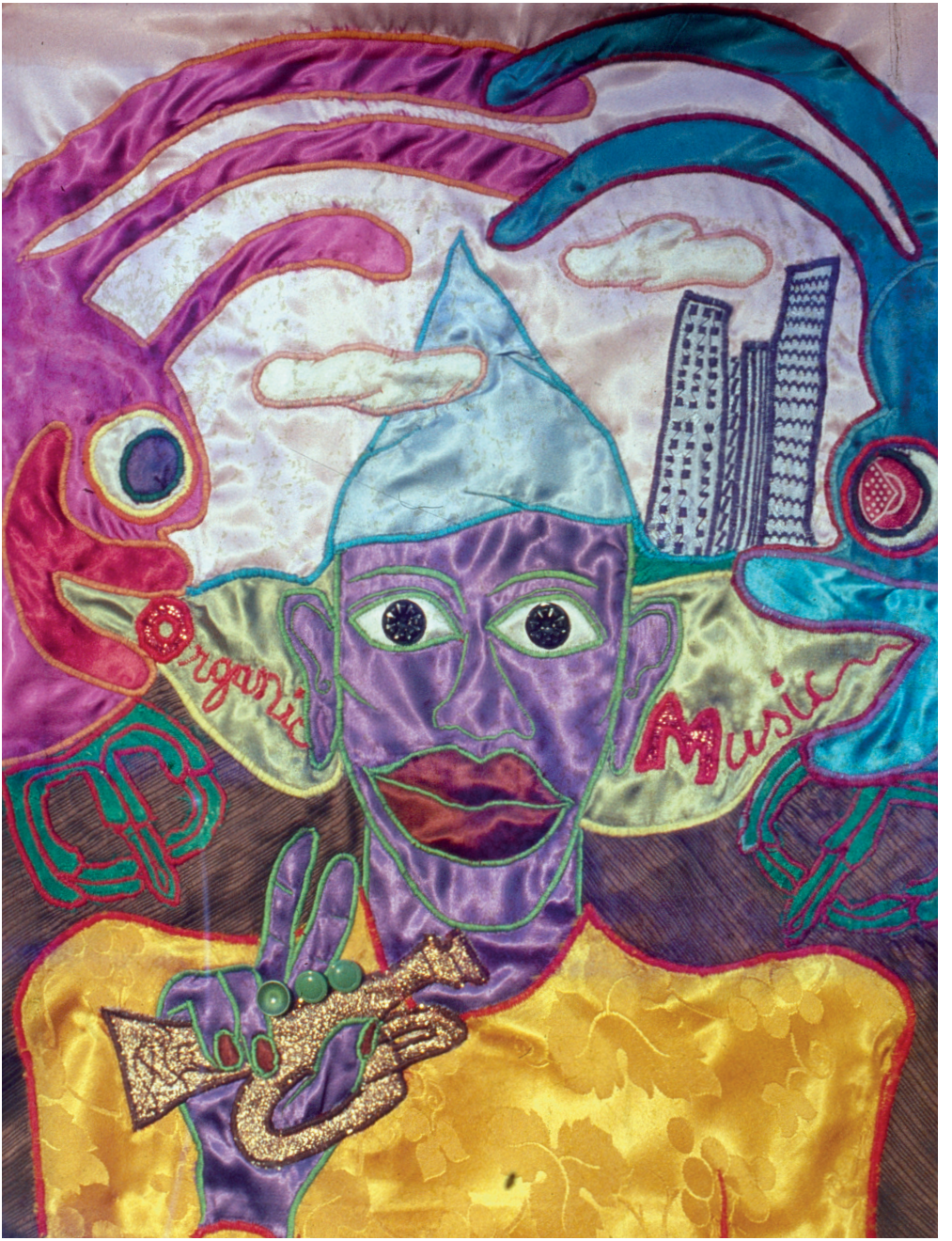


Children's workshop handouts depicting instruments from around the world with illustrations by Christer Bothén and Moki Cherry, ca. 1973.

ORGANIC MUSIC THEATRE



Flier by Moki Cherry for an Organic Music performance at the Kitchen, New York, October 1973. Photo: Moki Cherry.



Moki Cherry, untitled (portrait of Don Cherry), 1975, textile appliqué with mixed fabrics on silk, dimensions unknown.

Above: Preparation for an Organic Music Theatre performance featuring Naná Vasconcelos (*far left*), location unknown, ca. 1972.

Below: Set-up for an Organic Music Theatre concert in Sicily, Italy, featuring Christer Bothén on piano, ca. 1973.

Organic Music Theatre performance featuring Christer Bothén (*donso ngoni*), Kjell Westling (*wind*), Naná Vasconcelos (*berimbau*), Bengt Berger (*standing at center*), and Don Cherry (*obscured by Berger*), location unknown, ca. 1974.

Christer Bothén (*donso ngoni*), Moki Cherry (*tanpura*), and Don Cherry (*harmonium*), location unknown, ca. 1973.

NOW

Above and left: Eternal Now photoshoot, ca. 1974. *Left to right:* Bengt Berger, Don Cherry, Christer Bothén, and Eagle-Eye Cherry (*seated in front of Cherry*).

Organic Music Theatre performing in Warsaw, Poland, ca. 1973. *Left to right:* Bengt Berger, Gérard "Doudou" Gouirand, Eagle-Eye Cherry, Don Cherry, Moki Cherry.

Organic Music Theatre performing at the 1973 Newport Jazz Festival.

Above: Moki Cherry, Don Cherry, Frank Lowe (*saxophone*).

Below: Charlie Haden (*bass*), Bengt Berger, Christer Bothén, Ed Blackwell, Don Cherry, Carlos Ward (*alto sax*), Frank Lowe (*tenor sax*).

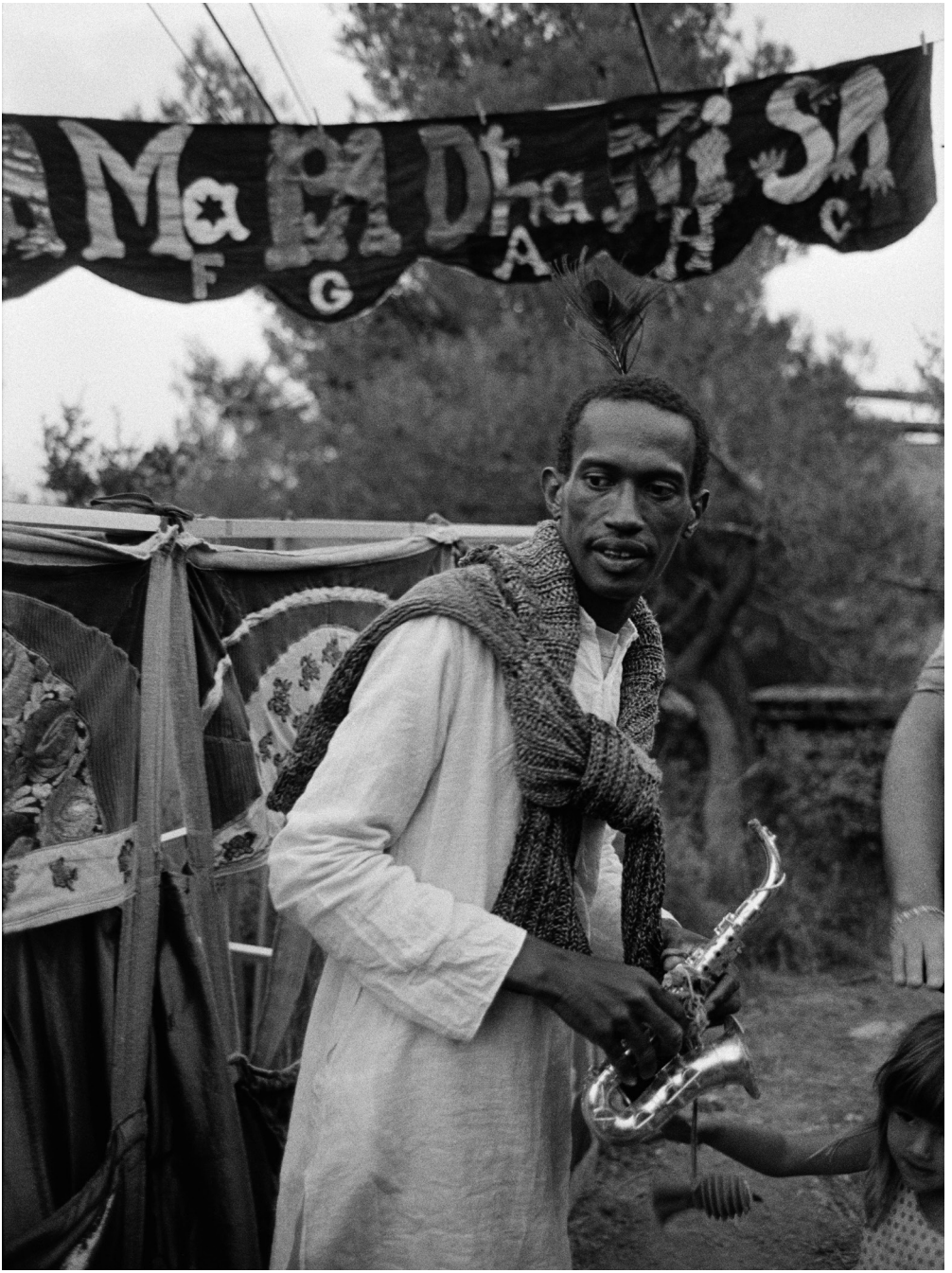
Camping in Chateauvallon, *left to right:* Annie Hedvard (*seated near van on left*), Don Cherry, Naná Vasconcelos, Marianne Rydvall (*standing*), ca. 1972. Photo: Guy Le Querrec.

Camping in Chateauvallon. Don Cherry and Annie Hedvard (*seated at center*) with children, 1972. Photo: Guy Le Querrec.

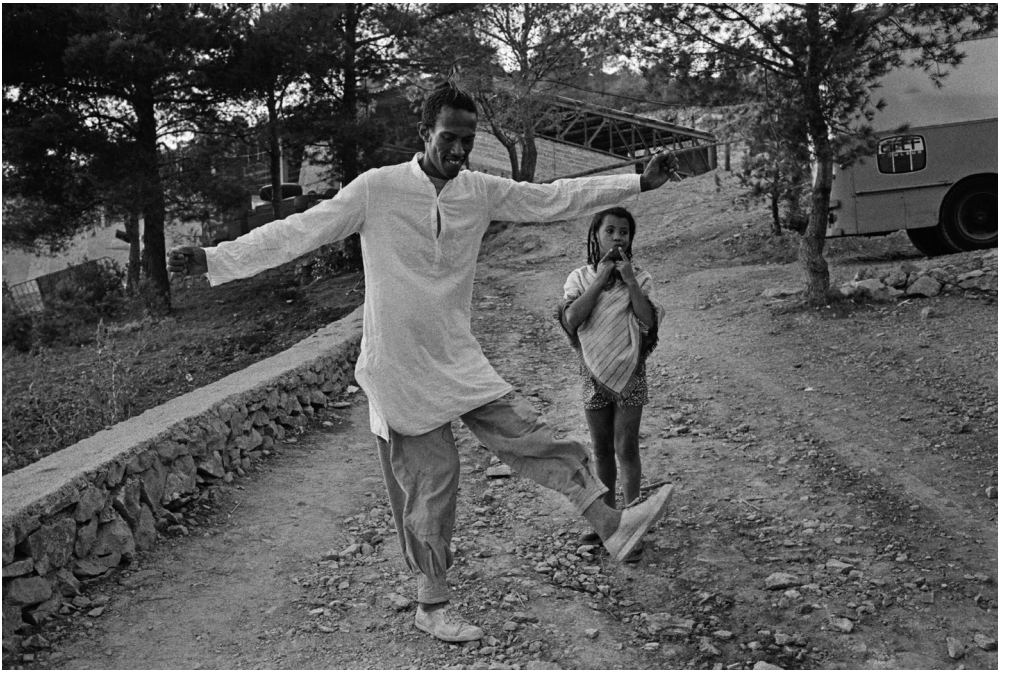
Stockholm Jazzdagar at Moderna Museet, August 25, 1973. *Left to right:* Bobo Stenson (*piano*), Christer Bothén (*saxophone*), Lennart Åberg (*saxophone*), Palle Danielsson (*bass*), Don Cherry (*center*), Bengt Berger (*drums*), Jane Robertson (*cello*), Sune Spångberg (*standing under umbrella on right*). Photo: Paul Gerhard Deker.

Concert at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, January 16, 1977. Photo: Rita Knox.

Concert at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, featuring Bronisław Suchanek, Jojje Wadenius (*guitar*), Don Cherry (*donso ngoni*), and Per Tjernberg (*bass*), January 16, 1977. Photo: Rita Knox.



Don Cherry outside Festival de jazz de Chateauvallon, 1972.
Photo: Guy Le Querrec.



Don Cherry and Neneh Cherry at Festival de jazz de Chateauvallon, 1972.
Photo: Guy Le Querrec.

DON CHERRY'S SYMPHONY OF THE IMPROVISERS

Keith Knox

This interview between Keith Knox and Don Cherry originally appeared in the August 1967 issue of the British magazine *Jazz Monthly*. It has been lightly edited for clarity, grammar, and spelling. Bracketed notes belong to Keith Knox (with a few exceptions where family names have been inserted by the editors) and have been updated according to current conventions. All footnotes have been added by the editors.

(127–139)

> The music that I play, that I've always been known to play, I have always tried to remember the first thing, the time when my mother first gave me a horn, the feeling of having it and this thing of going to play music, so that feeling to me, through as much music as I've learned, I still remember just that feeling when I first got that horn. And that's what's important to me. That's what music is really about–the infant happiness, the infant happiness, beautiful!

One cold February evening in Stockholm, a few friends and an atmosphere of conviviality provided a relaxed setting for Don Cherry to speak from his life, the hard times and the good times, although it is possible that some of the hard times may have evaporated under the warmth of his natural optimism. Apart from occasional dates, etc., which I have inserted in brackets, the story is just the way Don told it. Don Cherry talked until there were no more words–the rest is music.

I was born in Oklahoma City [November 18, 1936], Negro-Choctaw Indian parents, and when the Okies moved from Oklahoma to California, that's when my family moved [Don was four years old]. I was raised in California, started playing music in California.

Before playing music I used to dance, my sister and I. My father was a bartender and he had a club, so we used to stay up and peek through a hole into the nightclub and see everyone dancing, and we'd dance ourselves. Used to dance for money, big shiny dimes! It was in Oklahoma where we started dancing, but this was in California where my father was a bartender for a while.

In America when you go to school they give you "beginning wind class," beginning wind, so that's when it happened. Everyone learns one instrument. It was a friend of mine, had a nervous breakdown after a while, he's in Camarillo, and he and I started out together.[1] He was quite a genius, yes, man we were at school together–his name was George Newman. I don't think he's made any records or anything because he's been in Camarillo. Someone, his father I think, signed him in and his father died and he's still in there. But I heard that he does come out–like they let him out

1 Camarillo State Hospital in Ventura County, California–a well-known institution where many musicians would go to detox from heroin or to dry out. Charlie Parker wrote the song "Relaxin' at Camarillo," inspired by his six-month stay there.

a month at a time—and he's active musically. He's quite a genius. Ornette knew him.

I started playing trumpet, let's see, in 1950. I think I had a couple of lessons on piano, but I really started in music on trumpet. The piano lessons let me learn the fundamentals of music itself, the staff, and that's the training I had when I picked up the trumpet in junior high school. Well, it's like we had a little band and kind of learned how to swing, and the type of music was what they would consider rock and roll now. We used to play all the high schools and things.

But one of the best experiences I had when I was young was studying at high school with a teacher named Samuel Brown. He had a swinging brass band there playing arrangements from Dizzy Gillespie, George Russell, and Stan Kenton. There were some very good musicians, and after they'd graduated from the school they would still come back to play. This was in the early fifties in high school, after I'd left junior high school. The band would play concerts at other high schools, and that was good experience for playing with an organization and reading music.

There is this tenor player, James Clay, played with Ray Charles, and him and me used to play together quite a bit—and Billy Higgins, the drummer. There were some very good musicians out there in California at that time, Larance Marable, Dexter Gordon, and Wardell [Gray] and all that. There was what they called West Coast music, but there were some good players and there was jamming all the time. It was just what was happening for me, and a lot of cats would come from the East Coast. I remember when Art Blakey came out, when he had Jackie McLean, and I remember when Clifford Brown came on the scene. We used to be kind of close together. I'd call him on the phone when I'd hear him play something in the club, like "Delilah" or "Daahoud" with Max [Roach]. I met Clifford personally over at Eric Dolphy's house, we were jamming over there; this was when he had to pick between the tenor players Harold Land and Walter Benton. It was quite a decision because they both could play. Clifford Brown, he told me a beautiful thing, that he had to be in shape like an athlete, and he was in shape, screaming! But that's another whole discussion.

You see, I was living a double life. I was in high school but I was out trying to wear a tie, getting into these underage places all ways, you know, when you're young. I stopped hanging out with all the high school kids and I would be out on the streets. I guess I was considered a professional because I had a union card, it's true.

I was privileged to hear Charlie Parker play—this was when he came out to California. I heard him three times, at the 5-4 Ballroom, that's a rhythm and blues place; he played a concert with Stan Kenton's band and he was working at this burlesque place, the Tiffany Club, with Chet Baker. George Newman and myself were listening from the back, in the kitchen at the Tiffany, because we were too young to get in, when Bird burst through the door in a great argument—Charlie Parker! He had strings there for a while.

Yes, I met Ornette Coleman in California—the first impact was gigantic, swept me off my feet. Well, you know, his first wife, we went to school together and that's where I first heard about him because she was the one that had all the jazz records, Jaynie.[2] There's this tune we recorded that's named after her. George Newman—Ornette Coleman used to borrow his saxophone, especially one occasion when Ornette was going to play with Charlie Parker at the Tiffany Club. Ornette used to wear his hair very long, and I felt when I first met him that he looked like the Black Jesus Christ, because his hair was like the Beatles' is now. Yeah, that was something, that was in Watts. I didn't play with Ornette then because I was very young, but years passed. Yes, Ornette was young too—he's still young.

And then, in the period with James Clay, we were playing around together and we started a group, George Newman and I, called ourselves the Jazz Messiahs. We went on tours with rhythm and blues groups and our group as a package, ended up in Canada—Vancouver. It was a very beautiful period. There was this bass player from Syracuse called PeeWee [Williams], Billy Higgins, George Newman, and myself, just four people. Playing originals, we started writing around that time.

We went to Vancouver, they have a jazz society up there, and it got so that every six months we would go up there with a band. The first was with George Newman, then with James Clay, and the third one was with Ornette Coleman [in 1957]. We went up to this gig, and like Ornette says, this was one of the first jazz jobs that he had, because this was a real jazz club. Ornette, he can really play the blues, I mean like that Buster Smith plays, from Texas. Well, after the job I stayed and was living in Canada whilst Ornette went back to California. That's when he contacted me that it was possible to record, and we did this first record on Contemporary [*Something Else!!!!*, Contemporary 3551]. Ornette and myself were combining our minds musically and I was learning a lot from him, still learn a lot from him. We would study the whole musical fundamentals

2 Jayne Cortez (1934–2012).

and we would play compositions that he would write frontwards and backwards. It was just that we went through music together. When I came back from Vancouver we played together and made this record. And we played at a club with Paul Bley, the Hillcrest, which was one of the few swinging jazz scenes they had in Los Angeles during my period in California. It was Paul's gig and we played some of Ornette's compositions, some of Paul's, and some of Carla Bley's compositions.

After this period, Ornette and I won a scholarship to the School of Jazz in Lenox, Massachusetts, near Boston, a beautiful school out in the country. We met Percy Heath when we did this record for Contemporary. We played together, he learned some of the compositions, and we ended up making a record with him and Shelly Manne [*Tomorrow*, Contemporary 3569]. Percy had told John Lewis about us, and in some way John heard of the scholarship, and the next thing we were on an airplane. We stopped in Texas; that's where I met Ornette's family—he has a sister that sings the blues—and then we went to school.

John Lewis was there, George Russell was there. That's where I first met George Russell and we studied the Lydian concept. Max Roach was teaching there, and Kenny Dorham; Bob Brookmeyer was there for a while. It was a fantastic school with all types of classes going on twelve hours a day. We got a letter from John Lewis. Gunther Schuller was teaching there, Dave Brubeck came for a lecture one time, and they would have concerts—it was a very good thing. And Marshall Stearns: we would go through this book of his [*The Story of Jazz*, Oxford University Press] as part of the studies, and he would play records for us, and we would go all the way back through jazz. There were some very good students who have gone on from the School, like arranger Gary McFarland and Perry Robinson—he's a clarinet player. Dave Baker, he was one of the students. There were some very good cats, doing something.

After we left the School, Ornette and I went back, and we—that's Billy Higgins and Charlie Haden—more or less lived musically together for about a year. Ornette and I would have a get-together or a recital in the mornings, learn some sounds, and then in the afternoons we would practice with the cats in the band. At night I'd have some things that I was working on, things we were practicing, and we did like this for a year. This was on the west side of Los Angeles. We were trying to survive, we hadn't started to live yet, but we were dedicated, young. We'd learned a lot musically because of the inspiration that Ornette puts out—it's beautiful. That's when Nesuhi Ertegun from Atlantic Records came to hear us, and he recorded us. That's when we went to New York. [The Atlantic

recordings are 1317, 1327, 1353, 1364, 1378, and 1394, covering the whole time with Atlantic.][3]

New York opened its arms, beautiful, everybody came, from Leonard Bernstein to Thelonious Monk. The people came on different nights when different musicians played—everybody was trying to dig what it was at. I remember a night in particular when Charlie Mingus and Phineas Newborn came in, and they were running on the bandstand and playing the piano to you. Everybody was trying to feel where it's at; they knew we were from the West Coast.

It was a good band, Billy Higgins, Charlie Haden, Ornette, and me. After Billy Higgins left there was this drummer Edward Blackwell, who played with Ornette in the period when I was first going to sessions. That's when I first met Blackwell. He's from New Orleans and has fantastic rhythm—he can sound like ten drummers at once, all with eleven fingers. The Five Spot was the first place we worked at, but there was one particular club way downtown every Wednesday night where we would play. Armands, that was the name of it, and that was *the* club. We toured the States, went to a few cities in the States, and then I went to jail.

And then of course I didn't have a cabaret card. It's a little better now in the States, but if you have an arrest you can't play in clubs and things. That's in New York. That's the reason Billy Higgins lost his job, and there's Billie Holiday, she had to go through it.

Then I had a period of struggling in New York, really struggling, and then I went back home. Back to California.

In California, Sonny Rollins and I met on a mountain, and he sent for me. The first time was to join the band in San Francisco. He had Jim Hall and a trio. I played one night and Sonny said it wouldn't work out, but he said he'd send for me later. I went back home and waited a few more months and nobody sent for me. So I went to New York again. That was quite a spiritual experience playing with Sonny Rollins, because he is a very spiritual man. I played with him for about eight or nine months [in the latter part of 1962 and early 1963]. We did some cities in the States and we toured Europe. That was the first time I came to Europe. It was when I was touring with Sonny Rollins that we went to Rome and I met a tenor player from Argentina by the name of [Leandro] "Gato" Barbieri. I met Albert Ayler for the first time when I was with Sonny

3 Respectively: Ornette Coleman, *The Shape of Jazz to Come* (1959); Ornette Coleman, *Change of the Century* (1960); The Ornette Coleman Quartet, *This Is Our Music* (1961); The Ornette Coleman Double Quartet, *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation* (1961); The Ornette Coleman Quartet, *Ornette!* (1962); and Ornette Coleman, *Ornette On Tenor* (1962).

Rollins—this was in Copenhagen. It was great. We played together that night and I heard him play with Dexter [Gordon] and Don Byas. It was beautiful, yeah, that was quite a night! Albert has a spiritualness about his playing, and when I heard him that night it was the same feeling as when I first heard Ornette Coleman—it was the same kind of spirit going.

I went back to the States with Sonny Rollins and the last time I played with him was at Birdland. I met Albert Ayler again—he was in New York at this time—but I actually came back to Europe with Archie Shepp. Archie was with the [New York] Contemporary Five, which had John Tchicai, J. C. Moses, Don Moore, and myself. That was quite a band to have together, all these musicians, and now some of them have got bands of their own. At that period all of us were playing with a lot of love. It was a beautiful band, that's a whole subject, that band! How did it start? Ah well, it just seemed to come about, it was a beautiful band—that's when they swung. That was when I came to Scandinavia [in late 1963]. We made some recordings in Copenhagen with the Contemporary Five [*New York Contemporary 5*, volumes 1 and 2; Sonet 36 and 51], and there's one from a movie that we did—it's almost the Contemporary Five.[4] Then there's this record that Archie Shepp did on Savoy [*Archie Shepp and the New York Contemporary 5*, Savoy 12184]. It was Ted Curson's session and I did one composition, "Consequences," and I just happened to be there when they were playing pretty hot.

Around this time there was a wonderful thing that happened to me: I had the opportunity and the freedom to do what I wanted to do musically. These were compositions that I did for Radio Denmark—some of the musicians were on this film that we did, like J. C. Moses. The instrumentation was one cello, which was my concert master, and he picked some other musicians, classical musicians who wanted to improvise. We used the backboard to make up the motifs and make up the changes, so we could switch them around, criss-cross them into different parts. We had a harp and two French horn players and they swung so beautifully. I was in Denmark, must have been about three or four months at the end of 1963, and it was around this time that I started to get serious about writing compositions, because I had been through my life playing other people's compositions, which was very good for me, but then I started writing for myself. I never had the chance or the freedom to do this in New York.

4 Niels Holt, *Future One* (Copenhagen: Helion Film, 1963), 16 mm, 9 min.

Anyway I went to New York again, and this is the period [in early 1964] when I was playing with Pharoah Sanders. We were playing together and we made some tapes with David Izenzon and J. C. Moses. Pharoah Sanders is quite a man.

Albert Ayler was in New York at this time and that's where I met Albert again. We came to Europe together, although we hadn't played that much together. Albert just felt that we could tune together and it so happens that we had a wonderful band, with Gary Peacock playing bass and Sonny Murray playing drums. This Sonny Murray, he was a fantastic percussionist at that time, he really makes rhythm breathe. We lived music and ate music together, Albert and I. Well, I feel like we're still doing it, but mostly it was on this tour of Europe. We played Scandinavia [recording Ayler's *Ghosts* in Copenhagen in September 1964, Debut 144] and then went to play around Haarlem in Holland, and that was quite an experience. Gary Peacock was a vegetarian—no, not a vegetarian, one of those with their headquarters in Belgium [macrobiotics], and you eat special rice and seaweed, special teas. I was in it with him for a while; I know it made me very conscious of taste.

We had some time off before going to Haarlem, and I went to Paris for the first time. That was quite an experience. I ended up doing a study in Duke Ellington that was really fantastic, learned everything that was Duke Ellington, and heard a lot about Tricky Sam [Nanton], fell in love with him and Bubber Miley. Duke Ellington is like gold—he's just as old as he is new. That's a good quality for the music to have, that back/forward, old is new. But new is now! Anyway, I met Albert Ayler in Holland again, we met in Haarlem and we split up in Holland.

That's when I went to North Africa, Tangier, went to see some elephants! I just wanted to touch African soil—things when you're a child that you keep in your mind. I met this painter, Hamri,[5] and lived in a village, one of those mountain villages between Tangier and Marrakesh, called Joujouka. It's like it was back to the beginning: I was just being born and everyone played music in the village, wind instruments, and of course rhythm! The children would come out of school and march, little tots, playing until they would fall off to go home, still playing, swinging, yeah! It was a beautiful experience, I mean, people's values would have a certain trueness.

Then I went back [this took about a year] to New York, but by way of Paris and Copenhagen. That was something. Dollar

5 Likely Mohamed Hamri (1932–2000), a painter and author affiliated with the musicians of Joujouka and the Tangier Beat scene.

Brand [Abdullah Ibrahim]! I was in the right place at the right time, because Bent Jædig [tenor] and I were in the front line with Dollar Brand's band and he had Johnny Gertze playing bass and Makaya Ntshoko on drums. Fantastic drummer, Makaya Ntshoko!

Then I went to Paris [around April 1965] and this tenor player, Gato Barbieri, that I met in Rome, and the rest of the group [Karl Hans Berger, vibes; J. F. Jenny-Clark, bass; Aldo Romano, drums], we all ended up in Paris together. So we worked there–it was beautiful.

I did some film work after that, putting music to a film in Munich. It was called *Zero in the Universe,* produced by Jock Livingston, directed by George Moorse, and it was shot in Amsterdam. I think it was made under LSD. It was a very good film and the only thing I was disappointed with was that I didn't have enough time. I watched as he edited the film to get it in my mind, watched it eight hours a day. I set up that Sunday and went around to find the musicians, different cats playing with Kurt Edelhagen's big band. All the musicians came and, you know, stop-watches. There wasn't enough time, though.

After Munich I went back to Paris [mid-1965] and I decided on this band–you know how happy we were and how in tune we were musically. We worked together and eventually we ended up in New York, the whole band.

Gato is a fantastic man. He's got so much love in him, automatically in his sound, and he's paid a lot of dues, has come a long way from where he's from, down in Buenos Aires. You can hear that in his sound–it's one of those sounds that puts the wind in your face. He taught me a lot of songs, sambas and different sounds, very beautiful. Yes, we've played together for the last year and a half or so. That's how time goes.

No, we didn't record in Paris, we played for the French radio [possibly the material from Spring–Summer 1965 which appears on the French issue, Durium A77.127].[6] We did a record in Italy with the whole band [Giorgio Gaslini Ensemble E Quartet, HMV QELP 8154].[7] That's a trouble record; I never got paid for it [this was actually recorded after the band returned to Europe from New York, in February 1966].

I haven't been through my business era yet, been just gypsy, going around to cities trying to teach people to write, teach some

6 Gato Barbieri / Don Cherry, *Togetherness* (Durium, 1966).

7 Giorgio Gaslini Ensemble E Quartet, *Nuovi Sentimenti (New Feelings) Suite* (La Voce Del Padrone, 1966).

of them my compositions, just to have them played so I could hear them, and sometimes it ends up leaving a song. It's beautiful, though, going around learning different songs and different scales. That's a beautiful life, songs and scales.

One night I came to Stockholm on a Christmas, and Lars Gullin was playing at the Golden Circle, with strings. Lars was coming from Malmö and he didn't show up—something to do with a storm—and they asked me to play with the strings. And there was this beautiful music that Lars Gullin had written, from this album that he did [*Portrait of my Pals*, Columbia SSX 1010]. That was quite an experience. That was the first time I came to Stockholm and I've been coming back ever since. I spent some time here playing with a band led by George Russell [recording in Germany with Russell's sextet, Saba 15059, 15060 from August 1965].[8] Yeah, I remember Cab Calloway was in town—he did that New York, New York, suite with the band [in September 1965] one time. And Duke Ellington played a concert—I saw Duke again.

That's one thing about Stockholm, it's good for me to relax and write here. I've found a piano here that has a golden throat to it and I have peace of mind, which I feel is very important. The north, it's a beautiful thing about the north, the birds come up here to have babies. It's nice.

At first [December 1965] Gato and I went to New York and we recorded that *Complete Communion* for Blue Note [Blue Note 4226] with Edward Blackwell and Henry Grimes. Henry Grimes is one of the fantastic bass minds of today—he's really fantastic. Charlie Haden used to say the only bass player that could outplay him was Henry Grimes.

We recorded for Blue Note and we worked at the Village Vanguard. Miles Davis was there on the weekend and we worked there during the weekdays; it was a beautiful period. They lowered the price down to a dollar so that everyone would come. The first three nights were beautiful, but the next week it snowed for the first time in New York, and people said, "Why should I come here on the weekdays when I could be at home?" That was the group that we recorded with.

Miles did a beautiful thing to me: he invited me to sit in with him at the club, which is always a beautiful experience. We played together once before, in Hollywood, California, when I was

8 George Russell Sextet, Guest Artist—Don Cherry, *George Russell Sextet at Beethoven Hall* and George Russel Sextet, Guest—Don Cherry, *George Russell Sextet at Beethoven Hall Part 2* (both Saba, 1965).

working [during the 1950s] with Leroy Vinnegar and Billy Higgins. Miles came in and stayed all night when I first got this pocket trumpet I used to have, from Pakistan. But this particular night Charlie Mingus was there and he said, "It's a matter of minutes!" and Miles said, "Come and play." I went to get my horn and there was a stairway, I looked up and there was Sonny Rollins coming in the door. And we played some "I Got Rhythm."

The first time I met Miles was in San Francisco. He was playing this tune "Well You Needn't" using these auxiliary fingerings, getting the sounds from the notes the way you do. It amazed me, so I walked up to him to tell him how beautiful it was and he said, "Aw man! Keep that shit to yourself." You know, so excuse me Mister Miles Davis, "AND FURTHERMORE . . . " I had come to be with Trane [John Coltrane], because we were staying at the same hotel, getting together, playing together, getting into music, tuning up. I told Trane about it and Trane said, "Well, don't worry man. Miles, he's like that. He'll come to you." Then two weeks later, that time in California, he patted me on my back to ask if he could play my pocket trumpet, and he stayed all that night and played. We got together reminiscing something about Bird—Charlie Parker.

Thelonious Monk, he's been quite an inspiration. When we first came to the Five Spot with Ornette, he would come along. We used to spend some beautiful days together. He says some very wise things—Infinite and Happiness! And Pannonica [de Koenigswarter] the baroness, Nica Rothschild, in New York—she's an inspiration. It takes people like that—that's just it, she's a human being.

But this is a hell of a period that we live in now: it's the age of miracles. I mean, people are getting closer to health, natural health. People all over the world are getting more and more health-conscious; take jazz musicians, they used to dissipate a lot. There was always a lot of drugs and things, but it's not like that now, as much as it was. I mean, everybody is taking healthy things, spiritual food. See, a generation is always of the art, the music, and the children—that's what makes up the generation.

I used to build a tree house and we made a boat and watched it sink, it's true. I've always been on the outside, and that's a good quality for the music to have, like for the wind to blow in your face. And silence: there's a lot of music in the silence.

But there's another thing to do with the new generation. A club to me is just a meeting place where something can happen, and those priceless moments are happening more and more—maybe not for a lot of people but just for a few people who know that it's happening, and that's the thing. There are instruments laying

around more and more, people are finding out all the sounds in their bodies. ONK! UNK! Ta Ta ZAT! They're finding out things.

I have a lot of respect for simplicity, where something's so simple that it's hard–it's hard to be simple. I've been trying to write compositions where it's not really the melody itself, it's the form that's important, or the mood. You can do that also with scales or with modes, and I'm trying to reach to the point where I've a complete symphony for improvisers. It's hard for me to put what I would like to happen and what's happening into words. I feel that music is the kind of thing that you can keep in tune with yourself, and in tune with your life and your feelings, your beliefs. You can stay in tune with the music and be growing all that time, getting stronger. Otherwise I really feel that I shouldn't be talking words, I should be just playing it.

I feel that everyone should be interested in trying to bring some kind of music that they have in their bodies out of them. That's what music was here for. People used to fight over food, but they would get together and play music in their homes.

And then, again it's like where it's different, music can't all be beautiful and it can't all be angry; there's a lot of other things music can be. Yes! And I hope that each one of my compositions has a different approach musically, a different style, a different feeling, a different sound or color. I know I'll get to the point where I'll be just playing one same thing over and over different ways, like in the ragas. Now I'm trying to mix up collages, trying to put all these colors together.

I am thinking of getting a regular band together. I feel like one day it'll be a place where everyone will all be, and that'll be the symphony of the improvisers.

REPORT TO ABF
Don Cherry with Keith Knox

"Report to ABF" is one of the few existing complete articulations of Don Cherry's teaching practice in his own voice (the other is "Don Cherry at Dartmouth: a teaching report and interview," also reprinted in this volume). It was recorded, transcribed, and edited by Keith Knox, whose interjections are set in brackets. The ABF [Arbetarnas bildningsförbund, or Workers' Educational Association] is the education wing of the Swedish labor movement and is a nongovernmental entity (often mistaken for a political party in the American press) that conducted workshops, study groups, and seminars on a range of subjects including art, music, and foreign languages. Founded by the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) in 1921, the organization primarily serves members of the SAP and Left parties. While there are few clear records of Don's involvement with the ABF, it is certain that he presented a number of concerts and workshops, including the first Movement Incorporated event in 1967 with Moki, at their headquarters in Stockholm. Besides the written text here, there are mentions of Don's teaching engagement in several publications: the January 1968 issue of *OrkesterJournalen* says that Don will be engaged as a teacher at ABF during the spring of 1968, and the March 21, 1968, issue of *DownBeat* reports that Don is in Sweden "to conduct three weekly seminars under the sponsorship of the Swedish government." In the Musikverket Jazz Archive in Stockholm, there are a number of recordings made by Göran Freese from the ABF Hall between March and May 1968. While these sound like rehearsals, there is very little discussion, and it is not fully certain whether these are actual workshops. There is an additional recording (released as Don Cherry, *Live in Stockholm*, Caprice, 2013) by Freese from the ABF Hall in September of 1968. The total number of classes and the frequency with which they were offered are unknown. The workshops were attended by musicians Tommy Koverhult, Leif Wennerström, Maffy Falay, Torbjörn Hultcrantz, and Bernt Rosengren, all of whom can all be heard on *Live in Stockholm*], as well as Bengt "Frippe" Nordström, Dave Woods, and a Turkish drummer, either Okay Temiz or Bülent Ateş. According to Rosengren, the workshops consisted simply of the musicians playing together, but even if that is the case and they were not led by Don, the ABF report shows that he had a clear plan for their conceptual structure.

August 1968, Stockholm, Sweden

DON CHERRY

Extended forms of improvisation.

To the elements of sound in folk music, the word folk expresses music from the people, music of the times. Collective improvisation, consciousness of phrasing, sensitivity in sound. Development of meters into the form of intensity, temperament, temper, consciousness of new meters. The element of swing.

I think the first and most important thing is the sensitivity of sound in relation to music, sound in music.

As we first began the class, the most important thing for us was holding long tones to create a oneness. Then, we developed it into holding long dissonant sounds to open up the scope of the overtones. "Ghost sounds" is a term we have used in our improvisation for the musical surprises which, originally, were accidental bloopers, goofs. Because we started from the beginning with long tones and dissonant sounds, it seemed more and more important to find the surprises, to be more involved in it, for the assimilation of them.

Class I. The whole hour's session was made up of long tones of in-tuneness and dissonance of overtone sounds, which I usually call "ghost sounds," the whole overtone series, which we shall talk more about later on. "Ghost sounds" should also be defined as surprises which are controllable; another phrase might be spontaneous control of a sound that occurs–which the instrument itself may have made, or most likely did make–consisting of trumpets, saxophones, and most of the reed instruments where certain screeches occur, or the reed might crack. But to be able to be sensitive enough with each moment in the sound of the note . . . which the long notes allowed us the sensitivity to be able to resolve into a whole spectrum of sound, which for some reason always ends up in the overtone series. Also from the bottom sound, which creates such a vibrant sonority, especially with reeds, the way they penetrate the whole body to make this feeling of the vocal when playing a musical instrument. There are certain sounds we've discovered which can cause the vibration of the whole body, as with a vocal, no matter what instrument you're playing.

In meters for instance, Lesson II–we were visited by a lecturer from Turkey–which involved different time signatures such as 8/8/4 and 9/8/4, and has been one of the main studies we have been doing for the whole semester–trying to be conscious of the time so that

we could play it unconsciously, in the way we are familiar with such times as 3/4 and 4/4, the march time. The unorthodoxness of this 9/8 time, it is very unfamiliar to us in Western countries.

KEITH KNOX
Why do you do this?

DC Because it's completely contradictory to the way we've been taught, and we find in these studies that we can really develop within ourselves by contradicting what we have been taught, to get to our inner expression, which the forms of the Western system do not do. It's more that you tune up with the technique and for the discipline of the instrument itself, but not to be really conscious of the feeling within yourself, for expression. Because the whole body can be like a chamber—and it's the same way in life, you must go inside of yourself to know the outside. In sound it's the same way: the more of certain sounds you can ring in your head, certain sounds ring through your chest, and certain sounds can vibrate and penetrate your whole body to become a sweat or a beautiful chill, things like that.

KK These are certain surprises, certain results that you can't get by the use of traditional meters because you're expecting certain things?

DC Yes, in a broader scope for this reason. We have electronics and electronics has opened up different vibrations of our body. You notice that in modern day avant-garde music, it needs a certain fullness in sound for it to really have that quality of now-ness they call avant-garde, and this is because we are affected by our present day, living in the modern mechanical world. We know of these vibrations, like a big bus passing, that fullness of sound. A saxophone player nowadays seems like he's playing four or five saxophones, from knowing the fullness of vibration that can happen in the saxophone. This is like the different musicians that come on the scene now who have opened up these other sounds that are in their bodies.

We've been working on being sensitive enough to develop our fullness, and also I must say that we have been working outside of the class very hard on the technical side of the instruments. All of us have different studies and different teachers; even myself, I have been taking trumpet lessons to develop technique.

KK This is a result of the class?

DC Yes, the whole object is development. After this class everyone has felt a development within, a technical development and self-development, by going inside yourself.

KK You have discovered new areas that require more work?

DC Yes, with Class III, about breathing and singing tones, which is important and is now part of our music when we improvise. Because of the quality of sound from the human voice, and the textures of sound in the human voice—relating them to our instruments but being aware of the sounds in that instant—for us to touch as we hear them when we're improvising, because tone improvisation, as far as I could try to explain the studies we did and my feeling of it, is all a complete surprise, but controllable, this thing of the control. The control is just as much a surprise as . . . I keep going back to some of the things I said. As before—

KK You said—

DC —a saxophone player's playing a melody and a certain note in the melody causes a whole different sound, a scope to happen; and to be really conscious of it, this sound is there and present, to resolve it into a whole lot of . . .

This is one of the main qualities of a lot of the musicians that we've already . . . the musicians in jazz, such as Lester Young, he was a very good exponent of that, because he could completely surprise himself. Not only from the sound of what is created, but from the sound of the development within himself, too, resolving it. And to be conscious of it, you know. So, as we see, Class III was made up of breathing exercises within the sound. Also, the sound the breathing exercises opened up for our consciousness of the music, and the loudness of sound in silence, which we were more involved in going into Class IV. As Class IV was made up of the study of collective improvisation cut off, open up silence; in space, in time, spaces where the space was longer in between collective sound, each cluster of sounds was just to open up the silence—the example of hitting a gong and listening to it resonate and

sound, where, you know, it's eternal, from the time you were really aware of the overtone sound and listening to it, until there's no more sound, but it's your whole imagination of the sounds that you hear.

KK Is that the same with a group of improvising saxophones and trumpets and things? When they suddenly stop: Do you hear the same kind of thing? What do you hear then?

DC But that is for . . .

KK What are you trying for?

DC Yeah, but you see now, this is the thing that we became aware of. Within that silence, it's sound that is related to the sound of sound.

KK Oh yes.

DC But then, also, we can turn it all the way around where it is not related, but it is a whole music within itself, to get the importance of the silence. Then, having to respond in Class IV, we discovered that the respect for silence, you know, is something which in nature is very . . . Class V, that's important, OK? Also, between Class IV and Class V, we all visited the forest to listen to a lecture by someone from Scotland playing bagpipes, which opened up the sound of the reed and the sound of the drone, it gave a very electrifying sound, which gives us a wider scope in sound of the ensemble. And also from the lecture of the bagpipes we became aware of the stillness and the motion, the importance of these opposites is the same as with silence and sound, as the stillness–

KK Gives you the drone and things.

DC –Yes, the drone and then the motion you must feel that carries the body. This thing is to mean like, sensitive, passionate sound, how it can take the whole body and lift it. Not in the form of the attack of the sound, the musical sound, sound that happens after the silence; it brings motion just from the attack but it doesn't necessarily carry you. It depends on what

happens after the attack, you know, the direction of what sound you play.

KK What was particular about bagpipes?

DC As I said before, the fullness and the electrifying feeling of a nonelectronic instrument creating electronics. And also . . .

I must define this word, *avant-garde*, insofar as it's the term they use for describing the type of music that we play. I would rather the word they used was just *improvised*, you know, improvised music which automatically would have a different quality from music that has been that concrete, you know. But the importance of improvised music is mostly . . . is the quality of an emotional impact as a listener would be listening and feeling each movement as being inside of him, because of the surpriseness in it. I should jump a little ahead and explain, like now, that the group has been playing, and we play for different audiences. They ask: How do you feel playing for an audience that doesn't understand what you're doing? And automatically we are reaching for this pureness, and in improvisation, where everything is just as much new to us as it would be to the audience, automatically they would feel the newness in it themselves.

KK It would be more personal?

DC Yeah. It seems as if it will be. We can take it that the quality of improvised music in folk music has really been preserved mostly in Eastern folk music, I think, because of . . .

KK Why?

DC The religious tint, the belief in . . . having a belief in the reason and the purpose, you know, of playing to a spirit that would only be interested in that nowness, at one, expression in music, if I can put it that way.

KK Does that associate itself automatically with improvised music?

DC Yes . . .

KK What I mean is music that strives for god, let us say . . .

DC Praise, yes, praise.

KK Is that automatically improvised music?

DC Ah! Now we are in Lesson V, and Lesson V is where we really were conscious of our individual expression in sound, where it was necessary for us to play different types of instruments, where the whole class was made up of different new instruments. OK, if a trained musician needs to play, he's been studying and knows every note on the instrument we would play on—the class first began with us all running chromatics together, in tune, up and down to the top of your instruments, to the top of the whole sound of the whole orchestra, you know, like if one instrument could go so far in pitch, then the other instruments would go higher, and in the same way we would go down, down whichever instruments had the lowest quality to the whole range, and feel the whole technique of awareness of the technique of the nowness of each individual musician, where his only consciousness was of expressing himself, in music, to a strange instrument where every note had a newness to him.

KK These were instruments he had not played before?

DC Right. We switched personal instruments, where everyone just expressed themselves in their infant happiness, but having them in a musical way. Now, this is the reason, as I spoke of before, for making the balance of the musicians studying technically, to learn the techniques of their individual instruments. It was like nourishing their conception of resolving. Because this thing of resolving has been categorized in different countries. Certain sounds resolve a certain way to different musicians in different countries. This is one of the things that, by the tradition of this resolution, I feel can make a musician not necessarily really improvise his own true expression—being stifled by the tradition of the resolution of his country.

KK You were teaching spontaneously?

DC Yes.

KK Spontaneity was–

DC Spontaneous control. We were also visited, in Lesson IV, by a musician who plays completely spontaneously, which is to say that he was never trained. I mean, he would admit that he had never had any formal training, really, in the instrument and in music other than in the love and conception–from listening, which is also a beautiful growth, for a listener to nourish his conception, and by doing that, widen the whole scope of his music, which we can do in this day and time.

Forms and the feelings in form are another aspect of improvisation. Improvising forms. For example, this present-day music from Brazil, the bossa nova–when they have performances in Brazil, they would play a series of bossa novas. The same rhythm would still be going, but each person would improvise a different melody to keep the series of different forms going. Each melody they would improvise, sing, or do, would be a different form. That also extends to counterpoint in forms. Counterpoint in music is always like a movement in the same key, tonally–moving counterpoint within the key. The counterpoint can also be counterpoint between keys, which is the different sounds of keys. And then it moves into counterpoint in sounds, especially if we live in a big city.

You sit and you hear all these sounds, and you hear each one of them as it moves. You hear them consciously and unconsciously, and the point in Lesson VI was where we were standing in different parts of the room and everyone was improvising in the sound and in the song of their own, where they collectively played at the same time to create a whole counterpoint in sound which is . . . musicians must listen. The musician I'm speaking of is Bengt Nordström. He has this belief in the importance of what he's doing: it was important for everyone to really have their fullness of expression, because you can have so much respect for other musicians that you'll just play with them, which is beautiful. But you can have this importance in your song, like we say in jazz terms: play your song. You play your song, and you can all play it together in collective counterpoint to create a wholeness in sound, and that's something I think is very important. I should define this word "form." To me, form is a whole complete breath–and it is a beginning, and true, absolute form will have the feeling of rising where there is no end. The next–what you

would consider an "in"–would be another beginning. But it is a whole sequence of phrases: a whole sentence, completeness. And this feeling of an attack or a beginning, we could say the quality of this beginning, sounds so complete that it is a wholeness within itself, until the next beginning, and they connect with ascending, you know; each one is ascending from the other, and I think this has been an important fact in collective improvisation. And also, we must realize that to keep the balance, we have been learning different melodies that we have been working on from the beginning of class. Now this is another thing, of reaching–we had these certain melodies we'd been also reading, these notations which have come about, that are the only way these melodies have reached wholeness within themselves, are there for the musician, first to be conscious of every phrase within the whole composition, to have control over this phrase, and also to be able to memorize it without the music. Then it's a part of you, as a song you can sing. Because there, we're using certain bands where you can hear that quality of reaching, of the tension of just reading, of keeping in step, we shall say, which, also in rhythm, we have found this independence of rhythms–it's what makes true sound in rhythm.

KK Have you overcome this by some means of notation or memorizing?

DC As I was saying, before the composition we had been studying, by the end of the class we all had them memorized. Each time we would play the composition, it would have a difference in sound and texture because of us realizing that it's the toneness, in knowing a composition and in expressing and phrasing this composition–knowing it well enough to play the same composition as you would the day before. Otherwise I would play the same notation, each time taking up a different form, and that's because of your feelings being different. Different period, different time, and you are more aware, you know, and reaching for more brilliance in it, you know, and more sensitivity each time, and that's the same way as I feel about the importance of melodies as a message, and a unity in love with the musicians, and I didn't find it confining at all. It is this thing of playing a theme–we'd get to the point in the class where each theme was as an interlude, where that, after the theme is not . . . this is where we are not improvising from the

theme but starting another beginning, which is a theme within itself, you know. Usually it's been, like, you play a theme, you improvise from the theme, and then you play. Take the theme again—well, it's only a very few musicians who can do that. Lots of discs that I've heard are where the theme itself has been more brilliant and dominating than the improvisation itself, and that's why the quality of these themes is important for the quality of the improvisation, you know, and to play a very good theme; then, when you improvise, the improvisation ascends so that it's not necessary to play the theme again, you know, really, because it's the binding of the book, but it can be a very small book or a large volume.

Ah, we're on to Lesson VII, where we were visited by some musicians from India: a tabla player and someone who sang, gave illustrations on the piano, certain scales. Also in the class, during this whole period we had been studying different scales and we became aware that each scale is an instrument within itself and in musical terms it is like a mode or a motif but—

KK Western modes you're talking about?

DC No, Eastern scales. We did not study any Western scales because you have all that in class, and we found that in studying scales in the Western concept of teaching, someone is to play the scale the same way each time. Then, you know, you can play the scale if you can hear it before you play it.

KK There are many Eastern scales that you can't play on fixed pitch instruments—did that hang you up?

DC Well, we haven't really got that advanced into it, but we have found that there are scales, and from knowing the scale and maybe a melody, we would learn a scale and we would run the scale, and we would find certain cushions, drones, certain sounds in the scale, and then each one of us would try to create a melody within the scale ourself. This is the work we would do to create a melody from the scale, and then to improvise and move in the scale and keep it rising, now that's the thing. I'll give an example: even in jazz, a composer like Thelonious Monk, his melodies are so strong and of such good quality that very few musicians can really improvise from the scale. I

mean, from the melody, because ordinarily you would improvise from the chords, when you improvise bebop or modern jazz—you would improvise from the chords after you have the melody. But with Thelonious Monk's themes you must improvise from the melody and still know the chords to know the completeness of it.

KK You mean Thelonious Monk forces that on you?

DC Yes, and there's very few musicians I have heard who can play his compositions as well as he can—to improvise on any of them, after the theme.

KK Is that true of any material when it gets sufficiently strong?

DC Yes. I mean, the right quality for good material. Especially if it's a new form—some of the melodies he's written are made from old forms, such as blues or rhythm—but also if you have a completely new unorthodox form.

We've been studying the music from Turkey in 9/8 time, and we've found out the importance of knowing the whole melody—everyone knowing the melody—and this is the same way I learned from playing with Ornette. It's like, when you know the melody, and it's maybe an unorthodox number of bars or something, but knowing the melody—everyone can make the accents, even play rhythm around it. Our rhythm section, we all studied rhythm, we've been studying coloring themes with rhythm, and that's what I mean, of knowing the melody such that you can play even unorthodox rhythms naturally. I wish I didn't have to use the word unorthodox because it's natural. I mean, playing natural rhythms and still knowing them enough to make the certain definite accents which bring in that togetherness, that love. And music: it's beautiful. I mean Indian music. We heard this singer, we played the drone while he would sing, to feel the texture. I mean the texture which is important in Indian music, the texture or touch that they have—and as I said, long tones make you more sensitive to that. And by us playing the long tones behind him singing the scale, we could get sensitive to these textures.

Now, one of the most important factors of us beginning this class and everyone feeling . . . of the musicians being aware of the importance of timing—the class would maybe be

one or two hours, but everyone was very aware in a sacred way of this one or two hours, and so it got to where we would come in and warm the instruments up, and then we were all set to play before reaching this musical trance. We would all first sit and listen to the silence before playing. Then we would start our breathing, as the silence was going on, and then we would begin to play, and this trance, and the importance of this time, was sacred for us, to fulfill every musical minute that we played—and that was after Class III or IV: everyone would be there on time, all during the winter. We were all dedicated to this sacredness of the time, of this hour and, even more so, now, when we perform, of realizing the sacredness of being in tune with our own body, in which to make our own personal expression.

KK This is to make every moment important?

DC Yes, and then you put that kind of quality on each note in each phrase. I mean, if you didn't really feel that phrase you would just sit and listen, to hear the right sound to make. And putting that kind of value on each note is like, in India, which I keep speaking of, it's important because of the music being ninety percent improvised.

Electronics to me is artificial—just electronics itself—and then electronic music is artificial, because most of the music you hear is someone in electronics imitating something that they've heard from electronics, and electronic music is a big race to create different sounds, and all these sounds are electronic-mechanical sounds, because that's the only way it can be because it's electronic. I mean, in music that you play that is being created on a sensitive instrument—the most sensitive instrument is the throat. The next most sensitive instrument is from percussion and then you get into breathing, the winds and things. But this quality I feel that we must pursue in improvised music is important and especially for human compassionate emotion, being sensitive to music. It's usually been in melody or rhythm: they can stir the thing in the human body of who you are, or completely disconnect you. This is a fact of what music can really do to the whole soul, the whole body, because it makes a whole beginning, and more awareness of this eternal search in developing the part. So, out of all the compositions that we have been studying, in

the last classes, we were also visited by a very good folk singer. Bengt [Nordström] also sang songs which had a very dramatic quality, and drama in music as well—it's programmatic in a sense. But I think some of the forms of drama are important for making a whole larger realm, when it's done with very good taste in forms. That's what I'm saying, and that's why, now, I think things are more operatic and symphonic in form; that's one thing that I've been involved in, extending forms. And it's nothing new, it's just a preserving of the absolute quality of the old, and some of the important things that we have seen.

I mean, an important word that we should bring up is this infant happiness, which is like a dedication to the absolute. And the human sensitivity, the naturalness of human senses.

KK This has to do with improvisation?

DC Yes, it really does, because especially this thing of contact between musicians as they play, usually when you hear two musicians play together, they are so in tune with each other that each one is playing the other one's instrument to make a oneness, and when you have more than two musicians—we were involved with seven and sometimes more—there had to be one thing that they all believe in. With us it's been like preserving the quality of improvisation in individual at-one-ment.

KK This is desperately important, because this is why you're doing it.

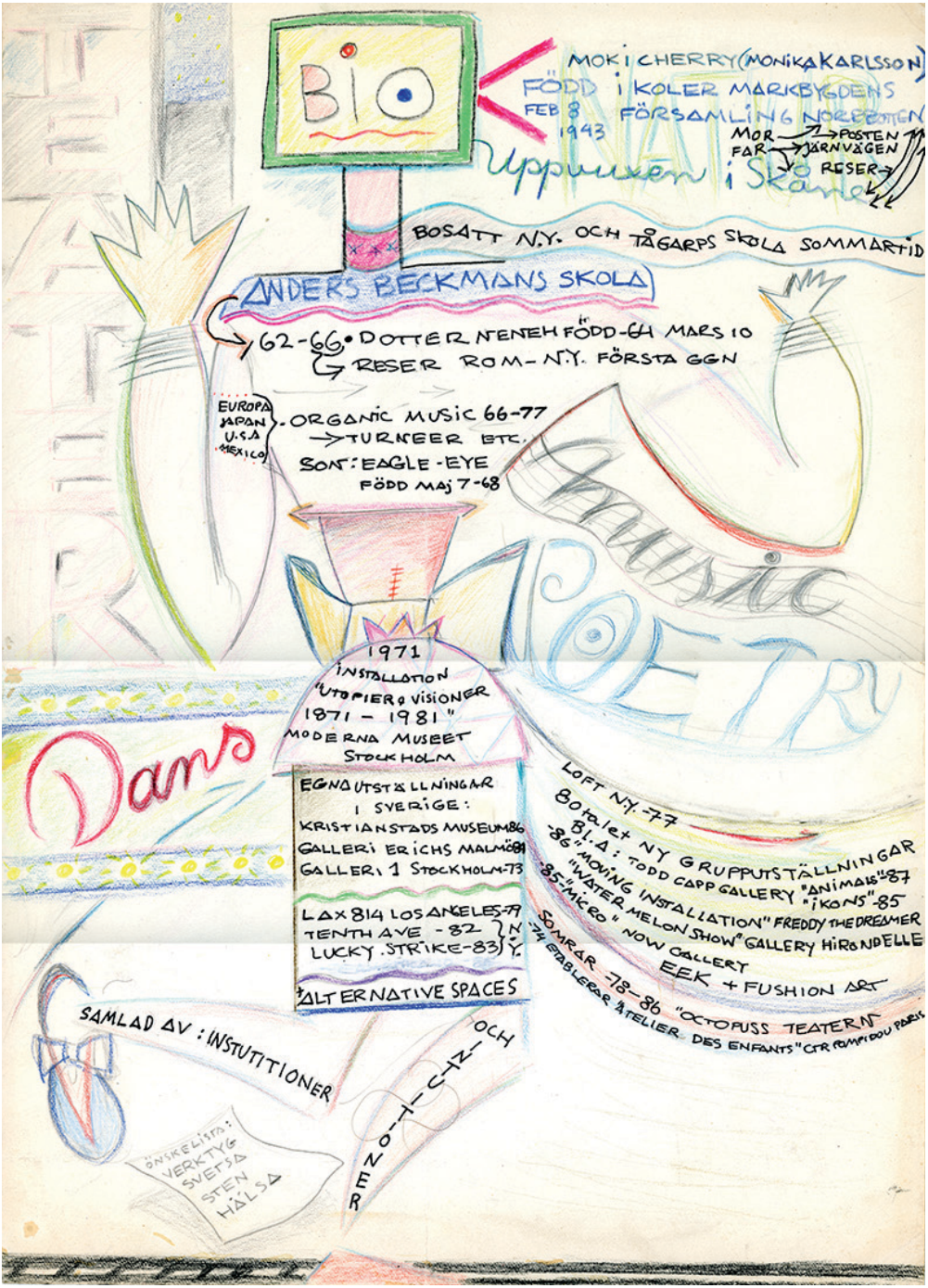
DC Yes, and also we have been studying this drone, which has been very important with us, this one sound. And building from that sound and making sound within that one sound as a surprise—suddenly we are all in this one sound and then us building the distance from the sound, like a trip, traveling to come back to this drone, it's a surprise.

Also, it's this atonalness, playing atonal sounds that are nonmelodic. To me, that's what electronics is—this surprise in sound, in atonalness, and it's very still. To me, that's very still. It's an important way because it exists, you know, the stillness. Where each sound is a melody within itself no matter the length of the sound. But I don't believe in mixing them: that's one type of counterpoint that I don't, maybe. . . . In atonal music I've heard, we have done some things in the class where we're having a rhythm playing so strong, rhythmically, that

the atonal sounds come in, but the intensity of the rhythm is still traveling, still penetrating.

KK So, in other words, if you have atonal music of the electronic music variety, if it has momentum, it will carry it through for certain while, but rhythm is the way to do that?

DC Well, for me, atonal music is Western–it's completely Western. I mean, I'm saying that and not putting it down as a definite fact. But still, again, you could say like there's nothing more atonal than Indian music, because of them using more notes and semitones. But they use it in a very expressive way, and there are composers in atonal music that use it as expressively as in that sound. I am, musically, my scope being broad enough with different types of music and sound to hit different sound pictures, where each one is holding its own in a concrete sound, that each one is like a color, a smell, different from each other. To me, that is a differentness of surprise to make an emotional impact on the natural flow of life in sound. Unnatural natural.



156 Moki Cherry, *Bio*, ca. late 1980s, pencil and ink on paper, 8 ½" × 11".

MOKI CHERRY: WHEREVER WE ARE IS HOME

Ruba Katrib

(157–187)

Emerging from an energetic convergence of art and music in Sweden in the 1960s, Moki Cherry dedicated her life to a joining of creative production and domesticity. She did this by making immersive, mobile, and expressive artworks that adorned her home, hung in galleries, filled concert stages, outfitted her collaborators, and became celebrated album covers. Born in 1943 in Koler, a rural area in the northernmost part of Sweden, Moki moved to Stockholm as a student in 1962. There, she became friends with artists putting on Happenings, and with American jazz musicians who were passing through or living and working in Scandinavia. Stockholm was home to important sites of cultural innovation and exchange, including the music venue the Golden Circle and museums with active contemporary art programs such as Moderna Museet. The era was defined by the interweaving of music, performance, and art, and Moki was a key figure in this community, developing an interdisciplinary mode of working that she pursued for decades.

Influenced early on by a seamstress aunt and intent on working in fashion, at age sixteen Moki left high school to apprentice for a designer in her hometown who had a boutique and haute couture studio. Moki wanted to "help make a more beautiful world," and working in fashion was her start, though she quickly transformed this textile-based practice into a fluid and living art form. In her first year studying textiles at Beckmans Designhögskola (Beckmans School of Design) in Stockholm, she went to see the Sonny Rollins Quartet in concert. It was 1963 and as Moki tells it, "everybody" was there. The band included Henry Grimes, Billy Higgins, and Don Cherry. Don and Moki instantly connected when they met after the show. He continued on the tour, but they reunited the following year when he returned to Stockholm, commencing a partnership that would continue through the late 1980s. These early encounters and impressions set off a long and generative period for both of them. However, Moki redirected her early ambitions in fashion design into an expanded creative practice that, among other things, worked to frame her husband's musical output. At times, her contributions became so integrated into his music that they themselves were overlooked.

Collaboration and family were central to Don and Moki's union, and through their work together they found a common language that not only bridged their distinct artistic practices but produced a way of living with creative expression and experimentation at its core. In 1965, Don was leading a group of musicians playing under the monikers Togetherness, the International Quintet, the Don Cherry Quintet, and a handful of other names, while

developing his notion of "collage music"—the bringing together of international musicians and styles by touring widely and exposing the band to many cultures. "Everybody in the group spoke a different language, with music as their common means of communication," Moki noted.[1] While she observed that collage was important for Don's work, it formed a central part of her methodology as well, partly as a result of the increasingly globalized creative network of the art and music worlds emerging throughout the 1960s.[2] Further, the concept was grounded in an idiom of improvised music put forward by Don, where the players would come together for a more collective and egalitarian experience—everyone did their own part to produce the effect of collage. Through Moki's contributions, jazz and collage music became models for visual art as well, as she began combining varied sources and references to construct her elaborate textile works and paintings. Her sources extended from Western art history to Eastern religions (she and Don were practicing Buddhists), and included cultures the couple encountered on their travels as well as those introduced to them by their international collaborators and through books and magazines. Her interdisciplinary method, however, was developed in the space of musical performance—with the desire to create visual styles and scenography for Don's concerts.

Don and Moki's first collaboration occurred while Moki was still in school. She had dressed members of the quintet in white chef's jackets for a series of concerts at the Golden Circle in 1965. Here, Moki conceived the "look" of the band as they performed for live audiences and were being photographed and recorded. The aesthetics and stagecraft that would come to define Don's music from this period on began with Moki's selection of his band's wardrobe. The costumes and sets she produced would become integral to the meaning of the music, amplifying the artistic aspect of their collaboration. These concerts were an immersive experience and Moki produced their visual language.

The period in which the Cherrys lived and worked together transformed Don's practice—changing it from music performed in clubs (distinctly apart from the domestic realms of home and family) into a broader aesthetic experience of intimacy. He took part in a larger shift during the 1970s, in which some jazz musicians forwent the more exploitative and toxic culture of the jazz club and opted to play in lofts and private homes. In his study of this

1 In this volume: Moki Cherry, "Life Writings, Diaries, and Drawings," 278.

2 Cherry, "Life Writings," 269.

MOQUI CARLSON är färdig modekonstnärinna från Beckmans i vår. "Cicum" "Citronskivan" eller "Jorden med alla stjärnor" heter dräkten. Den är gjord av virade mässingstrådar med orange och ceris pärlor i. "Citronmänniskans" huvud har ögon runt om symboliserande jordens alla städer. Kroppen har Moqui skylt med en rak vit dräkt som är fodrad med starkgult tyg och målad med svart.

Above: Children's costumes by Moki Cherry, ca. 1964. Photo: Lasse Stener.

Below: Clipping from Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*, February 28, 1965. Translation: "Moqui Carlson will finish her studies as a designer artist at Beckmans this spring. "Cicum," "Citronskivan," [slice of lemon] or "The art with all the stars" are the names of the dress. It's made of twined brass wires with pearls in the color of orange and cerise. "Citronmänniskans" [the human lemons] heads have eyes that symbolize all the cities of the world. Moqui has veiled the body with a straight white dress which is lined with fabric in bright yellow and painted in black."

phenomenon in New York City, music historian Michael C. Heller describes the impact of these nontraditional venues on gender relations: "Rather than demarcating the performance space as one of exclusive male dominance, in which women appear only as sexual objects, the act of performing (in) the home worked to unravel commonly held associations."[3] Home concerts invited wider audiences in as well. These spaces were described as sites where a more relaxed seating arrangement and the presence of children and home decor made the shows feel more welcoming and even more safe.[4] In Moki's journals, she refers to clubs as "Don's environment," and says that she became "weary" of the tedious "changing of audiences between sets" and the "often smoky basements or cellars with no air conditioning."[5] This search for a new type of environment came about during a period in which the musicians were still predominantly male, and their predominantly female partners were often relegated to traditional domestic duties, such as taking care of children, cooking, cleaning, supporting their partners, etc., as was well documented in Valerie Wilmer's classic account of the period, *As Serious as Your Life* (1977). Moki carried out the domestic duties typical of the era's gender relations, yet she managed to incorporate them into her art practice. She also came to perform as part of Don's lineup—on the tanpura—as did many other female partners of male jazz musicians. But more than that, through her work in the visual arts, she created the environment in which the music was received—an inherently domestic space of spirituality, playfulness, and renewal. This multimedia aspect of their collaboration opened up avenues for their work to be experienced and understood outside of the music industry—primarily in the home, but also in the classroom, visual art venues, the theater, and television.

These experiments with form and site in the late 1960s extended into the life the Cherrys established together, involving stints in New York and Sweden and intervals on tour. In 1966, Moki designed outfits and created the posters for Don's concert at the Town Hall in New York City. That same year, Moki contributed to the cover for his album *Where is Brooklyn?* (Blue Note), which was released in 1969. That work, the first album cover she made for Don, comprises a single rectangular drawing framed by a border and a title in sans serif type. The piece is gestural and expressionistic,

3 Michael C. Heller, *Loft Jazz: Improvising New York in the 1970s* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 141.

4 Heller, *Loft Jazz*, 141.

5 Cherry, "Life Writings," 282.

depicting a subway going over a bridge with various creatures and creature-like human figures populating the scene. Floating musical notes, a chain-link fence, and other impressions of the city are collaged together in a childlike rendering. Here, the lines are sketchier than in Moki's early paintings from the late 1960s. In those, Moki similarly included bright colors and reduced figures in fantastical environments, but rendered them with blockier, thicker lines, which mirrored and could more easily be translated into her tapestries. This naive pop aesthetic runs throughout Moki's work, even as it becomes more developed and refined. Through refinement, her paintings and tapestries become more connected. These early pieces underscore the feelings of innocence and discovery that permeate Moki's work and Don's music. Following this merger of image and sound, the Cherrys cultivated a coherent visual and sonic language, and with it solidified their collaborative project, first under the moniker of Movement Incorporated and later as Organic Music Theatre.

Moki first joined Don on the stage for a 1967 concert at the ABF Hall in Stockholm. Moki made paintings live during the performance and had prepared food to share with the audience. This phase of the Cherrys' collaboration was distinct in that the music, visual art, and concert environment were brought together on equal footing. Moki took the domestic aspects of their lives, as a couple and a family with children, and integrated them into her larger project. In this sense, there were three levels to the Cherrys' life and work: a very public-facing aspect made for audiences, a semi-public component lived with various collaborators and bandmates, and a private dimension involving immediate family members. These facets appeared seamlessly integrated with one another. At the time of the ABF concert, the Cherrys were living in an apartment Moki rented in Gamla Stan, Stockholm, which Moki would completely transform. She painted the walls, used rooms as studios and playrooms, and hung fabric from the ceiling. In photographs from 1968, Moki and Don are pictured dressed in costumes and posing in front of her painted backdrops. In other images, Moki is seen playing with her daughter Neneh and surrounded by her own illustrations on the walls, featuring colorful, thickly outlined hands, birds, and suns, among other images. A local newspaper featured the apartment in a lifestyle article with a photographic spread. The caption notes the family's life on the road and how important it is for them to make their environment as portable as possible. The piece refers to the rolled-up textiles and painted paper hangings used to adorn

Apartment in Gamla Stan, 1968. Photos: Sven Åsberg.

DAGENS NYHETER.

Söndagsbilagan

Söndagen den 14 Januari 1968

Det totala rummet

"Eftersom man aldrig vet om man kan bo länge på ett ställe, är det viktigt att man gör sin miljö så portabel som möjligt. Jag menar att man har ihoprullbara textilier och målar tapeterna på lösa papper. (Hotellrum är ju omöjliga.) Rummet här i Gamla stan har ibland varit arbetsrum, ibland mest barnkammare, just nu är det allt-ett. Mockie Carlsson Don Cherry som säger:

Rum är vår skalv i rymden, något fantastiskt, som man inte har tid att tycka är tråkigt.

Gör det nu måla om stan

"Efter klädernа miljörevolution" Mary Quant.

Klädernа h a r ändrats, blivit gladare, enklare, mindre statusbetonade. Popens förtjänst eller ej, det hände i alla fall samtidigt som ljudet kom loss.

Bra och avkopplade miljöer är nästa steg, även om utvecklingen varit litet trögare i starten.

Hemma hos sig själva har redan många kommit in i en hämningslösare inredningsväg än någonsin. Börjat med möblerna (förenklat, ifrågasatt eller avskaffat dem), fortsatt med väggar, tak och golv. Målat över beige och grämelerade tapeter, ädelträ och daskiga golv. Skapat rum med ljud, ljus och färg.

Men ute i den offentliga stan är det kärvare. Ingenting finns som vittnar om att någon uppfattat behovet av nya sorters miljöer, statuslösa.

Stockholmsterrassen som är så bra är ändå för fin. Och vad har Farsta centrum, Norrköping och Linköping? I Sverige måste alla parksoffor vara mörkgröna, alla taxibilar svarta, tunnelbanan likbelyst. Ingen tar ansvar för gatornas grå fasader; att måla om Dalagatans hus ner mot Norra Bantorget är förstås otänkbart.

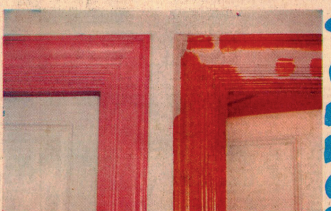
I stället invigs skrythus, bronsdörrar och bankpalats.

Man ställer upp rätt meningslösa skulpturraddor på Karlavägen, men kommer inte på att brandgavlar kan dekoreras, hus vara blå, Stureplans svamp göras prickig. När lokalen som gjorts i ordning under Sergelellipsen inte hittar en lyxkrögare hoppas den till "så länge" medan tunnelbanehallarnas lokallösa gäng släss mot kylan och polisen.

OMHÄNDERTAGANDET AV GASKLOCKAN PÅ TORSGATAN KAN BLI INLEDNINGEN TILL EN NY FANTASIFULLARE LOKALPOLITIK FRÅN STAN.

Reportaget fortsätter på sid 8

"Ibland för jag för mig att jag borde göra något åt alltsammans, måla TV:n och så där. Men Håkan gillar inte det, säger att TV:n funkar lika bra omålad och vi har nog kommit fram till att vi inte har tid att dolta med huset. Jobbet och demonstrationerna tar allt. Nicella, vår barnflicka, sitter lone hos oss nästan varje kväll, han gillar det bättre än att gå ut, tycker inte stan har nått." Helena Henschen—Håkan Nyberg—Nicella Perricone.



"Hemma hos oss blir det aldrig färdigt, vi tänker hålla på hela tiden. Man vet ändå att omständigheterna förskjuts ajtu. Gula dörrposten blev prickig av en händelse, det sog ju rolgt ut så jag dutade att måla dk." Susana Fromberg—Erik Langlet.

Moki Cherry and Neneh Cherry featured in Stockholm's *Dagens Nyheter* (*Daily News*) Sunday supplement, January 14, 1968.

Moki's temporary domiciles as "wallpaper." Below the photos there is a handwritten note from the couple saying, "Rooms are our place in space, something fantastic that one doesn't have time to think is boring."

When Don found himself becoming tired of the professional routine, the couple structured their home so that it could be folded up and taken on tour. It was a "period of my life when I decided I didn't want to play nightclubs," Don said in an interview made while he was in residence at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.[6] The itinerant lifestyle that came with playing in music venues wore on the entire family, but it was uniquely destructive for Don, who struggled with addiction. With two small children in tow, Neneh and Eagle-Eye, the Cherrys sought out alternative venues for their work. In the interview, Don speaks about his pedagogical interest in children and young adults. Describing a concert he was to present at Dartmouth, Don tells the interviewer that its title, "Elephantasy," is intended to signify a "large fantasy," speaking to the importance of keeping fantasy alive, particularly for children. (A year later in 1971, Moki produced a radio show for children in Sweden, using the same name). As with their previous collaborations, Moki made the decor for this Dartmouth concert. In earlier Movement Incorporated performances, they had involved slideshows and experimental films. Don also describes past shows where audiences brought their own carpets from home to sit on the floor, saying he was interested in how the inclusion of the audience's own domestic goods created the effect of many living room sets spread throughout the venue, with groupings of families and friends comfortably hanging out.[7] To create the Dartmouth concert, Don and Moki invited students from the university to collaborate with them on the set and costumes and to participate in rehearsals. They also held open hours at their house on the weekends for anyone who wanted to stop by. In creating a home-like atmosphere and multimedia show, and by opening up their living space, the Cherrys flattened hierarchies between audience and performer and between private and public. The merging of domestic and performance space is perhaps best captured in a motto Moki used to describe this aspect of their work: "The stage is home and home is a stage."[8]

6 In this volume: Christopher R. Brewster, "An Interview with Don Cherry," 251.

7 Brewster, "Interview," 252.

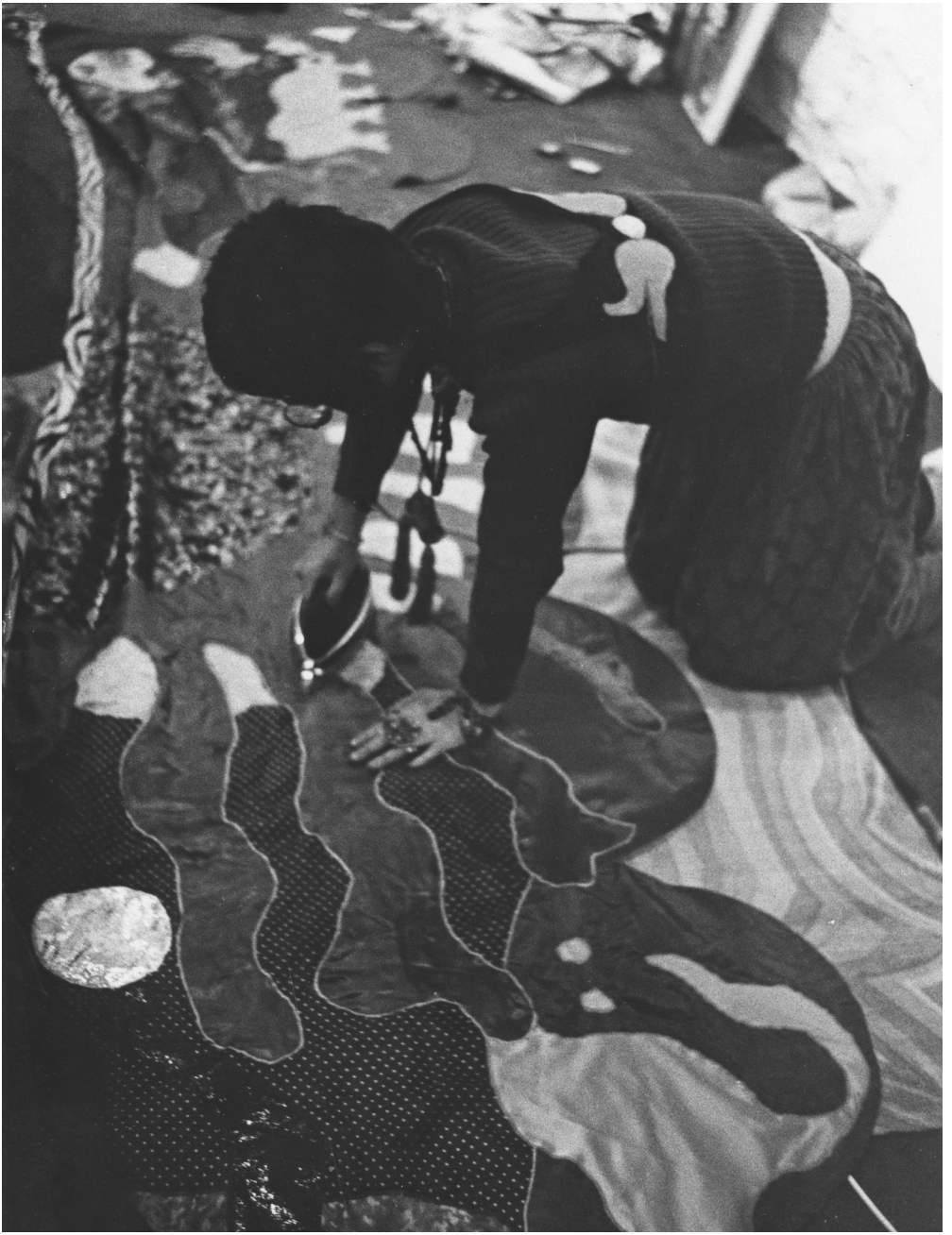
8 Cherry, "Life Writings," 282.

These first itinerant experiments and presentations eventually found a more permanent base in 1970 when the couple bought an old schoolhouse in Tågarp, a rural area in southern Sweden. The schoolhouse, which remains in the family's possession today, became a hub for the many projects the Cherrys would develop, building on their earlier collaborative and educational efforts with children and adults of all ages. In a departure from the portable environments they had built throughout the sixties, the schoolhouse became a more permanent center for creation and production, yet one that was similarly both intimate and public. Concerts and educational workshops conducted by the couple at public schools across Sweden in the early 1970s were adapted for their new home and eventually developed into what became the Octopuss Teater (or "Octo-puss Teatern"), a dramatic production that took place every summer from 1978 to 1985, enacted by their own kids, family friends, and local children in Tågarp, and hosted by Moki with her close friend Anita Roney. This yearly return to the schoolhouse became a constant in Moki's otherwise itinerant practice. Neneh took part in the first iterations (p. 237) and recalls how the theater was largely led by the children, who took the reins in developing the shows each year–affirming that Don and Moki found working with youth not only inspiring but a rewarding means of engaging with a "pure" form of imagination.[9] The event became an institution of its own, earning it a feature on the front page of the local newspaper. Summer performances featured sketches, music, costumes, and sets, and the audience comprised members of the local community, as well as other Swedish and international visitors. Hosting and other domestic labor in the schoolhouse was done collaboratively by Moki, Anita, and other family and friends, and by members of the Tågarp Culture Association; the Octopus kids even ran a cafe. However, throughout the seventies, much of the Cherrys' work to took place on the road. Moki would pack up the kids, the instruments, the sewing machine, and the artworks and take them on tour, saying of this period, "Wherever we were was home."[10]

Expanded forms of performance and participation were central to the couple's artistic investigations, and manifested in a variety of ways, from concerts and art exhibitions in formal venues to shows hosted in their home for public viewing and occasionally even for mass media. By challenging passive spectatorship and incorporating domestic spaces, objects, and symbols into their works, Don and

9 Neneh Cherry, interview by Ruba Katrib and Lawrence Kumpf, August 18, 2020.

10 Cherry, "Life Writings," 282.



Moki Cherry at Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973. Photo: Rita Knox.

Moki were participating in the artistic revolutions of the 1960s—such as the Happenings taking place in New York's lofts—however, as it evolved throughout the 1970s, their practice distinguished itself through its focus on music, collaboration, education, and entertainment. The art they made was structured by experimental pedagogy and aimed at exposing participants to a mix of cultures.

Domesticity and parenthood continued to drive Moki's creative practice, even as she expanded her work into new venues through the efforts of Pontus Hultén, the Swedish curator and museum director who brought Don and Moki into the realm of contemporary art institutions. In 1971, Hultén invited the couple to participate in an exhibition at Moderna Museet in Stockholm called "Utopier och visioner 1871–1981" ["Utopias and Visions 1871–1981"], which, in a symbolic nod to the lifespan of the Paris Commune, on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary, ran for seventy-two days. This show was a key moment for the couple, as they were able, for the first time, to create an immersive environment in the context of an art institution. For their public-living performance, Moki made textile pieces that hung from the structure, a geodesic dome installed in a courtyard, and painted a mandala to cover the floor. Don and his collaborators played and performed music all day and night. It became a functional home base and working studio, complete with a sewing machine and a piano on view as part of the exhibition. At nights, Moki would cook dinner for everyone in the abandoned naval prison on the museum campus—where the family also slept—while the children played in the museum's collection.[11] The public was welcomed into the dome, sometimes as audience members and sometimes as participants. Photos documenting the installation show mostly informal gatherings punctuated by notable events, including the couple hosting the Japanese band the Taj-Mahal Travellers on their first European tour.

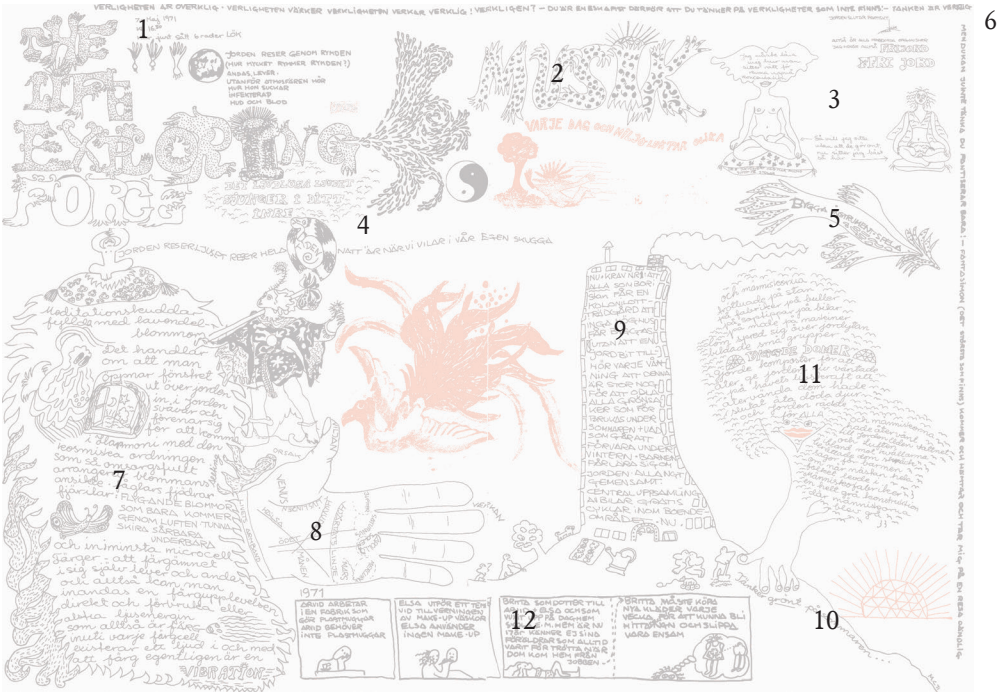
"Utopias and Visions" was representative of the era's broader nexus of international connectivity. In her writings, Moki recalls using a telex machine to connect with people in Mumbai, New York, and Tokyo.[12] The telex was one of several installed by E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) in public spaces in major cities across the world, including at the exhibition in Stockholm. As described in the exhibition press release, E.A.T. invited people from these locales to ask questions about the future that would be "forwarded to suitable persons for answers." They were encouraged

11 Cherry, "Life Writings," 299.

12 Cherry, "Life Writings," 299.

VERLIGHETEN ÄR OVERKLIG · VERLIGHETEN VÄRKER VERKLIGHETEN VERKAR
7:e Maj 1971
Kl. 16.30
Har just sått 6 rader LÖK
JORDEN RESER GENOM RYMDEN
(HUR MYCKET RYMMER RYMDEN?)
ANDAS, LEVER.
UTANFÖR ATMOSFÄREN HÖR
HUR HON SUCKAR
INFEKTERAD
HUD OCH BLOD
THE LIFE EXPLORING FORCE
DET LJUDLÖSA LJUDET
SJUNGER I DITT
INRE
JORDEN RESER. LJUSET RESER HELA
KIDEN
NATT ÄR NÄR VI VIL
Meditationskuddar
fyllda med lavendel-
blommor
Det handlar
om att man
öppnar fönstret
ut över jorden
in i jorden
svävar och
förenar sig
för att komma
i Harmoni med den
kosmiska ordningen
som så omsorgsfullt
arrangerar blommans
ansikte. fåglars fjädrar
fjärilar: FLYGANDE BLOMMOR
SOM BARA KOMMER
GENOM LUFTEN · TUNNA
SKIRA SÅRBARA
UNDERBARA
och in i minsta microcell
Färger - att färgämnet
i sig själv lever och andas
och alltså kan man
inandas en färgupplevelsen
direkt och förbruka eller
alstra ljusenergin
som alltså är FÄRG
inuti varje färgcell
existerar ett ljud i och med
att färg egentligen är en
VIBRATION
ORSAK
VILJAN
VENUS
LIVETS ARMBAND
HÄLSA
ÖDET
MÅNEN
LIVSLINJEN
HUVUDET
HJÄRTATS LINJE
MARS
JUPITER
SATURNUS
APOLLO
MERCURIUS
Livets
1971
ARVID ARBETAR
I EN FABRIK SOM
GÖR PLASTMUGGAR
ARVID BEHÖVER
INTE PLASTMUGGAR
ELSA
VID TIL
AV MA
ELSA
INGE

Moki Cherry, *The Life Exploring Force: Musik*, from the exhibition catalog for "Utopias and Visions 1871–1981," Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1971.



1 May 7, 1971
4.30 p.m.
Just planted 6 rows of ONIONS.

The earth travels through space / (how much space is in space?) / Breathe, live. / Outside the atmosphere hear how she breathes

Infected
Body and Blood

THE LIFE EXPLORING FORCE – The silent sound / sings in your / inside

2 MUSIC / Every day and environment different

3 I need to learn how to sit correctly to achieve concentration ← This is how I want to be able to sit without it being painful. / Right now I sit better like this →

Inside pillow
It's very difficult, I have always sat on chairs.

Above meditators
The earth actually ends here / more humus / So all organisms are liberated / I mean FREED EARTH / FREE EARTH

4 *Extending from small meditating figure*
The earth travels. Light travels continuously. Night is when we rest in our own shadow.

5 *Middle right, inside aerial creature*
Make instruments. Play.

6 *Wrapping around top and right edges*
Reality is unreal. Reality hurts. Reality seems real! Really?—You are an escapist because you think of realities that don't exist!—Thought is real, but you can't think, you just fantasize! Fantasimon* (the biggest there is) comes to get me and takes me on an eternal journey.

7 *Bottom left, inside of drawing*
Meditation cushions filled with lavender flowers.** / It's about opening the window over the earth, into the earth, floating and uniting to come into harmony with the cosmic order that so compassionately arranges the flowers' faces, birds' feathers, butterflies: FLYING FLOWERS THAT ONLY FLOAT THROUGH THE AIR. DELICATE, SHEER, VULNERABLE, WONDERFUL. / And inside the smallest microcell, colors—the pigment is alive in its own right and actually one can directly breathe in a color experience, and consume or generate light-energy which is actually a color. Inside every color-cell exists a sound because color is actually a VIBRATION.

8 *Inside of palm, from left to right, top to bottom*
Bracelet of Life.
Venus / Lifeline / Health / Destiny / Moon / The Head
Heart Line / Mars / Jupiter / Saturn Apollo / Sun Mercury

Middle finger: Intention
Thumb: Will
Left of thumb: Reason
Center, beneath red bird: Bird of Life.

9 *Middle right, inside building*
Now. Requirement number one is that everyone that lives in the city has an allotment garden. No high-rise buildings should be built without a piece of land that belongs to each floor, big enough to plant all vegetables that are eaten in the summer and those that can be stored for winter. Children will learn about the planet. Collective projects. Shared cars. Free bikes in the living area. Now.

10 *Right of gardeners*
Thinking green in the summer.

11 *Middle right, tree leaves*
and the people got tired of the city, of factories, of noise, of garbage dumps, of cars, of fashion, of machines. They spread out over the face of the earth, forming small communities. BUILDING DOMES. Made composts to once again give life to the planet. Waited for the ocean's life force to return. They had stopped eating dead animals. The planet provided for all. And the people had returned to the earth, the fire, the water, the air. Sometimes at nightfall they told ghost stories to the children about when nearly all of humanity had lived in people-factories, completely gray constructions where the people became gray.

12 *Bottom, comic strip*

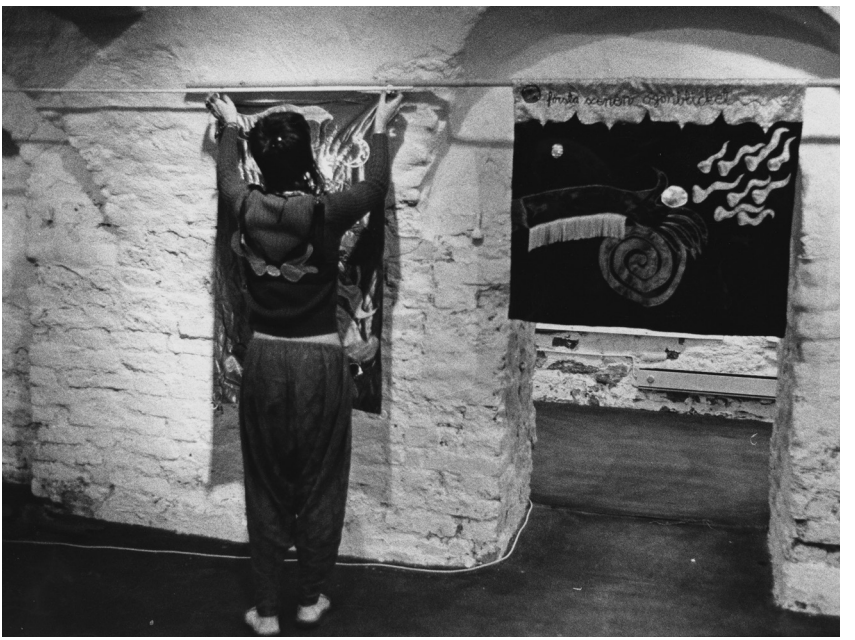
Panel 1: Arvid works in a factory that makes plastic cups. Arvid doesn't need plastic cups.

Panel 2: Elsa keeps a fast pace in the manufacturing of make-up bags. Elsa doesn't use any make-up.

Panel 3: Britta, the daughter of Arvid and Elsa who grew up going to afterschool programs in the afternoons, is now seventeen. She doesn't know her parents well, they were always too tired by the time they came back from work.

Panel 4: Britta must buy new clothes every week to attract someone and escape being alone.

* A fictional character in Don and Moki Cherry's children's radio show, Elephantasy.
** Moki Cherry made cushions filled with lavender for the "Utopia and Visions" installation.



Moki Cherry exhibition at Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973.
Photo: Rita Knox.

to pose inquiries specifically about the year 1981, and on the subjects of money, work, newspapers, schools, and home life—aspects of the Paris Commune that the exhibition sought to evoke. Through these multidisciplinary, interactive, and collectively authored (and unauthored) projects, "Utopias and Visions" produced a particular form of cosmopolitan collaboration in art and music that would be central to the aesthetic methods used by the Cherrys for years to come. This internationalist spirit is evident in Moki's holistic impression of the emergent global connectivity that defined the era. "We listened to music from all around the world and studied other cultures' philosophies—other ways of thought, including studies with the Tibetan Lama Kalu Rinpoche between 1972 and 1977," she recalls.[13] Don learned North Indian classical music with master musicians Ram Narayan and Zia Mohiuddin Dagar, and frequently collaborated with the South African bassist Johnny Dyani and Turkish drummer Okay Temiz, while Moki's textile pieces and paintings combined symbology from various spiritual traditions, mostly from Buddhism and Hinduism, with text announcing concerts and phrasing borrowed from traditional Buddhist mantras and musical scales from India.

The next year, in 1972, Organic Music Theatre performed in the south of France as part of the Festival de jazz de Chateauvallon. This was a major outing for the family. The concert took place in a packed outdoor amphitheater and the stage was covered in Moki's tapestries featuring Indian scales. In a film documenting the concert, Moki is situated on a carpet with various other collaborators, mostly members of a Danish puppet theater decked out in hippie garb. The Cherry family wears Moki's costuming: handsewn garments collaged with metallic fabrics. The concert featured sing-alongs with the audience and a psychedelic puppet show. The musicians and their friends gathered on the stage—dancing, miming, playing percussion instruments, and singing. Moki switched between playing tanpura, manipulating a puppet, and looking after a young Eagle-Eye. Meanwhile, Don played a range of instruments including harmonium, tanpura, and piano, expertly weaving the apparent spontaneity of the moment into an hour-long journey of hybridized jazz experimentation. The choreographed, seemingly chaotic performance blurred the line between artist and audience, and combined sound and image into a multifaceted show that was more of a ceremony than a concert.

13 Cherry, "Life Writings," 306.

From performances to exhibitions, Moki's creative activity took place in social arenas that were not only informal but clearly designated as family-oriented spaces. In 1973, following "Utopias and Visions" and the Chateauvallon concert, Moki had her first solo exhibition at Galleri 1 in Stockholm, where she further developed the techniques tried out in the Moderna Museet experiment in a more formal display. The gallery interior was raw and concrete. Tapestries hung from the vaulted ceiling and on the walls, creating enclaves and altars. Other works were draped over the architecture, and a few were framed and wall-mounted. Moki, Don, and other musicians played in the space, seated in front of particular pieces, such as *Eternal Now,* ca. 1973, a large-scale tapestry featuring the word ETERNAL in a sky with a floating Ganesh, and the word NOW encircled by an ouroboros framed by flaming red trees (the work shares its name with a record Don would release the following year, and a detail of it was used for the album cover). Photo documentation shows visitors hanging around with children, eating, and sitting on the floor—the gallery looks lived in.

In 1971, right after "Utopias and Visions," the Cherrys produced a show for Swedish public television called *Piff, Paff, Puff.*[14] While not a concert, the program focused on experimental music production and was geared towards young audiences. It comprises a short series of sketches shot in the Tågarp schoolhouse. Each episode is a nonlinear combination of art-making, costumes, face paint, and playful movement, and features Don and Moki, their children, and kids from the neighborhood playing music. *Piff, Paff, Puff* is a prime instance of the couple turning their domestic life into artistic work, and an example of their interest in creating with and for children, using musical experimentation and new forms of media. Notably, the show riffs on variety television and gives it an educational focus. Instead of performing for audiences, short films set in the house show the two of them making art and music for the camera. Because young people had been increasingly centered in the work they made after "Utopias and Visions," Hultén, who had become the inaugural director of the Centre Pompidou, invited Don and Moki to Paris

14 This wasn't the first time the couple appeared on television. In 1967, while Don was busking in the streets of Paris, a producer recruited him and Moki to appear on the first airing of color TV in France (see Moki Cherry's "Life Writings," p. 287). The Cherrys would later appear on the Italian television station RAI in 1976, playing an Organic Music Theatre concert for the camera. There, they performed with a smaller ensemble than at Chateauvallon, and the children joined the band, with Neneh singing alongside her mother and Eagle-Eye playing percussion.

Four stills from Björn Lundholm's six-episode television series *Piff, Paff, Puff*, 1971, 16 mm, color, sound.

in 1974 to create an educational space for children similar to their installation at Moderna Museet–Moki would make tapestries and Don would perform music for schoolkids. Their *Atelier des Enfants* was hosted off-site, in anticipation of the museum's opening, and was intended as a demonstration of "living art" for the French bureaucrats at the Pompidou, in order to win them over to Hultén's vision. Later, the artist Niki de Saint Phalle, who was a good friend of Moki, would work in the museum's short-lived television studio, for which she wrote a treatment for a children's television series to be scored by Don. Ultimately, the proposal yielded only an unfinished pilot.

Piff, Paff, Puff and the *Atelier des Enfants* were natural segues into the extra-institutional project that was Octopuss Teater. Moki's commitment to radical forms of play were central to her art, but also to her domestic labor. Feminist art practices in the 1970s were marked by investigations into traditional gender roles and domesticity. A year after Moki worked with Don on the immersive Moderna Museet installation that linked home and creative production, Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro staged *Womanhouse* (1972) in Los Angeles. Also an immersive installation, *Womanhouse* filled a residential building in Los Angeles with scenes and objects that subverted and challenged traditional gender roles. Spearheaded by Chicago and Schapiro, and constructed with other artists and students from CalArts in Santa Clarita, the collaborative making of the work with students bears resemblance to the concerts and opera staged by the Cherrys at Dartmouth. Prior to this, in 1966, Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Per Olof Ultvedt opened *Hon: En Katedral* (She: A Cathedral) at Moderna Museet, also at the invitation of Hultén–a gigantic sculpture of a woman's reclining body. Visitors would enter through an opening between the legs to find a multimedia installation inside. Viewers of both *Hon* and *Womanhouse* were amused and scandalized. Installation and environment became compelling ways for women artists to enact and challenge the norms of domestic and social life on monumental scales while also dealing with the politics of interior space–bodily and architecturally. Moki's installations addressed her experience of gender and family life, and her art practice informed her domestic work. She writes:

> I was a human being until I entered my teens. Then I was transformed into a female. I have now entered back into the status of a human being. In the meantime, I experienced motherhood. I was my husband's muse, companion,

> and collaborator. At the same time I did all of the practical maintenance. I was never trained to be a female so I survived by taking a creative attitude to daily life and chores.[15]

Throughout her diaries, Moki refers to cooking and cleaning: for Don, for the children, for audiences, for guests in Tågarp. She describes doing laundry, making beds, and growing and preparing food for Don's students, "It all seems nuts. But it was beautiful. Live music all hours, beautiful music. Musicians came from India, Africa, all over. [. . .] It was an open house."[16] Moki's approaches to hosting visitors, playing with and educating children, and maintaining the household brought the seeming banality of the domestic into an exciting global nexus of creative output. This particular performance of home certainly seeped into Don's approach to his work as well.

In 1972, Don released *Organic Music Society* (Caprice Records) and Moki painted the album cover. Unlike her earlier design for *Where is Brooklyn?*, for which her piece was framed and contained, the psychedelic nature scene here fills the entire surface of the record sleeve front-to-back, including the gatefold. The image features the geodesic dome from the Moderna Museet exhibition with a flaming-red-haired Moki seated at its entrance with children playing in front of her. The symbol for Om is set under a sunrise, the Himalayas are in the background, and a Hindu deity rides an elephant holding a lotus flower in its trunk. On the back, Istanbul's Blue Mosque sits upon hills with a caravan of camels, a nod to the family's trip to Turkey in 1969, and Don and Moki are shown playing instruments in the grass. The Islamic crescent moon and star are placed sideways in a heart. This use of various religious symbols in combination with a psychedelic, naive style extends from the lexicon used by the Cherrys in music and art. Moki says of works such as this one:

> I cannot name my paintings since they very seldom, yes never, symbolize a particular historical moment. They are all dedicated to all the invisible powers that are ruling man and the universe. The possibilities of what can happen and what is happening in the universe are out of reach. Man is frustrated in his aim to rule nature and

15 Cherry, "Life Writings," 306.

16 Cherry, "Life Writings," 299.

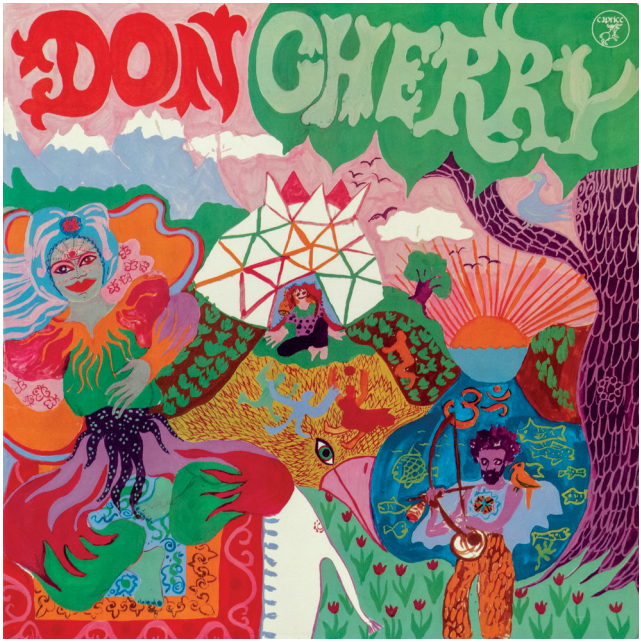
> within this effort forgets to see and realize the paradise he was put to live in.[17]

The interior gatefold features a collage of pictures taken inside of the geodesic dome in Stockholm and photos of various friends and collaborators from this time, resembling a family album. Additionally, there is an image of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the twelfth-century Hindu temple turned Buddhist religious site. The track list is handwritten. There is also a vignette in the top corner of the gatefold depicting Shiva and Shakti, a pair of deities that symbolize masculine and feminine energies. Through the songs on the record and the imagery provided by Moki, the Cherrys continue to extend and memorialize the work that was done in "Utopias and Visions," building it into a world of its own.

The first track on *Organic Music Society* is a version of "North Brazilian Ceremonial Hymn" that was performed at the Chateauvallon concert. On it, the domestic environment where the music and art are being produced is captured by the sounds of children's voices periodically audible in the background—mirroring the intimacy conveyed in the photos featured inside of the album. Following that album, the 1975 LP *Brown Rice* (EMI) became the most exemplary recording of Don's music from this era and further demonstrates the influence of the household on his own work. The title was a reference to health food, no doubt stemming from his and Moki's lifestyle in Tågarp. Taking care of the body and mind was a part of their practice, evident in their spiritual endeavors and in Moki's approach to home and work. Moki produced the art and design for this record as well. A culmination of their early years in collaboration, here, a photograph of one of Moki's textile pieces adorns the front. The text and figures are fully integrated into a single work. The image features a Buddha and the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM on a banner, a meditation on the transformation of an impure body and mind into the unpolluted body and mind of a Buddha. The Buddha on the textile holds a mound of brown rice in a labeled bowl containing a dove. There is a sea below and a little island with a palm tree where the words ORGANIC MUSIC are sewn. The textile is wrinkled and satiny, with a sheen that conveys its texture, showing how it's been used over time.

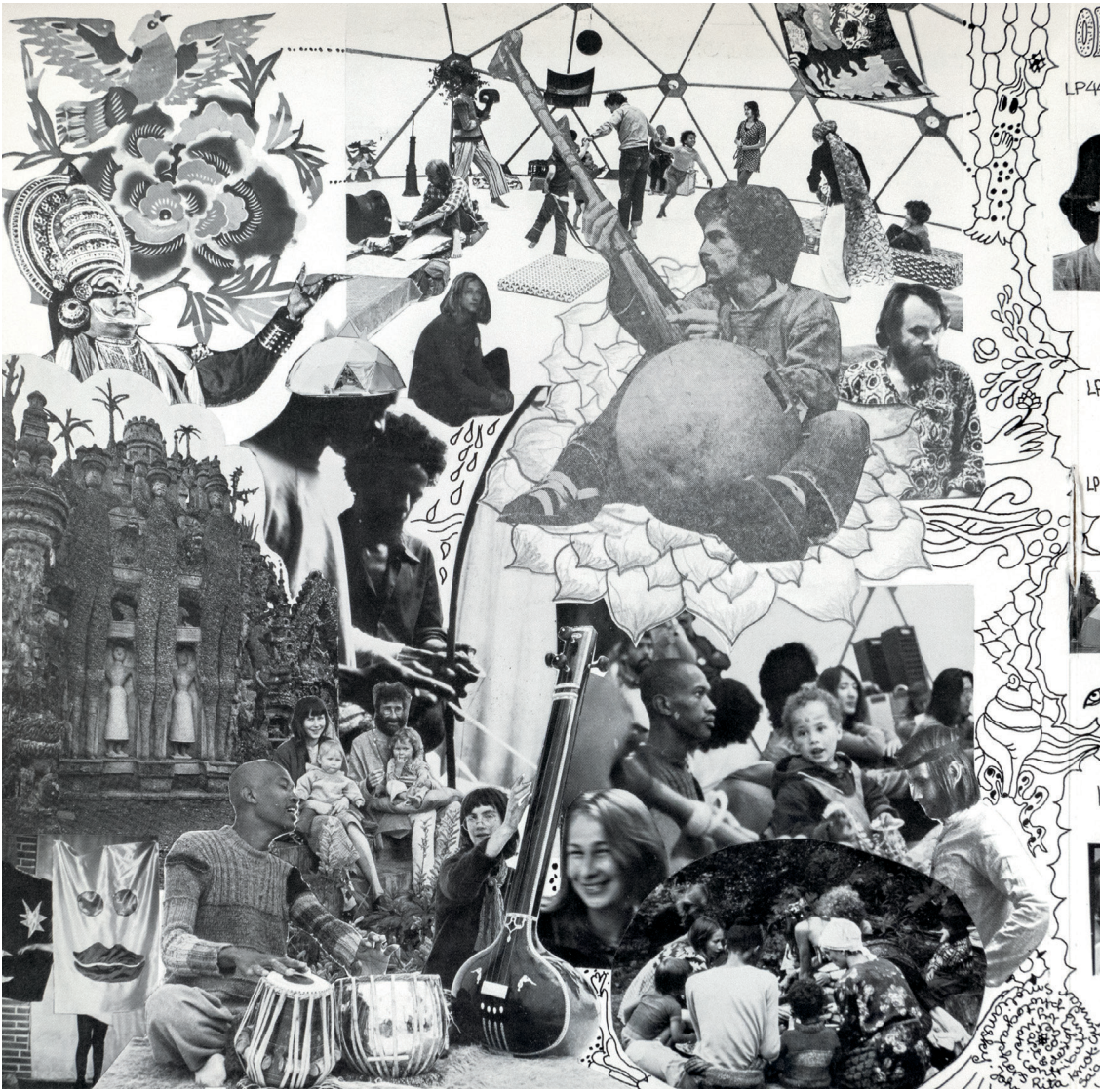
In 1977, following this period of intense productivity, the Cherrys moved to New York City. Moki renovated a Long Island City loft located on the top floor of a factory, which became the

17 In this volume: Moki Cherry, "Poetry and Aphorisms," 318.



Front cover for Don Cherry's *Organic Music Society* (Caprice Records, 1973), illustration by Moki Cherry.

Back cover for *Organic Music Society*, illustration by Moki Cherry.



Innter gatefold of Don Cherry's *Organic Music Society* (Caprice Records, 1973), photo-collage and layout by Moki Cherry.

hub of the family's activity from that point forward, except for summers spent in Tågarp. When the frequency of Don and Moki's collaborations diminished in the 1980s—initially owing to long periods of physical distance from each other, and then as their relationship faded and Don relocated to San Francisco—Moki continued to return to the loft every winter. During this period, Moki exhibited her work more actively. She showed tapestries in Los Angeles at Lyn Kienholz's gallery LAX 815 in 1979, and throughout the 1980s she made furniture-objects that formally resembled her textile and painted works and line up with the style and palette of the Italian Pop design of the Memphis Group. While in New York in 1988, Moki was inspired by an exhibition at Gracie Mansion that featured Pop art and works by the Chicago Imagists. Her evolving formal language also fit into these milieus. In the 1990s she took ceramics classes at Greenwich House Pottery, producing many striking pieces, and in 1992 she opened a solo show at Saint Peter's Church in the Financial District, where she showed sculptural wall works made of cutouts and light boxes. One tableau depicts an urban Medusa flanked by skyscrapers that double as palm trees; her serpentine locks are made of roadways, menacing a tiny Earth. Here, the graphic elements of Moki's tapestries become more Cubist, with human and animal forms interacting and merging into more abstract scenes. These types of sculptures, which, like her tapestries, straddled the line between functional and fine art, were the culmination of her oeuvre, combing many of the motifs she had developed early on.

Moki faced barriers to entry in the art world as she evolved her solo practice in the last decades of her life. She was able to exhibit periodically, but opportunities for her to show in contemporary art spaces were sporadic. Influenced by global art and culture, Moki maintained a naive and visionary approach to composition and figuration, and she continued to use spiritual symbols within her work. Ironically, while she found less acceptance as an artist in the eighties, her work began to share a graphic and spatial language with figures in America's burgeoning street art movements, such as Keith Haring. But Moki was part of an older generation. Not unlike her friend Saint Phalle—who was an influence on Haring—Moki worked outside of established art circles, and yet appeared as a senior figure. And similar to Saint Phalle, Moki made some of her most recognizable works in collaboration with her male partner. Further, the politics of gender that were integral to Moki's work were latent and not always visible on the surface. Some of these investigations can be grasped in a single work, but her radicality becomes most apparent when one looks at her practice holistically. In that totality,

Moki Cherry exhibition at Saint Peter's Church, New York City, 1992.

she can be understood as aiming for transcendence of obstacles through creativity. Her individual pieces convey discreet narratives and meanings in a gallery setting, but are most effective as works that have a function and a context—clothing her family, covering a floor, creating a backdrop, and producing an environment for learning, play, and performance. In a fragment for an artist statement, drafted between 2004 and 2006 as part of the feminist art historian Arlene Raven's writing workshop in New York, Moki described the reception she received throughout her career: "I have not been very successful in the established art world, but children have always been great supporters, and they have let me understand the work is OK, and [to] never lose hope."[18] Her most important platform was the space of the home—a fluid and generative concept that she produced on her own terms, no matter where it was, and no matter who was invited.

18 Moki Cherry, "Work," 2004–6, Cherry Archive, Tågarp, Sweden.

Moki Cherry in Tågarp, ca. 1972. Photo: Torben Huss.

EARLY PAINTINGS

(189–196)

Moki Cherry, untitled, 1968, lacquer paint on masonite board, 33 ⅛" × 46 ⅞".

 Moki Cherry, untitled, ca. 1964–67, Flashe paint on paper, dimensions unknown.

Moki Cherry, untitled, 1968, unknown materials
on masonite board, 33 1/8" × 46 7/8".

192 Moki Cherry, untitled, 1968, lacquer paint on masonite board, 46 7/8" × 33 1/8".

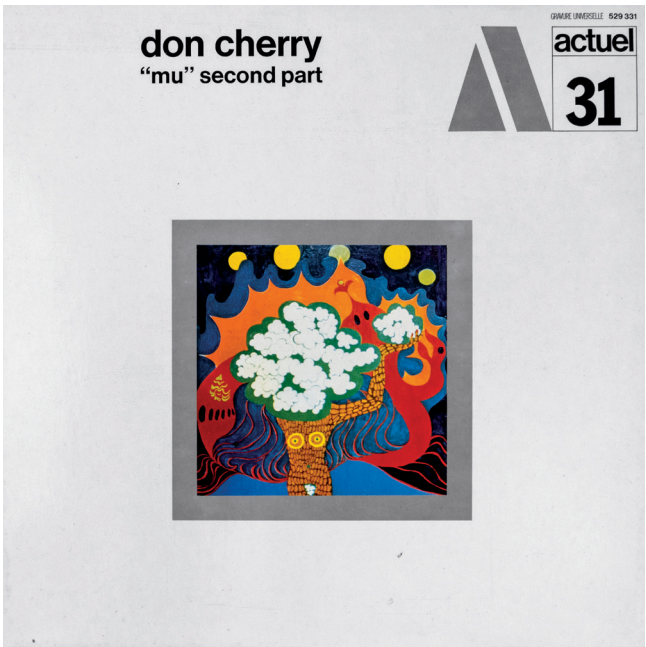
Moki Cherry, untitled, 1968, lacquer paint on masonite board, 46 7/8" × 33 1/8".

 Moki Cherry, untitled, 1968, lacquer paint on masonite board, 46 7/8" × 33 1/8".

Moki Cherry, untitled, 1968, lacquer paint on masonite board, 46 7/8" × 33 1/8".

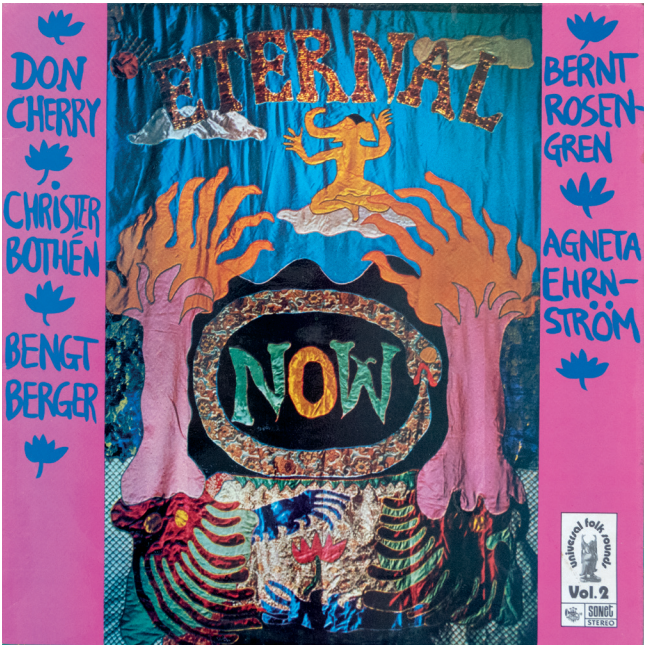
196 Moki Cherry, *Painting about Life*, 1968, lacquer paint on canvas, 19 ¾" × 29 ½".

ALBUM ARTWORK



Front cover for Don Cherry's *"Mu" First Part* (BYG Records, 1969), illustration by Moki Cherry.

Front cover for Don Cherry's *"Mu" Second Part* (BYG Records, 1971), illustration by Moki Cherry.



Front cover for Don Cherry's *Eternal Now* (Caprice Records, 1974), illustration by Moki Cherry.

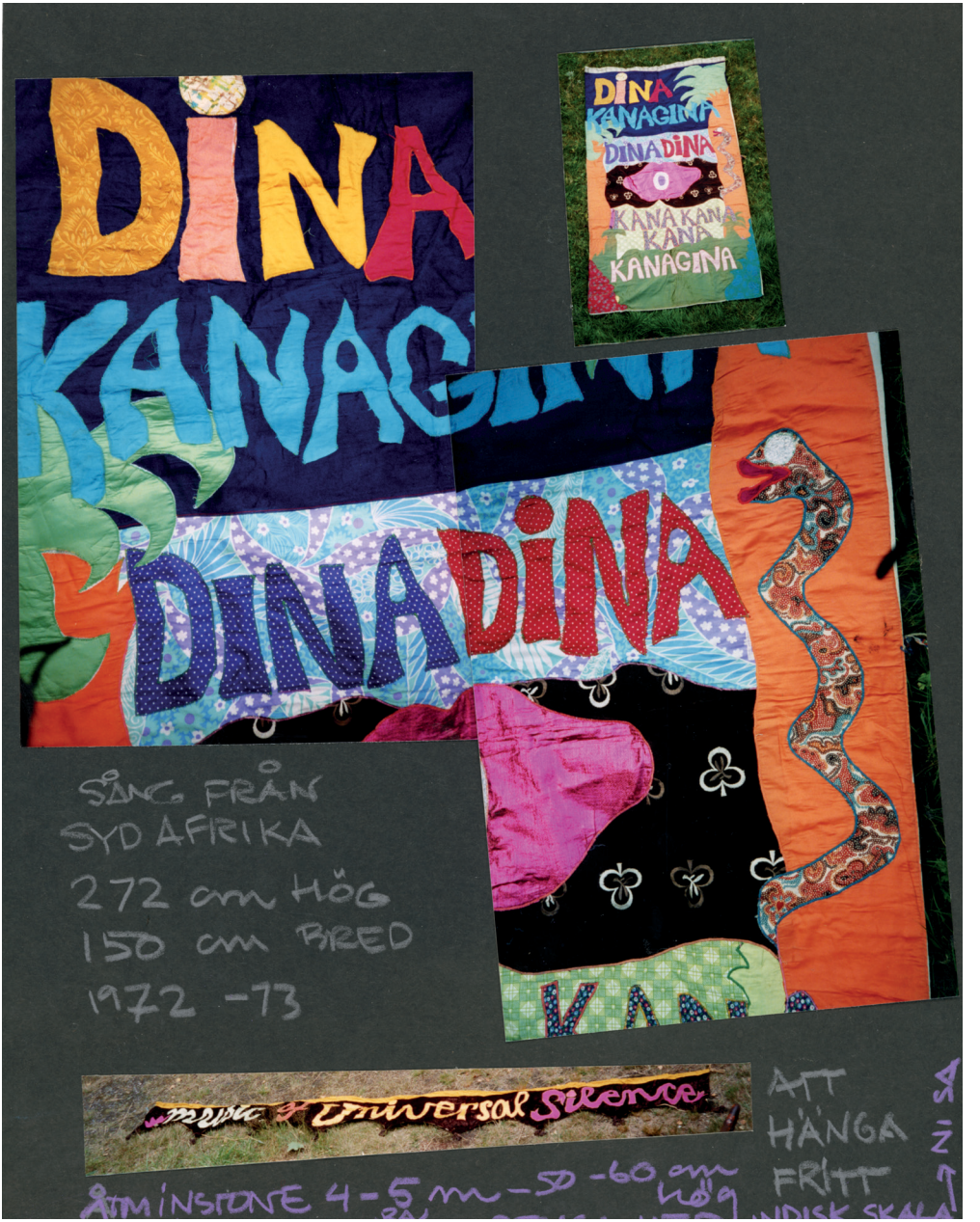
Front cover for Don Cherry's *Brown Rice* (EMI, 1975), illustration by Moki Cherry.

Front cover for Don Cherry's *Live in Ankara* (Sonet, 1978), illustration by Moki Cherry.

Front cover for Don Cherry and Latif Khan's *Music / Sangam* (Europa Records, 1982), illustration by Moki Cherry.

TAPESTRIES

Moki working at home in Pompanoosuc, Vermont,
near Dartmouth College, ca. 1970.


DINA
KANAGINA
DINA DINA
KANA KANA
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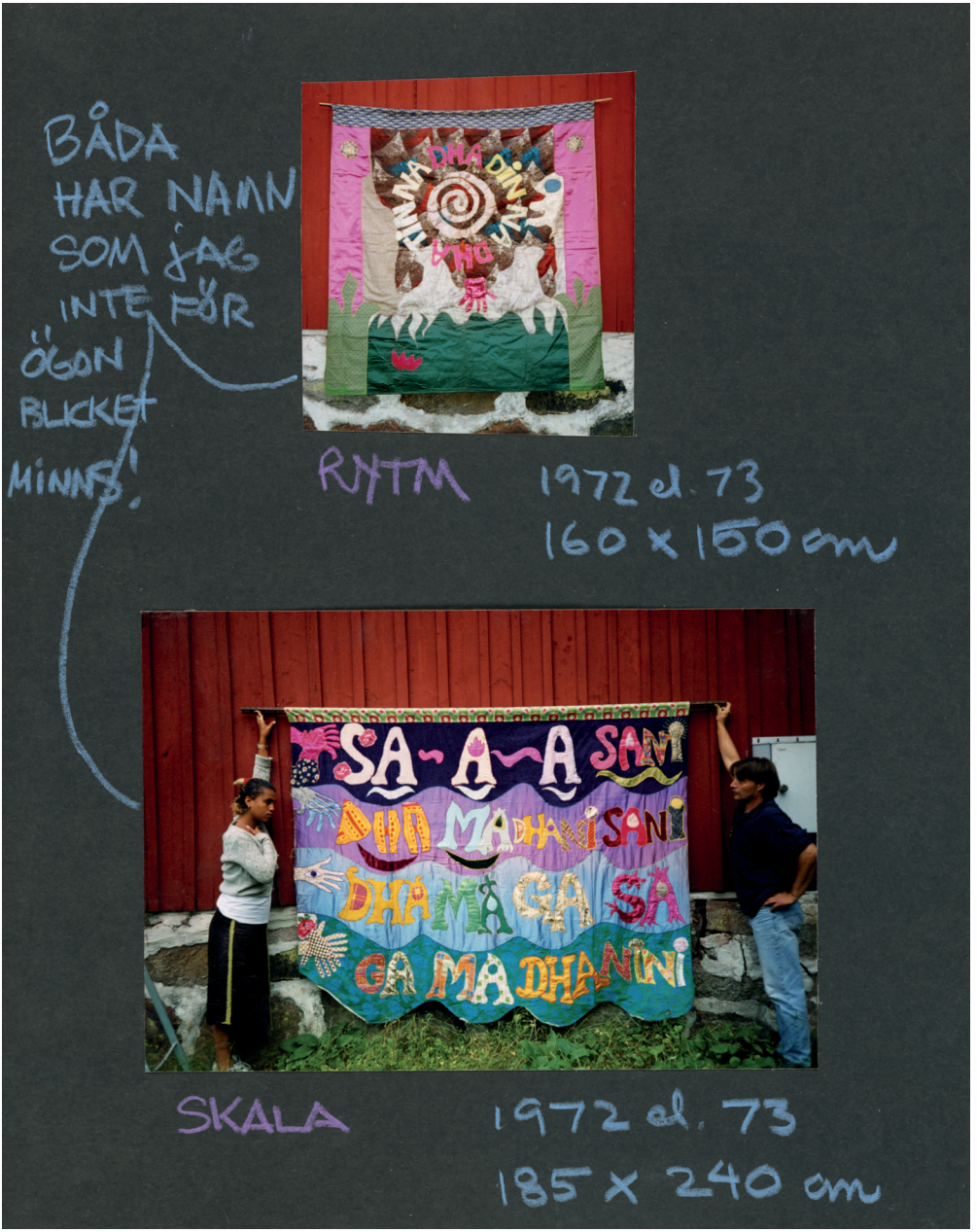
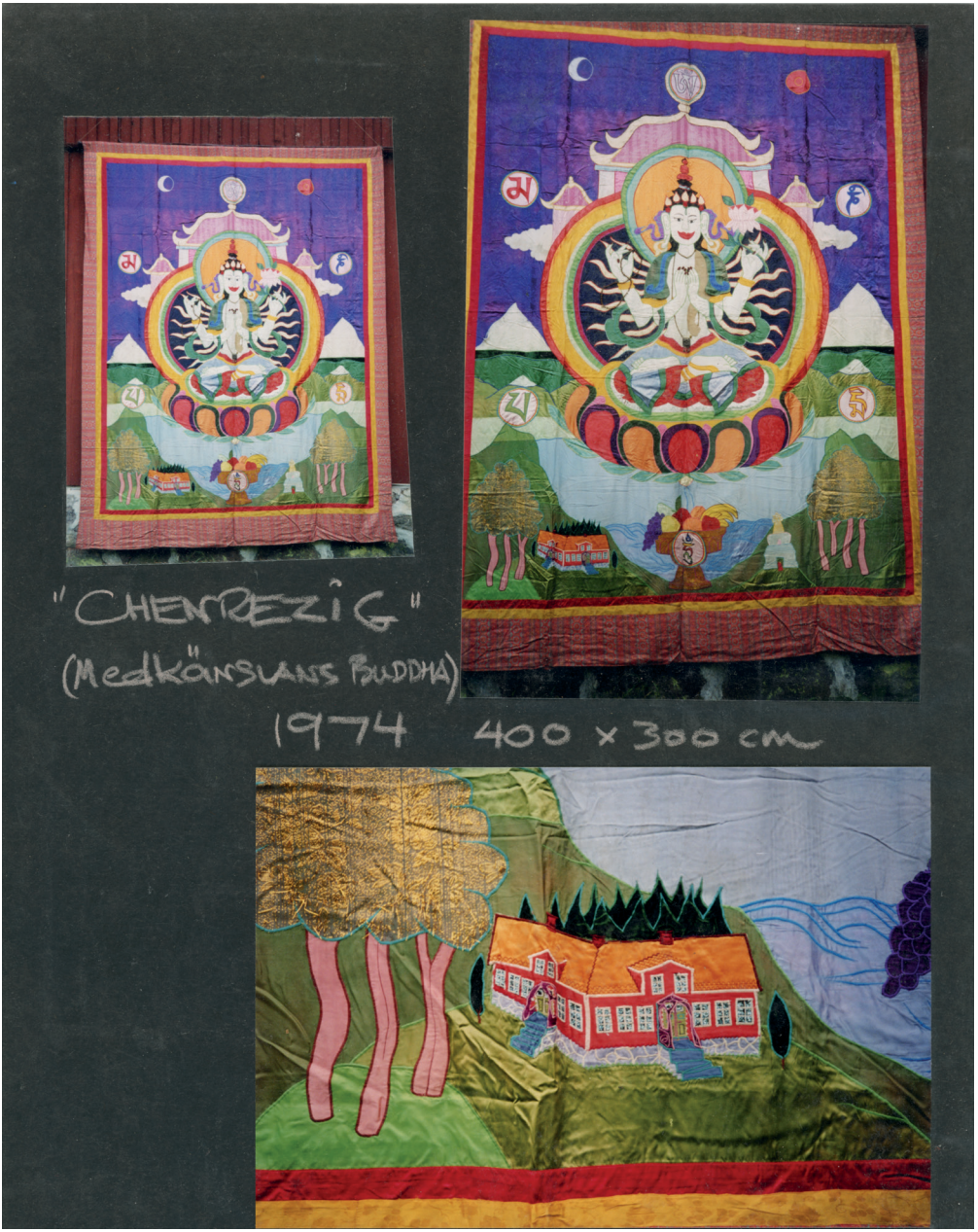
KANAGINA
SÅNG FRÅN
SYD AFRIKA
272 cm HÖG
150 cm BRED
1972 -73
Universal Silence
ATT
HÄNGA
FRITT



Above and left: Documentation of Moki Cherry's tapestries for her handmade portfolio, ca. mid-1990s.

MANDALA 197
205 x 205 cm
HÄNGER SEEND
MED ALLT
SKRYNKEL !
BLIX
BLEK
BORT
LITE
FÄR
I KA



Above and left: Documentation of Moki Cherry's tapestries for her handmade portfolio, ca. mid-1990s.

MÅLNING OM LIVET 1968
Lackfärg på duk
Gissar att dem
är c:a 70 × 100 cm
kanske lite
mindre. (50 × 70 ?)

Det finns en
SERIE MÅLNINGAR
PÅ MASONITSKIVOR

SOM JAG GLÖMDE BORT
NÄR JAG VAR I TÅGARP

FRÅN -68

"AFFISHER" FRÅN 1968

ABF-HUSET SVEAVÄGEN
I STOCKHOLM
67 × 88 cm

72 × 52 cm

DENNA SATT I ETT I
GLASSKÅP VID ENTRÉN
TILL "JAZZHUS
MONTMARTRE"
KØBENHAVN OKT 68

Above and left: Documentation of Moki Cherry's tapestries for her handmade portfolio, ca. mid-1990s.

Moki Cherry, *Organic Music*, 1975, appliqué on silk, 35 3/8" × 23 5/8".

Moki Cherry, *Brown Rice*, 1975, appliqué on silk with mixed fabrics, 33 5/8" × 66".

Moki Cherry, *Tågarp-N.Y.*, 1977, 80 ¾" × 92 ½".

Don Cherry in Tågarp, 1971. Photo: Moki Cherry.

Above and left, Moki Cherry textile works at Tågarp schoolhouse, 1979. Photo: Rita Knox.

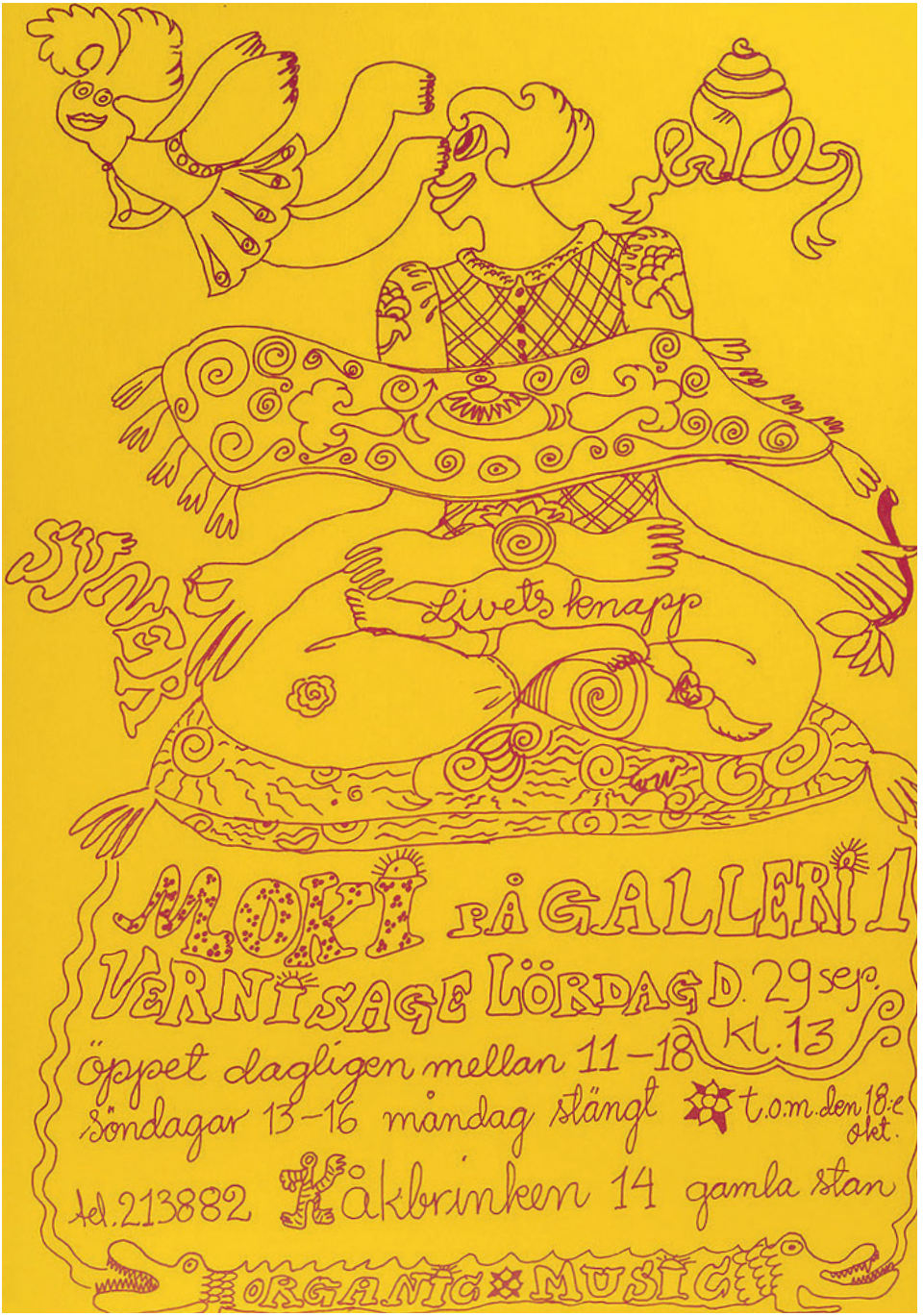
Don Cherry and Åge Delbanco (Babaji) (*right*) with an unidentified musician, ca. 1973.

Moki Cherry, frame from *Hear and Now*, 1977, textile appliqué on silk. Installation view, Tågarp schoolhouse. Photo: Rita Knox.

 Moki Cherry textile works at Tågarp schoolhouse, 1979. Photo: Rita Knox.

Moki Cherry, *Mandala*, 1978, textile appliqué on silk.
Installation view, Tågarp schoolhouse. Photo: Rita Knox.

GALLERI 1



Poster by Moki Cherry for her exhibition at Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973.

Moki Cherry outside Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973. Photo: Rita Knox.

Installation at Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973.

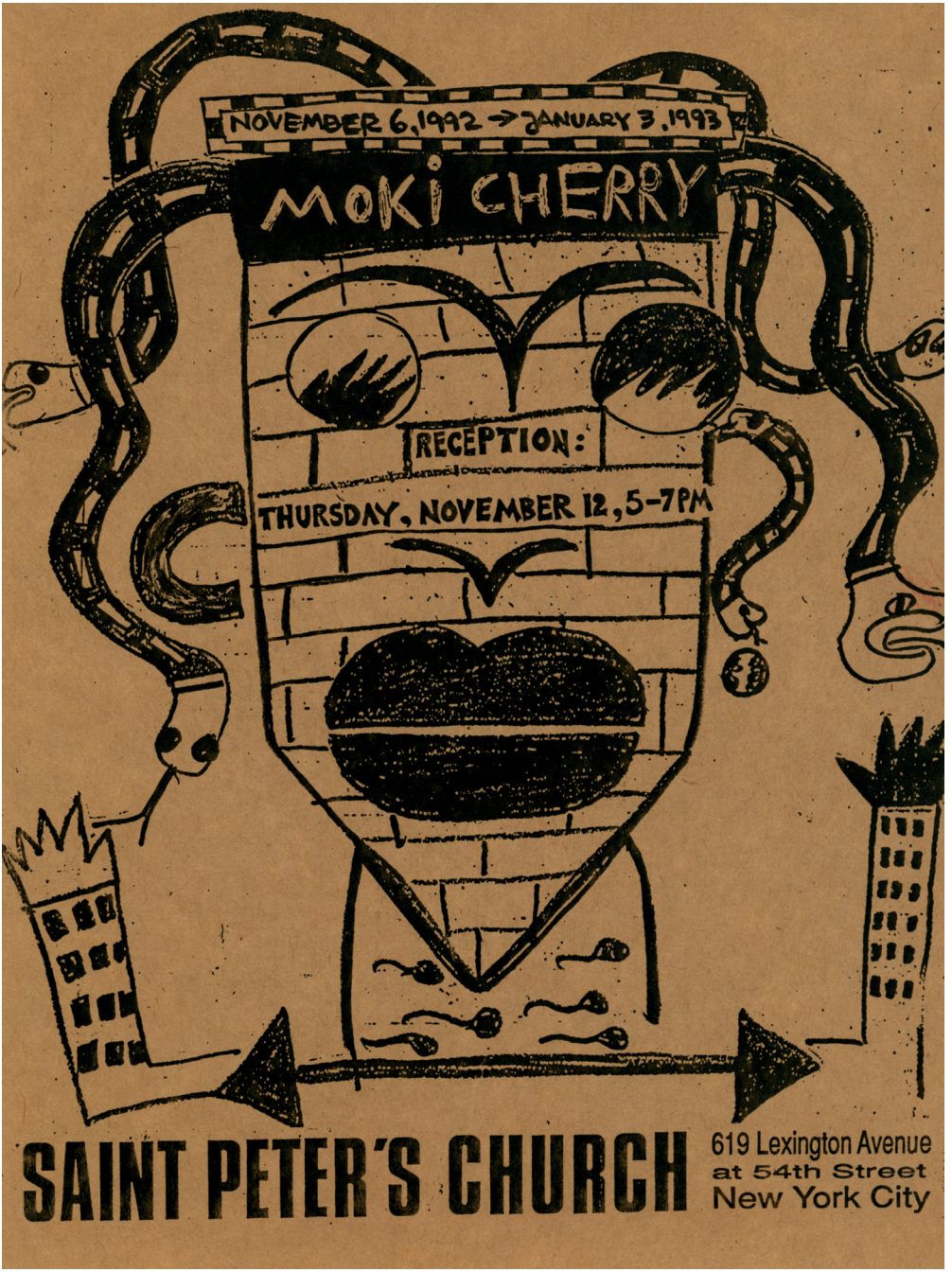
Installation at Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973. Photo: Rita Knox

Above: Lena Ahlman and Peter Isgren at Moki Cherry's Galleri 1 exhibition.
Below: Installation at Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973.

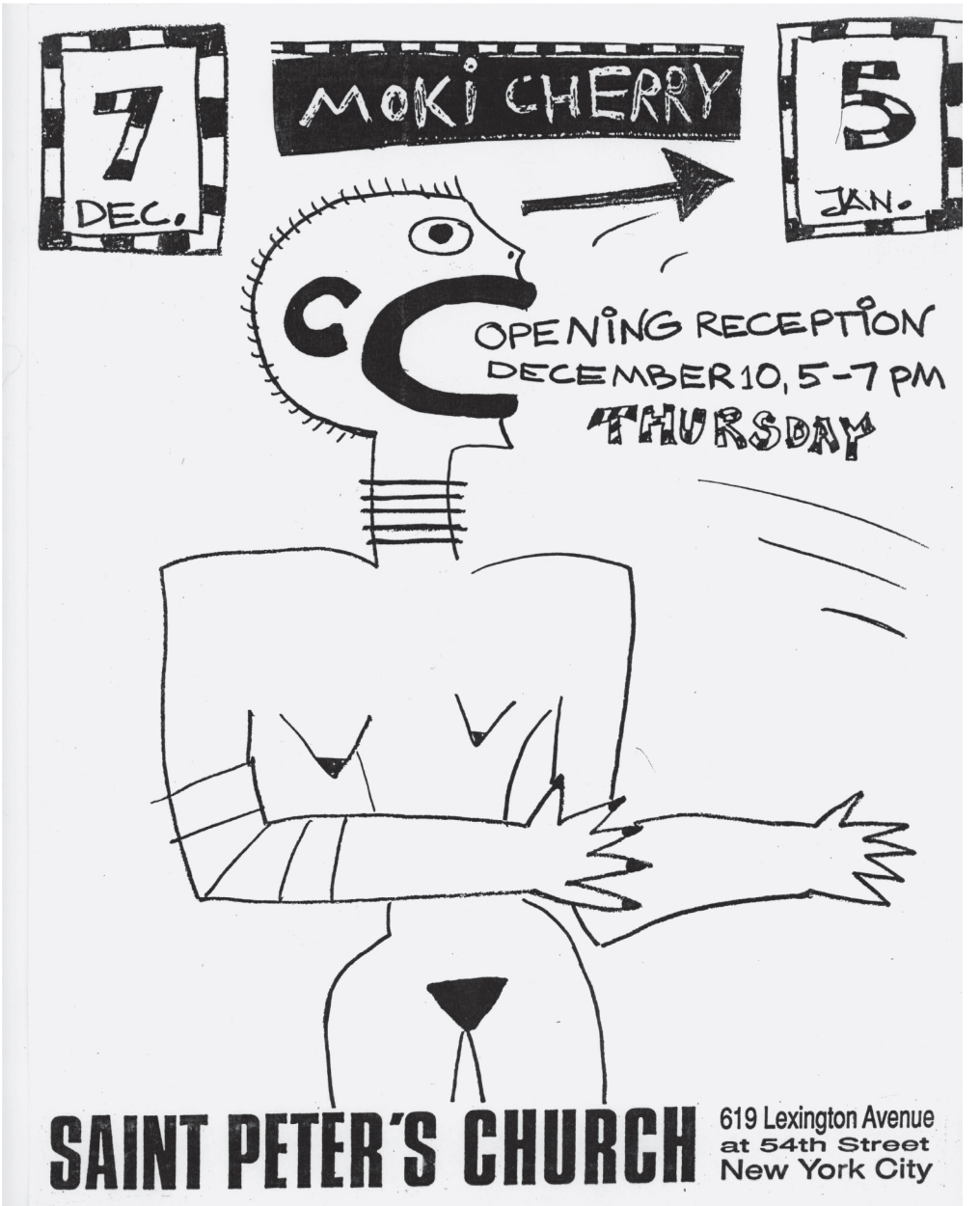
Above: Installation at Galleri 1, Stockholm.

Below: Moki Cherry and Don Cherry with an unidentified musician at Galleri 1, Stockholm, 1973.

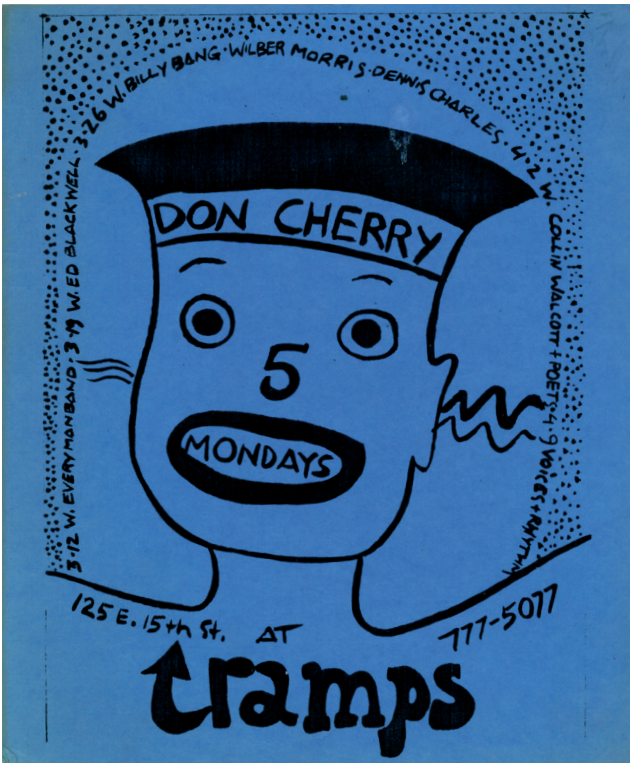
POSTERS



Poster by Moki Cherry for her exhibition at Saint Peter's Church, New York, 1992.



230 Poster by Moki Cherry for her exhibition at Saint Peter's Church, New York, 1992.



Flier by Moki Cherry for a five-night Don Cherry residency at Tramps, New York, ca. 1979.

Flier by Moki Cherry for December 9, 1977, "Mu Part III"
Don Cherry and Ed Blackwell concert at Eisner and Lubin
Auditorium, Loeb Student Center, New York University.

Poster by Moki Cherry for December 22–23, 1978,
Don Cherry concert at Circle in the Square, New York.

Flier by Moki Cherry for concert with Naná Vasconcelos, Don Cherry, Steven Gorn, and Badal Roy, ca. 1979, at Alternative Center for International Arts, New York.

Neneh Cherry and Bodil Håkansson rehearsing
a precursor to Octopuss Teater, 1975.

 Shanti Roney and Eagle-Eye Cherry rehearsing for Octopuss Teater, 1978.

Cast photo, 1982. Photo: Brita Olsson.

Moki Cherry setting up scenery, 1982. Photo: Brita Olsson.

Band rehearsal, 1982. Photo: Brita Olsson.

Outdoor changing room, 1985. Photo: Åke Jakobsson.

RECENSIONER

Turisttrafikföreningen i Vittsjö kunde glädja sig åt tämligen stor publikuppslutning vid tisdagskvällens underhållning vid Gåsadammen. För programmet svarade barnen från föreningen Tågarps skola, som visade en förkortad version av sin nyligen premiäruppförda Cabaré Sommar-Fnatt.

Det var ett lätt och lustigt spex. Man sjöng och spelade, dansade och mimade med fantasi och inlevelse och parodierade i sketchens form skilda företeelser i vuxenvärlden. Och samtliga i gruppen, några i mycket hög grad, agerade med imponerande säkerhet.

De medverkande barnen, som är i åldern 8-13 år, har själva bidragit med idéerna till programmet. Utformningen av materialet och instuderingen av rollerna har sedan skett på närmast improvisativ grund med enligt uppgift från regissörerna minsta möjliga grad av vuxeningripande. Trots den låga medelåldern har man hunnit skaffa sig åtskillig rutin på området eftersom det var fjärde året på rad som man sammanställer en föreställning av det här slaget.

De unga aktörerna har även själva ansvarat för såväl kostymer som scenografi, den senare lika klatschig som sinnrikt avpassad för en tribun i det fria. Helhetsintrycket av denna fina och fria form av ungdomsteater har verkligen blivit vällyckat och de som håller i trådarna är värda all respekt.

Publiken var också påtagligt med på noterna och belönade de talangfulla aktörerna med många och hjärtliga applåder.

Bilden: Barnteatern från Tågarps skola gjorde stor lycka på Gåsadammsscenen i Vittsjö.

Såe

NORRA SKÅNE * Torsdag 30 juli 1981

Skolan finns. Den står i en fint vildvuxen trädgård mitt i Tågarp i norra Skåne och luktar gott av gammalt trä och sommar.

Men någon psalm blir det inte. I stället börjar två små killar hamra som vansinniga på var sitt trumset, strax följda av tre andra ungar, som bräker i med höga och vilda toner från trumpeter och flygelhorn. Det låter friskt och skönt.

Ett av barnen tar upp en sångremsa från Guinea. Killarna vid trummorna hör direkt, stannar upp, torkar svetten ur pannan och sjungar med. Två textrader, stadigt och rytmiskt. Och så fullt ös med trummorna och lurarna igen.

Det går alltså! Det som alla vackra läroplaner och skolmyndigheter så högt och vitt talar om: att få barn levande, skapande och fria, men samtidigt ansvarsfulla och ömsinta mot varandra.

Lyssnande och ödmjuka i musiken.

DAGENS NYHETER, 1978

OCTO-PUSS TEATERN

TOFTA, 280 20 BJÄRNUM, TEL. 0451-702 55

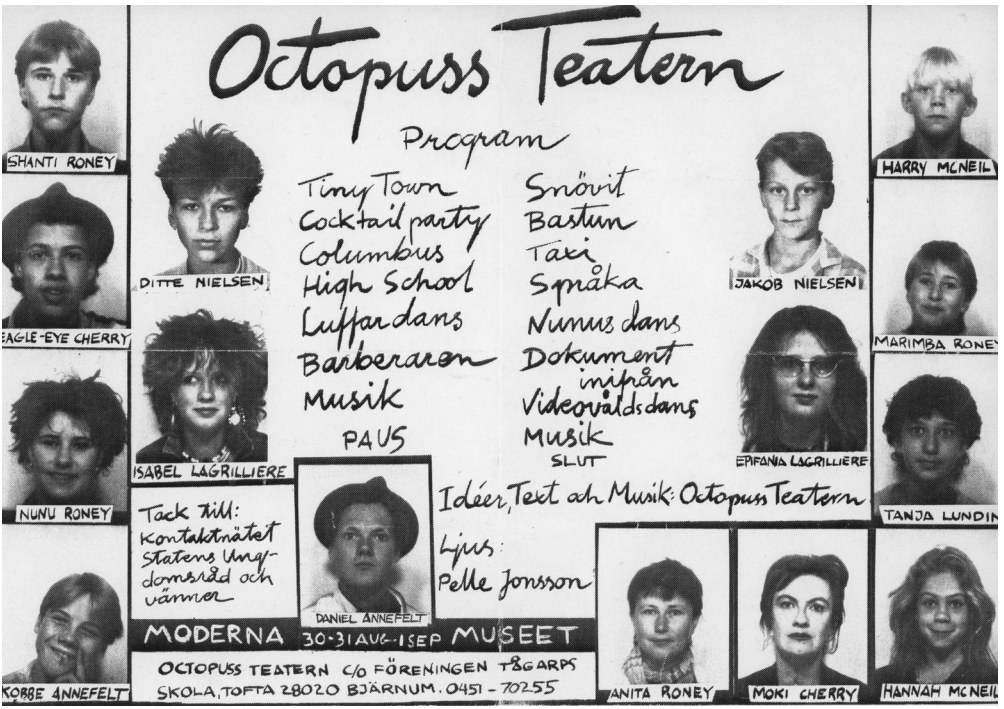
OCTO—PUSS

När barnen spelar en hisnande fars ...

OCTO-PUSS är en 5 år gammal ungdomsteater från Tågarp utanför Hässleholm. Vi spelar en satirisk, humorfylld kabaré med mycket musik och dans. Vår föreställning vänder sig till hela familjen. Vi är 10 medlemmar i åldern 9-14 år, samt Anita Roney, som samordnar och Moki Cherry, som står för kostym och dekor.

Handbills for Octopuss Teater, ca. 1983.

Poster for Octopuss Teater production at Moderna Museet, 1985.



Program for Octopuss Teater production at Moderna Museet, 1985.

Moki Cherry hanging *Kali*, 1973, at Galleri 1, 1973.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DON CHERRY

Christopher R. Brewster

This radio interview between Don Cherry and Christopher R. Brewster aired on March 12, 1970, in advance of Cherry's "Elephantasy" concert at Dartmouth University's Spaulding Auditorium at the Hopkins Center for the Arts in Hanover, New Hampshire. The conversation was originally broadcast on WDCR, Dartmouth's free-form community radio station, during Cherry's tenure as an artist-in-residence at the school. In it, Cherry sheds light on his travels, pedagogy, and collaborations, and demonstrates the use of several instruments. This transcription has been edited for clarity and length. Advertisements and other radio announcements have been removed, and phrases in brackets have been inserted by the editors for ease of reading.

(249–262)

CHRISTOPHER R. BREWSTER
Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to The Noon Hour for this Thursday afternoon. I'm Chris Brewster and I'm very pleased to have as my guest today one of my favorite people, Don Cherry, who is a jazz musician, and who at this time is teaching a music course at Dartmouth College. And Don's here to talk today about his upcoming concert, which will be this Saturday, entitled "Elephantasy." Don, I thought we might begin by asking where you got the name of "Elephantasy" for the concert.

DON CHERRY
Well, you know, this thing "fantasy" is something that has been a very rare thing. We know of it when we're very young. And being connected with as many children as I have in my life, I feel that it's important to keep this alive, this fantasy. There's so many other things that deal with the other things, but also I can imagine the fantasy that would be living in a forest and a certain nature and environment. To me, that's a certain reality that is fantasy. I mean, the fantasy that is reality. What is reality? What is fantasy? But "Elephantasy" is something which is huge, a huge fantasy–that's of an elephant. And as you can see on this poster, which I have brought in today, there's elephants on the poster. And we just worked from there. It opens up for a lot of surprises to happen, you know, through the fantasy and through the mysticism of sound. It's important for us to have these surprises, you know, some surprises can be supreme. A supreme surprise is great. It would be a nice name for a fair, *a supreme surprise*.

CB One thing I wanted to ask you about the concert that's coming up this Saturday is how it compares with concerts that you've done in the past.

DC That's a difficult question. Maybe it's better if I tell you about some of the past concerts. We started out as Movement Incorporated. This is the period of my life when I decided I didn't want to play nightclubs, [I'd] rather play under the environment which I felt was in tune with the type of music I was connected with. It started in Stockholm. And this artist-designer, who is the same person–Moki–that made the poster, which you can see around the campus here and also in Norwich at the Dan and Whit's store. At that period, the first concert, which was in Stockholm, she would make a black-and-white poster, and then she would also sew a poster. And

the first concert is where I had been there and used most of the musicians, which hadn't been exposed, some of the best musicians of the local scene there. And the concert was successful because we used certain techniques, we used slides on this particular occasion—and all this is a part of the program as a form in the program. Whether we use slides, or sometimes films—this is all going while the music does and it evolves into a suite—suite, not s-w-e-e-t—which we constantly use. What do we call that first one now? "Welcome," it was called. And so I played the "Brotherhood Suite." These things were all a part of what happened within it.

That first particular concert was made up, mostly, of a musical ensemble. The room was made with decor which Moki had made, and we used carpets with it. People would not be sitting in chairs. It happened in this room, which was very large, in Stockholm, with carpets. So we learned from that one and traveled on to Denmark.

The second concert was at the Art Institute there. Kunsthal Charlottenborg is the name of it, it's right on Nyhavn in the middle of Copenhagen, Denmark. I had been in Copenhagen and lived there on different occasions. Within this concert, we had some of the best musicians in some of the pop groups I had known about, such as Burnin' Red Ivanhoe and then John Tchicai, who is black, African/Danish parents, who lives there, and he has a group. We incorporated his group with some of the pop groups, and we had some film directors there that showed part of an experimental film, which we incorporated into the piece. This Charlottenborg, it's an old type, European Gothic, and it has a castle with a courtyard in it. And it's this friend of mine that makes fireworks, he's been doing this for years, he does it as a hobby but he's very good. He made a special fireworks exhibit, which we had at intermission. At that concert we advertised for everyone to bring their own carpet. And it was a wonderful feeling because it was a very large room with marble and pillars and all these people in groups, each had a carpet with friends, like a room. So it's this large room of little rooms with no walls. It was a successful concert.

In Paris, we gave our third concert. We did a color television show, more or less. We went there for a concert and we couldn't find a place and didn't have time to stay in Paris long enough to do that, but we did a color television show under the title of Movement. The decor was all done by Moki and

I used a trio at that time. The guitar player, Pedro Urbina, a classical guitar player who improvises, also. And the drummer, who is also in electronic music, Jacques Thollot. And then, let me see now. Movement, for certain reasons, didn't work again until we began again. And this time we started in Stockholm and Copenhagen again. This time we went all the way down to Turkey, giving concerts along the way.

We shouldn't dwell on that too long, you know, but we really would like everyone to come to this concert. We welcome them and ask them to please come out because there's certain things that we know everyone hasn't been exposed to. I could use the words *mixed media*, but we're trying to mix and incorporate all these things and bring the exposure, in different forms of music, such as some of the folk songs, which I've been studying. You know, I've studied music from Turkey, and I've learned many songs from the Black Sea and songs from India, and also some of the very recent contemporary pieces written by Ornette Coleman. And we should play a John Coltrane piece and some surprises, some Brazilian songs.

When I was in Paris, when I started the first international group, which stayed together for two years, we even came to America and gave a concert at Town Hall. It was very difficult the first time I went to Paris because contemporary jazz had not reached Paris yet. Now it's settled there, but at that time it was a very difficult period. But I stuck with it because of my will and the center—out of all of Europe, Paris is a very good center. And it has good impressions from some of the architecture there. And I incorporated with the group, which had a saxophone player from South America, Gato Barbieri, a bass player that was studying at Versailles by the name of Jean-François Jenny-Clark, a vibraphone pianist from Heidelberg by the name of Dr. Karl Hans Berger, and the drummer at that time was Aldo Romano, who was from Italy. So it was completely an international group.

At that meeting, which is about three or four years ago, only one person could actually really speak English. Some people would speak two languages. So we would have to contact each other through me, maybe asking the bass player to speak, he spoke Italian and French, and the drummer, Aldo, he could speak Italian or French and would communicate with the bass player, the same way with Dr. Karl Hans Berger, he could speak all the languages. And Gato, he spoke no English then. Now they all speak English and they all are well known

in their rankings as jazz musicians, fantastic musicians—and from me being connected with the musicians in Europe, and the jazz scene in Europe for these last few years—that's one of the reasons I'm sending for two musicians to come from Europe. Johnny Dyani and Okay Temiz were having visa trouble, but we hope to iron that out. And if there is any difficulty with them getting in the country, we will have to send to New York for Charlie Haden and Edward Blackwell, but we still have our fingers crossed. I think it's going to work out.

CB Have you ever done a concert in a room like Spaulding Auditorium, a big place like that?

DC Yes, yes. I played in the Berlin Jazz Festival about two years ago, I think, and it's possible I will play in it this year. This building is not *similar* to Spaulding, I've never seen a building similar to Spaulding, it's a very good building for music. The room is wonderful for me.

CB So you don't find that its size is any sort of problem?

DC No, I've been working with acoustics and even in the class, I'm trying to make everyone aware of the building: the highest sound, the lowest sound. I mean, there's very few buildings that are really complete for music. I'm speaking of practicing art, maybe, but there's some very good rooms that are made—especially classical rooms for string quartets. A small room is much better because it's a very relaxed feeling, and you can see it. To know, of a room, your highs and pianissimo, triple pianissimo—the lowest sound and the highest sound—then you can work from there. The room can be like an instrument, to know the whole range of the room, and then you have to work with it in a way. That's the wonderful thing about playing outside and with no microphones.

CB You mentioned your class, and I wanted to ask you how things have been going in your classroom since we talked last, which was about two weeks ago, shortly after the term started. What have you been doing in your class lately?

DC Oh, it's really flowering, you know? The plant has more leaves and is getting green like a healthy plant. And the kalimbas

have come. This is a kalimba I have in my hand here [*plays kalimba*]. It's a very interesting instrument, it's made in South Africa and we know it as a finger piano, but this is a Western version, and I think it's great. It also has vibrato [*strums kalimba*]. It's a heavenly sound. But the class is, as I say, flowering, and we're discovering more and more things about ourselves. Discovering more and more possibilities for spontaneous composing. I'm very pleased with the tempo and the things we're doing. There should be more time. For one thing, I feel like in an instrumental ensemble, we try to memorize things. You know, I have written music but if the students can leave and they know at least three or four songs in their hearts, I feel like they're leaving with something. From having different musicians in different fields, some musicians have Dixieland bands, some play country and western, some pop, some swingers, you know, from the jazz swing years. So we've discovered that we use the whole ensemble as interludes and scenes, and then we section it off to open up our introduction. The whole ensemble would be an introduction for these different sections to improvise, to play what they feel that's in tune with the style of music that they like most. And then some of the things that we use as interludes and themes will open up all these musicians in different fields and expose them to this form. Because it's not forced on anyone, there's a very pleasant and happy way to practice, when it's joyous, one that you can feel development in. And that's how it's flowering. As I say, we keep giving it water and giving the plant plenty of light so that it—you have to set it outside sometimes [*laughs*].

CB A little fertilizer.

DC Yeah! This takes care and time, you know, and I think it's very happy.

CB I wanted to mention that your class is going to be giving a concert itself, isn't it?

DC Yeah, that's on the fourteenth of March.

CB Fourteenth of March?

DC Yeah. We're looking forward to that. It's going to be quite an evening.

CB Now with regard to your "Elephantasy" concert, from the way you were talking about it, is it going to be like a combination– teaching session as well as a music session?

DC Well, no, not necessarily so.

CB By that I mean, do you think you're gonna be doing something in the sense of educating the audience?

DC Well, no, because it's not that type of a feeling–it's more or less of a musical gathering, you know, and we should say that there should be some surprises. But tonight we're collaborating classes with the director Joseph Losey, and both of our classes were in the project of making a film soundtrack, this film, which is entitled *Eve* [*Eva* (1962)], with Jeanne Moreau. And I've been looking at the film this week and we picked a few scenes and the class, we're going to improvise with the film. It's already a soundtrack there. This film, Joseph Losey had directed and made it with the music of Billie Holiday and Miles Davis in mind. In the film, she plays Billie Holiday records, and Michel Legrand did the score. We're going to experiment on the impact of live music on a film. And I think it's a great idea because, you know, as originally it was where they had the pianist playing for silent films. I have in mind that it would be great one day if there was a film that was made especially for that. It would be live bands, ensembles to play with the film and each time it would be a whole different feeling with the film. I think that's a very good idea, and timely for that to happen.

CB Have you ever done anything like this before?

DC Yes, yes. I've made some soundtracks for films and we have watched a film and recorded ourselves while watching the film and that's done quite a bit, and I've worked with a Polish composer by the name of [Krzysztof] Komeda, and Komeda did music for [Roman] Polanski. I've worked with him on two films, one with a Danish director [Henning Carlsen], I forget his name now, and the other one was with Jerzy Skolimowski, a Polish director, it's called *The Departure* [1967]. The way that Komeda worked, and me working with him, I really learned a lot about his technique in putting this film score together,

and the soundtrack. I think this is a wonderful experiment for all of us involved to do this, and I'm happy because the class can have projects like this. Also, I'm trying to work on the class to have performances in prisons. You know, there's some prisons around here and someone has spoken to me about it and we're trying to work on that, because I think that would be good. The more projects we have, the more unity we can feel in what we're doing and it's sort of like an examination, to perform. That's an examination itself, you know. But all things are really happening here at Dartmouth, at the Center. It's almost like a Renaissance of the seventies. People who are here and the unity of working and energy, it's wonderful.

CB You talked earlier, well, when we first did a show two weeks ago, about New Hampshire and Northland and what a great place that was to be for an artist and how you were hoping that this would be a good place to work. Have you found it to be a good atmosphere?

DC Yes, it's just–the difficulty has been the weather, getting people up here that we've been expecting, because the weather has been very unusual this year. But as far as living up here and the feeling of the people, it's really wonderful, because it's a feeling that everyone can accept you as what they can see in your eyes. I like that because I feel like the revolution is inside. You know, it's not–you can't judge people visually, you know, you feel that there is a thing called vibration, human vibrations, and you can feel that, a fragrance. Everyone carries a certain fragrance of their inner love. I can feel that here. As I said before, everyone knows nature and they're in tune with nature. So like I was listening to this sculptor who has exhibited at Hopkins now–

CB [Elbert] Weinberg?

DC Weinberg. I was listening to him and he made it very clear how he's actually inspired through nature. That's a natural thing for an artist, you know? And that's exactly what, to answer your question.

CB Well, Don brought several instruments with him today. A lot more than he had the last time. Maybe now, if you want to, we might get into some of that.

DC Yeah. Before I played the wooden and bamboo flute and a wooden and plastic flute, and I promised myself I would remember to bring bamboo.

CB I get to play the bells in this one.

DC Yeah [*laughs and plays flute*]. That's made up of three different songs. The first melody is from Peru and the vocals are from an old Indian, American Indian tribe. The last piece is a Turkish melody.

CB One of the things that Don began his music with was the trumpet. I believe that was what you started on, wasn't it Don?

DC Yes.

CB That was your first instrument.

DC That was the beginning, yeah.

CB And remember, remember the last show that we did together. He talked about his first trumpet and he has one with him today that he got when he was in Paris. It's quite a horn. I thought maybe we might do something with that. Could we?

DC You know, this–1956. Within the Valley of Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley this man had imported five pocket trumpets, which were made in Pakistan. And this instrument is in the same key as the regular trumpet. It's made very short, it's a very small, stubby horn. I like it because it's compact, it's more like your tonsils. I mean, it has a vocal-type feeling, and it's also possible to make the mellowness of a coronet or the brass of a trumpet. This horn I played up until the sixties, and then I found an old instrument, a Conn just manufactured in Indianapolis.[1] This horn was made in 1896 and it's *très jolie*,

1 C.G. Conn brass instruments were manufactured in Elkhart, Indiana, in this period.

as they say, a very light horn because in those days they were making horns very light. Now they're making them very heavy. Now three months ago I was in Paris. Well, by having this old Conn I had to have repairs on it at least every six months to keep it in good condition. I found this master craftsman that would work on my horn. So I would have to go there every six months to have it repaired. My last stay there, I had him repair it and he had to keep it for at least a week. I needed a horn because I had a record session. Someone, a trumpet player named Bernard Vita, they called him Babar, said, "Well, try this horn." He had it and he didn't use it that much. So I tried the instrument, and I think it's a grand instrument. You can see the engraving is exceptional. Let's see what kind of sound. [*Plays trumpet*.]

You see, there's a 9/8 time which is counted like one-two one-two one-two one-two-three, one-two one-two one-two one-two-three one-two one-two one-two one-two-three. It's a familiar time in Turkey and they count it [*counts in Turkish*]. I like it because there's a lot of life in it, very light and always the same. But the horn itself is really part of my heart, it's a part of me.

CB How long have you been playing the trumpet?

DC Ah, since the 1950s, 1950s I first started playing.

CB And we've talked about this before, you took lessons when you were in school, right?

DC Yes, I began in junior high school. And continued on and on and had to make the decision, you know, of entertaining. Because that was the thing then, you know, when you start out in music, you play the blues, you play with different blues bands, you know, T-Bone Walker, Johnny Watson, the Platters, you know, all these different groups that are around in the neighborhood.

You start working with them and that's a very good experience. My father, he didn't want me to play music. Originally when he first came with the movement, people from Oklahoma, the Okies, he was a bartender and he didn't want me to be involved with the life of jazz, you know, because he knew it as being the life of drugs. So he tried to not encourage me, he didn't want to encourage me in playing music. But after–I had to make that decision of whether I was going to entertain or really actually continue to study. I

made the decision and I studied–within the last six years, I was studying with a trumpet player from Turkey. His name is Maffy Falay, it's the English version, his name in Turkish is Ahmed Muvaffak Falay, and he's a fantastic trumpet player. A protégé of Dizzy Gillespie, you know, because of Dizzy Gillespie coming to Turkey. I was in Turkey before coming here to Dartmouth. I think I explained it–I did some music for a play for James Baldwin in Istanbul. I had been playing these songs and hadn't been there, and it was necessary for me to go there, which is wonderful, impressive. Something I'll never forget. The musicians you hear, and we were there during Ramadan, you know in the Islamic religion, Ramazan in Turkey and Ramadan in Morocco, they don't eat in the day after six o'clock. You fast during the day then you eat, and you hear the sound of the ney on the radio. [*Plays the flute.*]

The ney is a flute that has no mouthpiece, you play it from the actual end, just like a straight pipe. So it's a different embouchure. Also, I discovered the sound of the double reed–which I won't play now, but we'll hear at "Elephantasy"–of putting the double reed inside of the trumpet. By doing this, you can create the sound of a saxophone, a very shrilling soprano saxophone, and it covers some very large range.

CB Well, the double reed is the kind of mouthpiece used with an oboe.

DC Right. Quite a few countries have this instrument, they call it a zurna, a ney in different countries and it's very typical of the shepherd people. They'd have dances that they do. You may have four or five of these double reeds together.

CB Was there ever any question for you as to what kind of music you would play? You said that it was a question whether you'd entertain or continue studying? You never wondered?

DC With me, you know, I've always been interested in all kinds of music. Because it's just–music. And even as of now I'm writing my own compositions, but I have studied the compositions of different forms of folk music and different forms of jazz music. My background has been with playing in dance bands and also playing in bebop bands and then playing in Latin bands, which I enjoy very much. Folk music is Turkish music

and Indian music and many others. I mean, I can go on. I'm interested in hearing and I even remember first coming to New York, going to Madison Square Garden to hear the cantors, hundreds of cantors singing, which left a deep impression on me. I mean this, it's a universal, actually a universal language.

CB You've done some work in electronic music. What have you found about that that you like?

DC Yes, it's been interesting for me to be studying with a professor, [Jon] Appleton, and learning how to work the machines and listen to some of the sounds which are created from the machines. And I'm finding that it's possible to reproduce these sounds within the human body. For example, [*vocalizes*]. Also, speaking of the double reed, it's an electronical sound. Bagpipes to me is an electronical sound. I mean, it has that kind of force and vibrance to it. That's why it's interesting to me. Him and I have been working on combining the natural instruments, of which I have lots—earthquake drums, flutes, kalimbas—and combining them with electronical sounds, and it's working out splendidly. In fact I must try to get a tape to you so that you can maybe play something.

CB Had you done much work in electronic music before you came up here?

DC Yes. I've heard quite a deal of it. You know, in Stockholm they have a very good lab there and I know quite a few of the composers there and also in France, there's some very good composers there. I mean, I've been around so many studios and also it's important for me because I'm trying to reach for a certain quality in recording in the records that I plan to do in the future. We started for the first time to record the class. It has been very good for them to hear back themselves, and then they'll understand more of why we're doing certain things that I have them doing. When they hear them back, it's more understandable to them than actually doing them. I mean, a part of modern techniques and teaching is using these instruments. That's part of this world we live in.

CB Have you found the electronic music to be, well, I don't know how to quite put it, but have you found

it better–for lack of a better word–than things like the trumpet, or the flute, or the thunder drum?

DC Better–that's strange, you know, what's better, better than? The kids are always in that, you know, "this is better," but to me it's like, "different." Two different approaches, different techniques, and it's possible to combine them. It's another thing that's fantastic: you hear children say, "Oh, I hate this. Oh, I hate that." And I say, "You know what I hate?" They say, "What?" I say "I hate hate." I say, "You know what I love?" They say, "What?" "I love love."

LIFE AS A CREATIVE PROCESS: ON MOKI CHERRY'S WRITING

Naima Karlsson

(263–266)

> To experience Love – To give Love – To receive Love – To share Love. In Life – To make it Work through Work. To search for a Way to see if Life and Living in itself is Art by being a Creative process."
>
> –Moki Cherry, "Moki and Don's Collaboration"

Words are prominent in the world and work of Moki Cherry: in textiles, on paper, as mantras, songs, poetry, paintings. Language often carries strong messages in Moki's art; for her it was a tool with playful functionality. Words become pictures, and bold colorful letters interpret the vernacular, natural, and impermanent world. Nature was her ally, and art, words, and music the vehicles to express and ingest the many histories, wisdoms, and contradictions of life.

I remember Moki telling me how she taught herself to read at age four due to a burning curiosity to know more about the world. She would cut letters out from newspapers to make words, which she glued next to images of domestic objects from mail-order catalogs. With her new ability to read, Moki said, "true magic had been found." I don't think she ever lost that fascination and enthusiasm for playing with words, and she continuously used language to reflect on life and its public and private experiences.

Writing and words helped Moki to process her creative and personal impressions with endless doodle notes, spontaneous diary entries, sketches, and poems, combined with longer accounts of her life with Don and the many places they lived and traveled. Her life was transient, always on the move, always creating and writing in one way or another. Moki described her and Don's approach to life together as "improvising on stage and in living," which meant that wherever the family traveled was home. They carried with them all the means to make "home where you are," whether it was on a train, a camper, in a tiny room, indoors, outdoors, on stage, or even in a geodesic dome. Somehow, after several years of nomadic life, Don and Moki were blessed with finding very large living spaces for small prices–a schoolhouse in Sweden, a rented loft in New York City–convenient for both their tight budget and their ambitions to create environments that brought people together.

At the forefront of Moki's activity was the philosophy of living in the "now," which meant that she didn't give too much energy to the precious preservation of the past. She would cast old things to the attic and carry on to the next idea. But nothing was thrown away; everything could be useful for something, so the scattered

histories are everywhere: in dusty boxes, bedroom drawers, wooden tea chests, and old duffle bags. Gradually we sift through to find and fit the puzzle pieces together. I have naturally fallen into the role of attempting to find some order in the chaos, or at least pull out remnants of the story to share with others.

The texts I have chosen here were gleaned from Moki's papers, notebooks, and the many boxes and drawers that have housed them for years. These writings jump between years, themes, and places, much like the stories they tell. There are extracts of Moki's early life in Sweden, alongside little poetic wisdoms, drawings, reflections, and more formal accounts of her life story from a writing class she attended in New York from 2004 to 2006.

Several exhibitions in the last few years have pushed us to compile and care for the work and fragments of Moki and Don's story in a new way. Gradually an archive of sorts was born, which I continue to work on when time permits. Many new remnants have been discovered and digitized for this publication, and I am grateful for the dedication and enthusiasm that Blank Forms have had for this project. I would also like to acknowledge the many hours that my colleague and friend Evie Ward has put in to helping me organize and study Moki's papers and artistic practice. To encounter others who are also passionate about the material gives me fresh inspiration to carry on and find new ways to share the art, music, and histories that Moki and Don created. We can learn by example, mindful to avoid the skewed window of nostalgia, and see the timelessness of the simple methods and practice of "improvising in living."

London, September 2020

Untitled sketch for Movement Incorporated scenography, ca. 1967–68.

LIFE WRITINGS, DIARIES, AND DRAWINGS

Moki Cherry

The following pages combine autobiography, observations, illustrations, and diary entries, and have been assembled from sources including notebooks, letters, and ephemera, from the Cherry family archive in Tågarp, Sweden. While living in Long Island City, New York, Moki attended a creative writing workshop led by feminist art historian Arlene Raven from 2004 to 2006, using the opportunity to set part of her life story to paper. These writings cover Moki's early childhood, life with Don from 1963 into the seventies, and later reflections on Moki's career and the world around her. The texts have been edited for continuity and clarity by Adrian Rew. All images and texts are by Moki Cherry; they come courtesy of the estate and have been provided by Cherry's granddaughter Naima Karlsson.

I was born in Koler, in the north of Sweden in 1943. We lived in a beautiful black station house with red ochre trim.

I am an amazingly blessed person. My mother is from the Arctic Circle in Sweden. My father is from Göinge in southern Sweden. His ancestors were part of the Snapphane Wars between Denmark and Sweden, the only guerrilla warfare that ever took place in Northern Europe.[1] They gave me the beliefs and endurance I needed to set out on the path of sharing my life with Don Cherry. Our life together rang bells and inspired people. It was very unusual under the circumstances. No modern person with their senses in the right place would have been able to set up and create what I did.

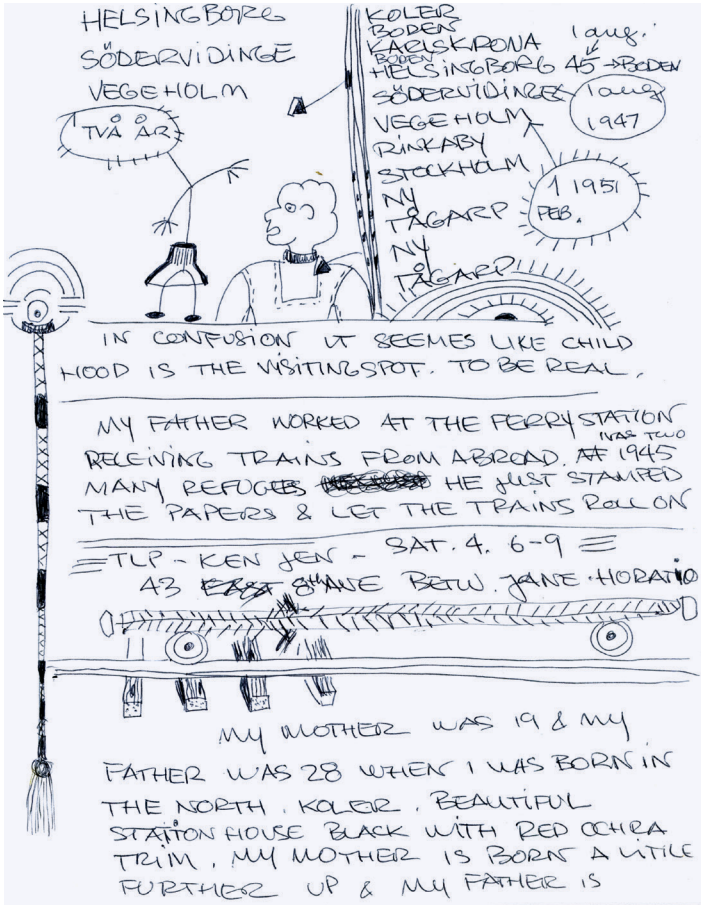
I lived in station houses growing up. The trains going by would make the plates rattle, and at night I would pretend I was in a wagon-lit,[2] especially when the long cargo trains passed. Since my father worked on the railroad, we could travel for free, and we went up and down the country like yo-yos. I was very fortunate to be bicultural. The north, the big space, the midnight sun, the challenging climate, the freedom in the spirit of the people, and the fact we never had an aristocracy up there. Men moved up there to mine and demanded the trees be chopped down—it was actually like a colony of Sweden.

Between the ages of two and thirteen I was more interested in butterflies and snails than in humans. The first otherworldly creature I discovered was a snail with a pale green shell. It was amazing. The body coming out of the shell, unfolding its eyes on those long tentacles. I spent a lot of my life with snails growing up, sometimes keeping as many as four hundred at a time. I built small rafters and took them on holidays, going sailing in a marshland forest. As a child, I loved nature and all of life, from such minute things to the northern lights. Especially getting to see birds make love while dancing, if I was patient. I lived in ecstasy just to see, hear, and experience all that life and magic going on, all interwoven and connected.

Sometime in the winter, when I was barely two years old, my mother gave me my first pair of scissors. Small, very sharp, and with a blunt front, they were made of steel that would rot if neglected. I vividly remember the scissors moment, my mother showing me what they do and how I should hold the paper to avoid cutting my fingers. I remember feeling a sense of magic seeing how the paper

1 Snapphane was a pejorative term used for members of a seventeenth-century pro-Danish guerrilla organization that fought against Sweden in the Second Northern and Scanian Wars.

2 A sleeper car on a European railroad.


HELSINGBORG
SÖDERVIDINGE
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BODEN
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1 aug.
45 → BODEN
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1947
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FEB.
IN CONFUSION IT SEEMES LIKE CHILD
HOOD IS THE VISITINGSPOT. TO BE REAL,
MY FATHER WORKED AT THE FERRY STATION
RECEIVING TRAINS FROM ABROAD. AT 1945
WAS TWO
MANY REFUGEES HE JUST STAMPED
THE PAPERS & LET THE TRAINS ROLL ON
TLP - KEN JEN - SAT. 4. 6-9
43 STATE BETW. JANE · HORATIO
MY MOTHER WAS 19 & MY
FATHER WAS 28 WHEN I WAS BORN IN
THE NORTH. KOLER. BEAUTIFUL
STATION HOUSE BLACK WITH RED OCHRA
TRIM. MY MOTHER IS BORN A LITTLE
FURTHER UP & MY FATHER IS

separated with a beautiful line, so I must have spent some time just shredding paper before I was handed a huge, fat mail-order catalog, from which I began to cut images of every item in existence, beginning with known objects such as pots, pans, toys, and clothing. I quickly learned to follow the edges and then created my own worlds with all this material, sitting in bed in the morning while the wood-burning kitchen stove heated up, its birch bark kindling catching fire, accompanied by the lovely smell of oatmeal and cinnamon.

My aunt Gertrude, my mother's older sister, was my introduction to the world of sewing machines, fabrics, and threads. She was a very intense and gifted seamstress. She could copy anything from the Paris fashion magazines she would send for, as well as make up her own designs. The women in this remote area of Norrland were very elegant and advanced. She could talk them into anything, bringing out huge catalogs with little fabric swatches while smoking her cigarette with a wooden thread spool as a holder. All fabrics came by mail order. She often stayed up all night to meet her deadlines, especially for wedding dresses that were out of this world. She had baskets full of wonderful scraps to play with and make dolls and creatures out of.

We then moved to Skåne, the south, where my father is from. I was four and a half when we arrived in Södervidinge, a flat open windy landscape. We lived upstairs in the train station. I would go outdoors and my mother would tell me not to go anywhere—as soon as the door closed, I would escape and run away all over. I knocked on people's doors and asked if I could visit. I discovered people doing many things.

One time I found a very old house and an old woman answered. There were three old sisters dressed in big striped aprons, making gloves from the softest, most delicate kidskin. The room was filled with fake wooden hands and the most lovely smell of leather. They asked me to sit by the door while they were sewing the gloves on the fake hands, singing softly. It was a mesmerizing experience. The house was small, with low ceilings, and from the eighteenth century. Everything was ancient. They were born in the house and had never married, just made gloves for the aristocracy as their parents did. I became a regular visitor. Later I found out they were famous for their exquisite gloves.

I went to the blacksmithery every day. I loved the fire, anvil hammering, leather aprons, and holes burned in clothes. It was dark and sooty, but the fire spread a warm light and all sorts of things were made, including horseshoes that would be fitted. I would go in and visit the blacksmith's wife to drink coffee, which I was not

MY MOTHER MARIANNE MADE THESE ~~SWEET~~ CLOTHES (LEFT) FOR MY FIVE YEAR BIRTHDAY. ~~IT WAS~~ GREEK WOOL WITH ZIPPER OCHRE WOOL KNITTED SWEATER. I LOVED THIS OUTFIT. I ESCAPED EVERYDAY KNOCKING ON DOORS ASKING PEOPLE ~~TO GO~~ IF I COULD ~~PAY~~ VISIT. I DISCOVERED PEOPLE DOING THINGS. THREE OLD SISTERS MAKING GLOVES FROM THE SOFTEST MOST DELICATE KIDSKIN

THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH FAKE HANDS. THEY ASKED ME TO SIT BY THE DOOR WHILE THEY WERE SEWING THE GLOVES ON THE FAKE HANDS SINGING SOFTLY. DRESSED IN OLD FASHIONED DRESS WITH BIG STRIPED APRONS. IT SMELLED WONDERFUL. EVERYTHING WAS ANCIENT. THEY WERE BORN IN THE HOUSE HAD NEVER MARRIED JUST MAKING GLOVES FOR THE ~~NOBILITY~~ & ~~SP~~ THE ARISTOCRACY ~~THAT~~ AS THEIR PARENTS DID // I WENT TO THE BLACKSMITHERY EVERYDAY I LOVED THE FIRE ANVIL HAMMERING LEATHER APRONS & BURN HOLES IN ~~ON~~ CLOTHES - DARK & SOOTY but THE FIRE SPREADING A WARM LIGHT ALL SORTS OF THINGS WERE MADE INCLUDING HORSE SHOES & THEY WOULD BE FITTED. I WOULD GO IN & VISIT THE BLACKSMITHS WIFE TO DRINK COFFEE WHICH I WAS NOT ALLOWED AT HOME. THEY HAD A SON INGVAR MY AGE HE JUST LOVED DRAWING SHIPS & BOATS HE WAS VERY TALENTED. THEN I WOULD GO TO VISIT A MAN ~~WH~~ WHO MADE SUNDIALS & ~~OTHER~~ ASTRONOMICAL CLOCKS OF DIFFERENT TYPES. I ALSO VISITED AN INTERESTING PLACE

THEY WERE BETWEEN 70-80 YEARS AT THE TIME

allowed at home. They had a son my age named Ingvar. He just loved drawing ships and boats. He was very talented.

Then I would go to visit a man who made sundials and astronomical clocks of different types. I also used to visit a chicken farm where two women from Japan sorted newborn chicks. They were very fast, smiled a lot, and didn't know much Swedish. The little yellow chickens were shipped away on the trains and used to sit there peep-peeping in cardboard boxes.

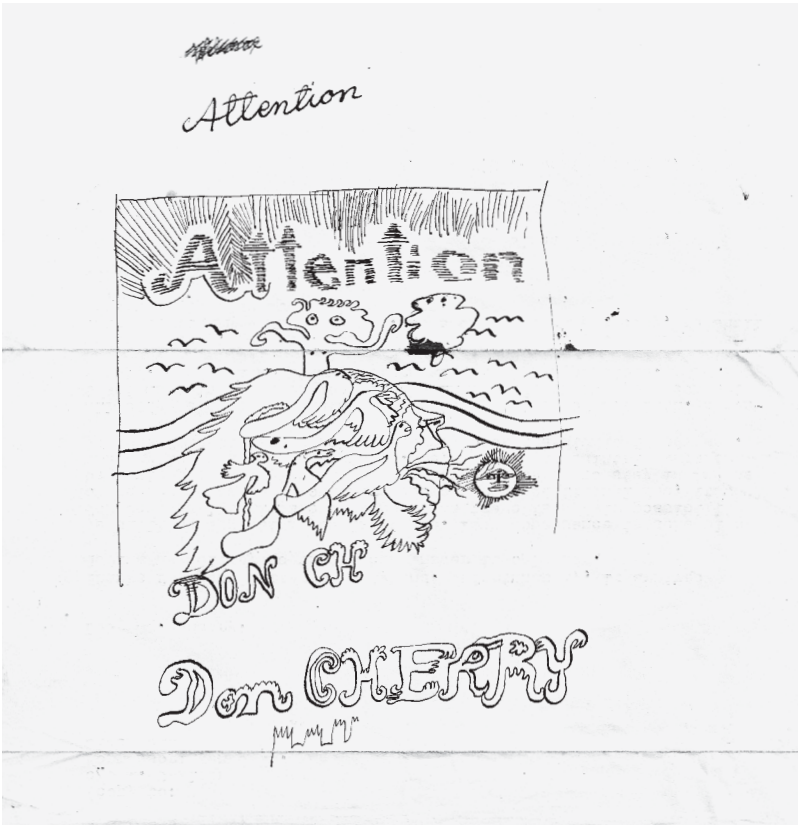
I went around and asked if people had any old magazines to give to paper recycling. I brought them to our shed and made collages and went around selling them to the same people and others. Someone came to the station and told my father they had bought "such a lovely collage" from me. My father went berserk. I think it's the angriest he ever was. I had made people think we needed the money, etc. I was in shock. I now wonder if that has anything to do with the difficulties I have getting myself out there, making price lists, etc., when I show my work.

When I learned to read I found magic, but school was very disappointing and by the time I reached high school, my capacity to learn in that way had totally vanished. I would sit there, unable to understand or hear anything, just watching the teacher's mouth moving.

At a younger age, I had already decided to *help make a more beautiful world*. My plan was to become a designer. I had found out about Beckmans School of Design in Stockholm and decided I wanted to attend. So, at sixteen years old, I left high school to learn to make clothes.

I began as an apprentice to Anna Greta Bloom, who had a boutique and atelier doing haute couture in Kristianstad. I learned sewing and took drawing classes at night. After one and a half years with Bloom, I went to Distingo, a manufacturer of women's coats and suits, and asked to become a designer's assistant. By a stroke of luck, an assistant had just quit and I could start right away by working on prêt-à-porter garments with Vera Öhne. I asked to spend some time going through the factory first, so during one month I gained experience ranging from shrinking fabrics to working on buttons–I still have some of those amazing buttons.

In 1962, I attended school at Stockholm's Tillskärarakademi, where I learned cutting, patternmaking, and drapery. While at Distingo, I had met the haute couturier Rune Ullhammar. He offered me an assisting apprenticeship that was meant to last one year, but I had applied to Beckmans School of Design and was accepted on my first try, so Ullhammar threw me out.



Untitled sketch, ca. 1966–67.

Don Cherry was born in Oklahoma, of African and Choctaw heritage, on November 18, 1936. He was an inspired, very unusual man, a musician's musician who had the gift of inspiring people to see their own unexplored potential. He was a founding father of world music who touched many people through his music and his person. As a young boy, he was called "Gandhi" as a teasing name because of his thin frame. Only later was he able to understand it as an honorable epithet.

Don grew up watching the artist Simon Rodia creating the magnificent Watts Towers. It was a very important experience for him to see a man create beauty and wonder out of debris–broken plates, etc.–from the area of Watts, Los Angeles.

I met Don for the first time in 1963, in Stockholm, while he was on tour with Sonny Rollins. He already had an impressive legacy by having been part of Ornette Coleman's original quartet between 1956 and 1961. A revolution in music at the time. On January 17, 1963, everybody went to the concert house in Stockholm to listen to the Sonny Rollins Quartet: Sonny Rollins, Don Cherry, Henry Grimes, and Billy Higgins. There was a fire in the subway below the building. Smoke was seeping through the floor, but no one moved. The night the concert house was on fire.

When Don Cherry's sound appeared it reminded me of the magic I had found by myself in nature while growing up. After the sensational concert, I went with some friends to the Golden Circle, a fabulous jazz venue down the street. The Sonny Rollins band was already there sitting in with Johnny Griffin's group. Don came over to us and asked to speak to me. We stood in the floor-to-ceiling window on the second story looking out at the snowy street, talking about love on some other elevated plane–music. We immediately connected on a creative level. I was nineteen and a student at Beckmans School of Design, during my first of four years.

My motto was: *to help make a more beautiful world*.

In October 1964, Don was in Stockholm again. This time he was on tour with Albert Ayler, Gary Peacock, and Sunny Murray. It was time for a special celebration. They played at the Golden Circle. Albert had spent time in Stockholm from '62 to '63 getting his *thing* together. He had been in the army in Germany. We were friends and he used to come to practice in the painting studio I was subletting. He had left Stockholm for Copenhagen on his way to New York just a few days before when I first met Don. The next stop for the Sonny Rollins tour was Copenhagen, so I told Don to look out for Albert and they did meet at that time. They would have met

anyway, but it was special when they came together to Stockholm. During that tour, they recorded a wonderful album together in Holland, called *Ghosts*.

When the tour was finished, Don did not go back to New York. He went to Morocco and met with the Master Musicians of Joujouka, finally arriving in Stockholm quite inspired in the middle of December. It was the first time he came just to see me and Neneh.[3] We decided to find a way to share our lives together.

When school started in January 1965, Don went to Copenhagen and then Paris where he met Gato Barbieri, Karl Berger, J.-F. Jenny-Clark, and Aldo Romano, and they formed a group called Togetherness. For the first time, Don was really the leader of a band. He explored and developed his ideas of "collage music."

Everybody in the group spoke a different language, with music as their common means of communication. Don's idea of collage music eliminated the solo and introduction of tunes, going back to the origins of jazz and into the future. This idea came to him from listening to shortwave radio.

Don was coming up to Stockholm in March for Neneh's birthday. The day before his arrival, before picking Neneh up from childcare, I ran into a quality secondhand piano dealer and frantically played every piano in the store in the free style of Cecil Taylor, since I'm not a piano player. In the end, I pointed at one and asked, "Please can you deliver this one tomorrow morning? I would like a payment plan and I am giving you fifty kronor as a down payment." They said, "You will get away with this since you picked our best piano." They delivered it the following morning at 8 a.m. Don wrote his most important compositions on this piano for years to come.

In the summer of '65, we traveled together for the first time. We went to Munich where Don made music for a George Moorse film. We continued on to Paris, where he had a lengthy engagement at Le Chat Qui Pêche with the Togetherness group. We all stayed in a big apartment on the boulevard de Magenta. I cooked for everybody and explored the truly amazing fabric markets of Paris. Les Halles were still there. I would walk home from the club at night surrounded by the bustle and energy, with all this beautiful food

3 Neneh Cherry was born Neneh Marianne Karlsson to Moki and Ahmadu Jah, a musician from Sierra Leone studying engineering in Stockholm. Moki and Jah separated early, with Don helping to raise Neneh from the time of her birth. Moki's notes on this period read: "I allowed myself to become a mother at a young age. My 21st birthday was in February of 1964 and my daughter Neneh was born on March 10th."

being brought into the city. We used to have steaming soup and I would buy my shopping for the day off the carts. It was a very special time in history.

The band came for a two-week engagement at the Golden Circle in the fall. I dressed them in white cook's jackets and white trousers. They looked like strange scientists, especially Berger on the vibraphone, as if he was performing an operation. A film was made.

Don spent a lot of time with us in Stockholm. George Russell was there as well, conducting a big band, which Don joined, giving him the opportunity to explore Russell's Lydian concept. During this time, Don started holding workshops with Swedish jazz musicians and musicians from other parts of the world. This project was later, for a couple of years, supported by the ABF. In this setting, Don began to develop his own way of conducting, leading other musicians in a very exciting and spontaneous mode that was part sign language and part dance.

In the winter of 1965–66, Don and Barbieri went to New York to record Don's first album for Blue Note, *Complete Communion*. They returned from New York to Italy, where Neneh and I went to join Don in May after my graduation from Beckmans. We then returned to Stockholm and left for New York. Don, Neneh, and I—as well as George Russell sidemen Cameron Brown and Brian Trentham—arrived on August 1, 1966.

We were lucky and got a loft with only musicians in the building. Some of the greatest music of the time happened in that building. Everybody rehearsed there. John Coltrane, whose drummer Rashied Ali lived there, Ayler, Marion Brown, painter and musician Marzette Watts, who reserved the loft for us, and many others. 107–109 Broadway in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Coming down the street, you could feel it shivering and hear it screaming from all that free jazz.

The band arrived from Europe: Barbieri, Jenny-Clark, Berger, and Romano. The day they arrived, they played in Tompkins Square Park and people were beyond excited. Jenny-Clark played the bass until his fingers were bleeding. In September, Don recorded *Symphony for Improvisers* for Blue Note. In the photo that appears on the sleeve, Don wears a sweater I designed and made. In October, we rented the Town Hall on West 43rd Street in Manhattan and produced a concert with the band and all the great players. The event was called "Elephantasy" and I designed ads, posters, and Don's blue suit. People spoke of this evening for quite a while.

Being fresh out of art school, I pursued my fashion career with much luck. A fashion photographer wanted to sponsor me as an artist-designer. The fact that I got the recognition and a huge opportunity was good for my identity. I guess it gave me the courage to choose to live and work with Don and to simultaneously be with my child, soon children.

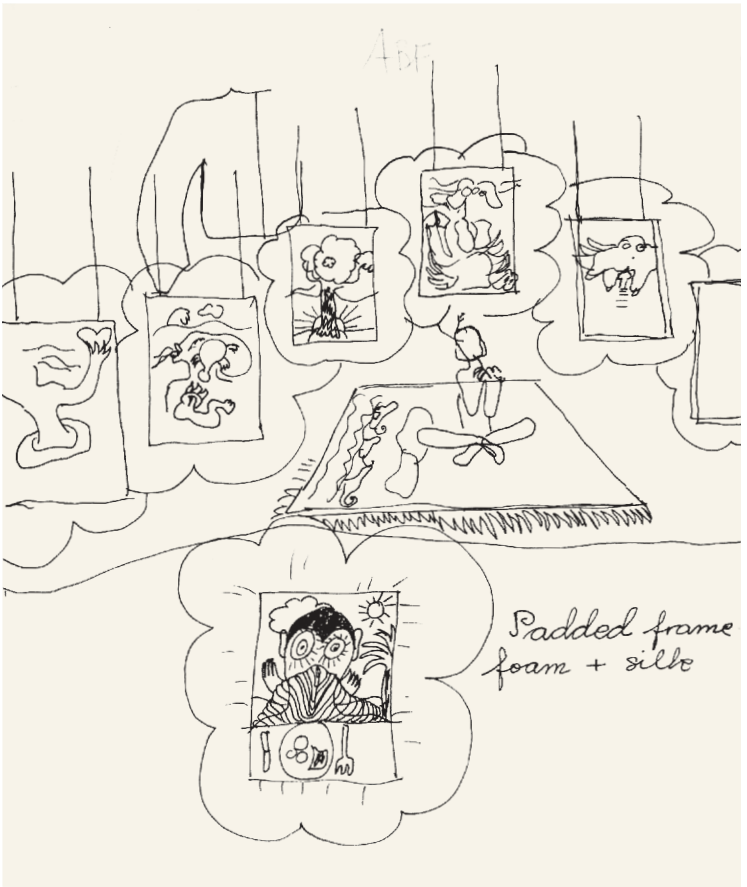
In the fall of 1966, we went back to Sweden. Neneh was going to stay with my parents for a bit while I was getting going in New York with this big thing. Don had gone to Paris to play/work. I had an amazing experience, like a visitation, and started painting and painting. I picked Neneh up, we went to see Don in Paris and I kept painting.

November 7, 1966

The breathing. The pulse. The veins in everything. Believe in music being the true freedom. Create a feeling, that one feeling beyond the way we all explain them in words—'cause we unconsciously understand the meaning more in a conversation from the sound of the voice than from the word itself, as we can use the same word in so many different combinations. Thinking of some African languages where the word tries to illustrate a picture and so gives the sound of what actually happens. Also thinking of Chinese writing. Am I creating something silent?

November 25, 1966
New York City

I have not seen the stars for a long time, only neon ones. My reasons, my values, my faith, my playing, my tears, my happiness, my stories all have to wait to be told, to be lived in another language. . . . Every time I breathe I exchange air. We breathe the universe. I forgive New York for the short story, the lack of thought. The air here hasn't got much from the universe, it's all poison, the minute before it goes into my lungs it was in a machine.



Untitled sketch for Movement Incorporated scenography, ca. 1967–68.

Don's mother Daisy gave him his first trumpet when he was fourteen. It took over his life. In high school he used to cut classes and roller-skate to another high school where the music department was better, more exciting. I believe Billy Higgins was there. I can't recall the teacher's name.[4]

The pocket trumpet is a minute instrument, but Don made it big. He could make its sound cut the air and take you for a journey. The pocket trumpet was his soul instrument.

One evening around '66 or '67 in Paris, at Le Chat Qui Pêche, a French trumpeter named Babar came to Don and said, "I have a present for *you*." He took out a small case made out of snakeskin and inside was the smallest, most beautiful pocket trumpet, engraved with suns and stars and smoke-like formations. It had been specially made in Paris for a Josephine Baker show in 1929. A treasure. Don's extension—his integration into matter.[5]

The jazz club had been Don's environment, except for during the Sonny Rollins tour.[6] But the changing of audiences between sets and smoky basements or cellars with no air conditioning had become weary. Wherever we were was home, so we started working together—and living it.

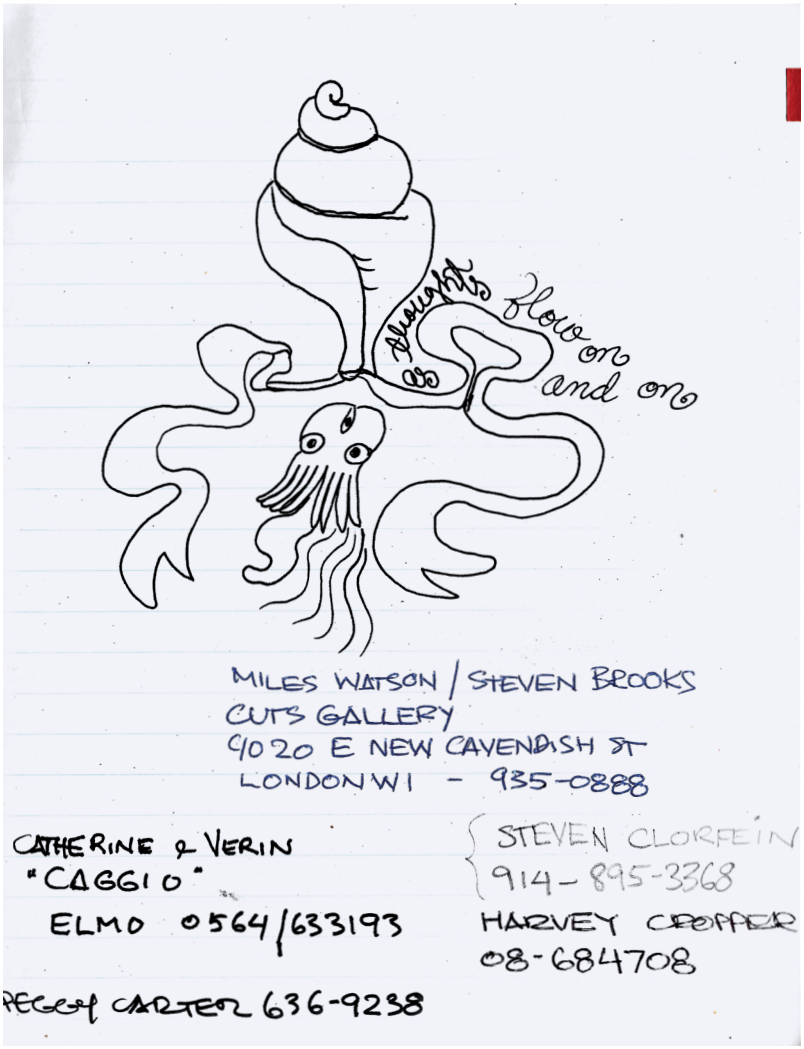
The stage is home and home is a stage. I think it was in the atmosphere at the time to bring the music out of the jazz club setting—to combine it with other art forms. So started our collaboration.

At first, we called our project Movement Incorporated, which we soon changed to Organic Music and, at times, Organic Music Theatre. Our first concert took place in Stockholm in the summer of 1967. We found the space and invited all of the musicians and some dancers. I made posters, designed the stage, and did live painting with the music. It sold out and was well-received on every level, so we were very encouraged. We were onto something that seemed to work and was great fun, so we decided to take it on the road.

4 Don Cherry attended John C. Fremont High School in South Los Angeles, where, for a time, he habitually cut class to play in the band at Thomas Jefferson High School, where Samuel Rodney Browne—the first black high school music teacher in the district—allowed students to play compositions by jazz musicians including Dizzy Gillespie and Stan Kenton. Because of his truancy, Don was sent to an all-boys disciplinary institution, Jacob A. Riis High School, where he met and began to play with Higgins.

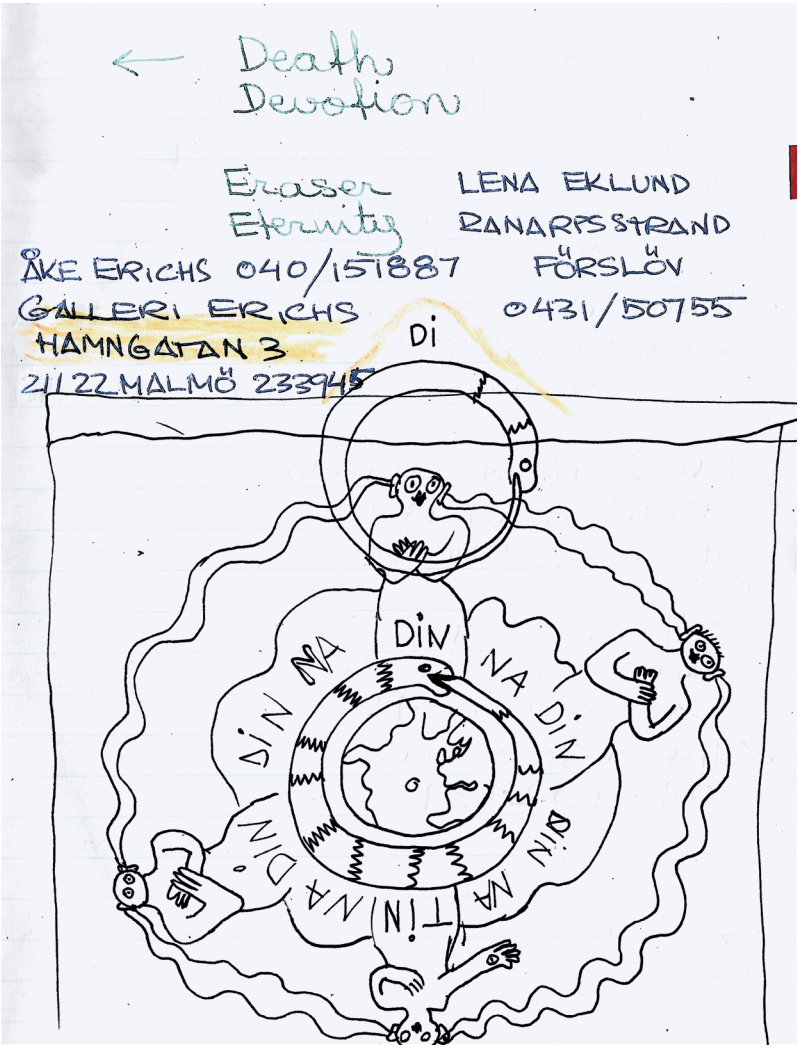
5 For Don's telling of this story, see Christopher R. Brewster, "An Interview with Don Cherry," on page 259 of this volume.

6 During his tenure in the Sonny Rollins group, Don played at larger concert venues, including the Konserthuset Stockholm.



Address book sketch, ca. 1970s.

10
Din Na Din Din Na
Tin Na Din Din Na
Din Na Din Na
10
10
10



Above and left: Address book sketches, ca. 1970s.

Address book sketch, ca. 1970s.

For traveling, fabric was a great, practical solution. Roll it up, put it in a couple of duffel bags. Go on tour with the family and musicians in a minivan. Improvising on stage and in living. So I started making big tapestries for the stage and to transform space. The visual work consisted of images for the imagination, but also for music–scales, songs, rhythms–for people's participation in concerts and workshops. I always brought the sewing machine. Since tables couldn't be carried around, I laid everything out on the floor or the ground. I also made all the clothes for the family and knitted sweaters, etc.

A few days after the first Movement Incorporated performance in Stockholm, we packed the car belonging to Maffy Falay, a Turkish trumpet player living in Stockholm, with "the sky,"[7] loads of fabric, instruments, the sewing machine, etc. Don, Neneh, and I drove with Maffy to Copenhagen. We rented a beautiful old hall at Charlottenborg, the Academy of Art, and did the same thing–invited the musicians, made the posters, etc. I remember I used a park to paint huge chunks of fabric for the stage, and designed and made costumes. Some of the musicians were insects, Don was a tiger, some had simple face paint. We invited a friend of ours who was a chemist and made fireworks as a hobby. He put on an amazing display in the courtyard during the intermission.

Maffy went back to Stockholm. Don, Neneh, and I went to the train with all of our stuff. We had a friend who worked on a wagon-lit so we went to Paris. After a few days we found ourselves locked out of our hotel room. The concierge wanted francs, so Don took his trumpet and a painting of mine and went down to Place de l'Odéon. It was rush hour. I stayed in the lobby with Neneh. A while later, Don came back with a producer from French television. This is how we became part of the premiere of color TV in France. The next morning, I was at the TV studio painting huge panels for the set. There, up on the ladder, I knew I was pregnant. Eagle-Eye was inside me.[8] We put on a concert-event at the American Cultural Center and one in Germany. We then took the wagon-lit with our friend back to Stockholm.

7 This was the nickname for Don and Moki's kitchen, which Moki had painted to resemble a clear blue sky.

8 Don and Moki's son Eagle-Eye Cherry was born on May 7, 1968.

December 31 1968.

I am in the Question if my diary will be written in Swedish or English Since the 21st we are here N.Y. City and I decide to use English since nobey ever will understand my bilanguage my spelling seems a sorry chapter but my intention is to trough this desecion of writing some thoughts and episodes down find natural ways of expressing myself

Above: Untitled sketch, date unknown.

Below: Diary entry, December 31, 1968.

September 13, 1967

We traveled to Norrland. I was back to my truth for all three of us to be together and feel this pure breath on a light summer night. Sun turning round on the top of the Earth. Salvation from pressures looking straight ahead. Oh these smells, these tastes, Don and Christer[9] *going fishing. Dear Happiness.*

In September 1968, we had to leave our wonderful but very primitive apartment in the old town of Stockholm, where we had been for five years. The time had arrived to modernize these ancient buildings and bring people with money in. We packed up and stored most of our things with friends in the countryside. We went to the train station with our children and the tools for our work, leaving Stockholm, never to live there again.

The five years of creating and making for the needs of the moment made it clear that it would be wonderful to have a more permanent place somewhere. Don was wonderful but completely impractical, which meant I took on the practical tasks. Stubborn as I am, if I did not know how to do something, I would learn. Don was great at playing with the children, while I cooked, etc.

October 8, 1968

The reward is not to rest, but to be willing to utilize one's full energy.

December 31, 1968

I am in the question if my diary will be written in Swedish or English. Since Nov 21st we are here in N.Y. City and I decide to use English since nobody ever will understand my language. My spelling seems a sorry chapter but my intention is to, through this decision of writing some thoughts and episodes down, find natural ways of expressing myself.

I am aquarius

Air yes I could imagine

Goodbye see you in the
afterworld or on the stage.

9 Moki's brother, Jan Christer Karlsson (b. 1949).

I am fucking up cause I am not
packing do not have the
slightest interest anymore
we are supposed to move out
of this light blue room . . . .

January 13, 1969
55 Chrystie St., New York City

Tjugondagknut *right? St. Knut's day drives Christmas out, that's why the day is named "Knut" . . . I'm driven further and further into the world of furniture.*

I'm sorting out the loft. There was a week where I couldn't do anything, I only just managed to get a feel for the room. It gives me great pleasure in a way, that everything else in the building is industrial and at 5 o'clock when everyone else goes home we're the only ones left.

The landlord Mr. Salzman is awful. I have to go and meet him and try to get some clarity on this. I'm really starting to get attached to this place. I scrubbed the whole floor on my hands and knees, and it's big. Every piece I finish is a victory. I've polished two windows . . .

In 1969, we rented a wonderful house in Congers, New York. I painted the house in bright colors and the parlor was panelled with tree trunks. In the summer, Don's children Jan and David came to visit for the first time. They had been living in Los Angeles with Don's mother, Daisy, and sister, Barbara, since he left LA. We had a great time. We loved the house, but had to leave because the owners were getting a divorce. We tried to buy it, but had problems doing so as an interracial couple.

In August, Don was offered a position as an artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College, starting in January 1970. We moved our things to storage at the college and flew to Amsterdam. There, we bought a completely equipped camper van from a professor from California for $200, and took him out for dinner!

We drove up to Norway and Sweden, performed concerts, picked Okay Temiz up, and drove to Turkey, did some concerts on the way in Paris and Milan, as well as a TV show in Istanbul. James Baldwin was there directing *Fortune and Men's Eyes* and Don created the music for the play. Then we went to Ankara, connected with an American center there, and put on a concert. Back in Istanbul, a remarkable meeting took place deep down in the catacombs. The Dervish tradition had been banned in Turkey, hence all the precautions.

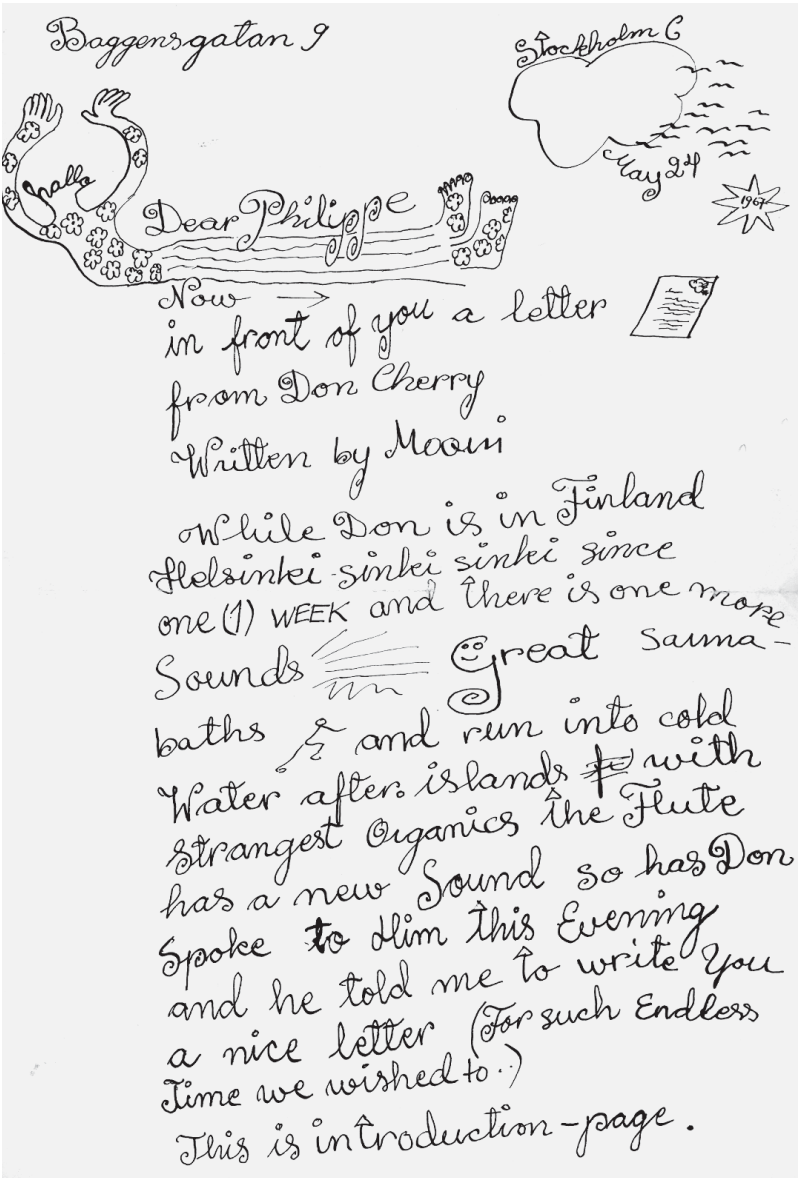
May 24, 1967
Baggensgatan 9
Stockholm C

Dear Philippe,

Now →
in front of you a letter from Don Cherry
Written by Moqui

While Don is in Finland, Helsinki-sinki sinki since one (1) week and there is one more. Sounds great, sauna baths and run into cold water after. Islands with strangest organics, the flute has a new sound so has Don. Spoke to him this evening and he told me to write you a nice letter (For such endless time we wished to . .)

This is introduction-page.


Baggensgatan 9
Stockholm C
May 24
1967
Hallo
Dear Philippe
Now → in front of you a letter
from Don Cherry
Written by Moon
While Don is in Finland
Helsinki-sinki sinki since
one (1) WEEK and there is one more
Sounds great Sauna-
baths and run into cold
Water after. islands with
strangest Organics the Flute
has a new Sound so has Don
Spoke to dim this Evening
and he told me to write you
a nice letter (for such Endless
Time we wished to..)
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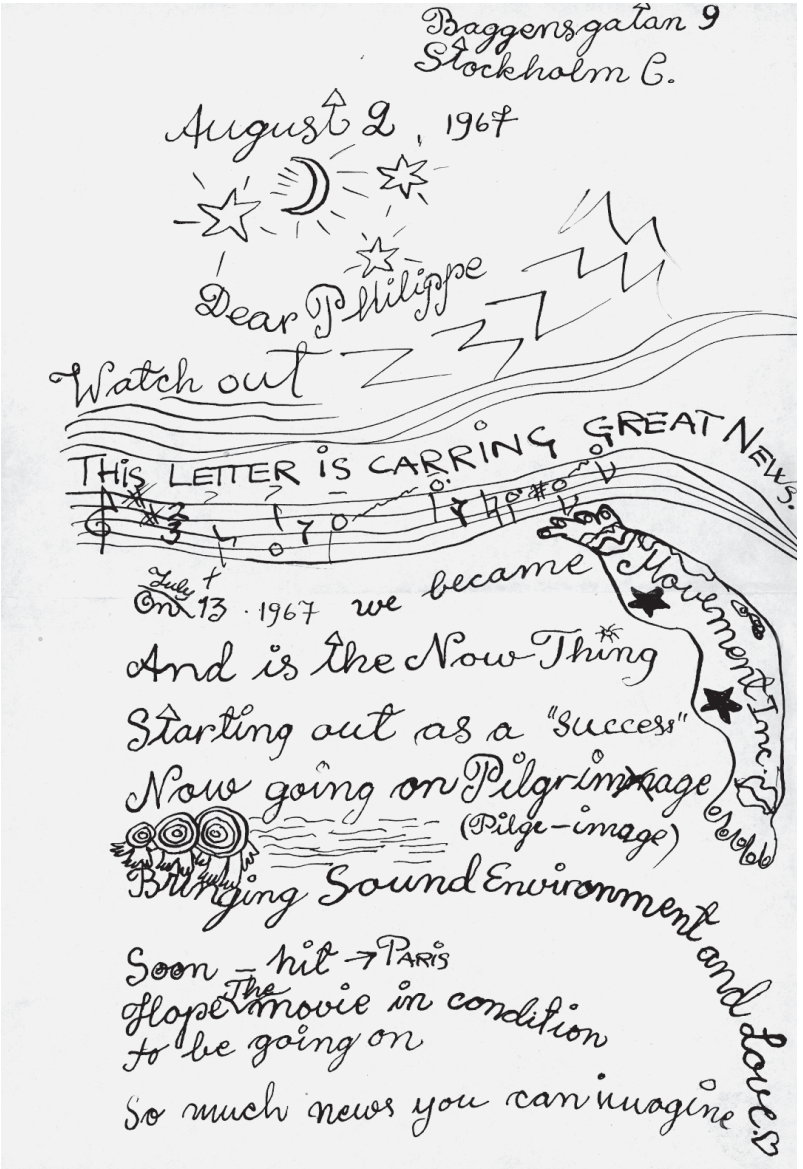


Above: Letter to Philippe Gras, August 2, 1967.
Left: Letter to Philippe Gras, May 24, 1967.

August 2, 1967
Baggensgatan 9
Stockholm C.

Dear Philippe,

Watch out
This letter is carrying great news.
On July 13, 1967 we became Movement Inc.
And is the Now-Thing
Starting out as a "success"
Now going on Pilgrimage (Pilgr-image)
Bringing Sound Environment and Love. ♥
Soon – hit → Paris
Hope the movie in condition to be going on
So much news you can imagine

September 10, 1969
Amsterdam

So long . . .

We left New York on the 13th of August after a huge move, including finishing all the work I started in the house in Congers.

The house in Congers, 54 Highway Ave., will always remain clear in my mind. A dream of something eternal and something that came crashing down, maybe because of the world and, I think, for that reason I was probably finished with it at that point, even if I still dream about the house.

We moved our stuff up to New Hampshire and back to New York. We stayed at Van Rensselaer Hotel like when we first arrived. Then a day at Julia [McFarlane]'s, which was really nice, last night at Brian [Trentham]'s, and Karl [Berger] drove us to Kennedy Airport in the morning. The flight was delayed by an hour and the journey gave no special sensations, slow and we were already physically exhausted.

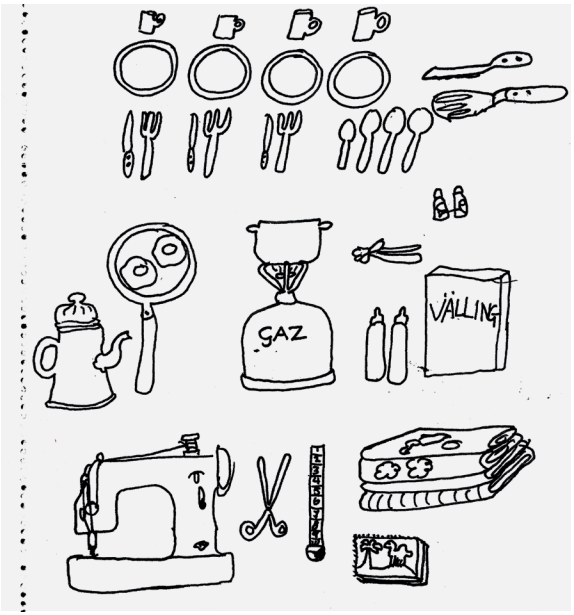
We landed in Iceland for an hour in a cold rainstorm, the first essence of Europe. I don't know exactly when we decided that we needed a change, a new stream of resources. We landed in Luxembourg at 6 a.m. on the fourteenth. Got a bus to Cologne (unbelievably long journey) and arrived in the middle of the day with enormous amounts of luggage. Right in the middle of a fiery street, wrung weak, I shoved some of my paintings into sacks half-full with fabrics, and pushed everything—the typewriter and instruments—into stacks up on the buggy, Don's back bent doubly from the strain. Sacks, what an invention! A huge lunch behind the train station, which was miserable—a classic example of unemployment in European industrial society. Rows of men with newspapers under their arms, shoving their way around. I arrived in a lace skirt and had to change quickly into leather behind a phone booth. Don wanted to go to a hotel as the train didn't leave until 9:30, but they claimed not to have any rooms, so we went out shopping instead and that was really fun. We didn't get to see that part of town when we spent two or three days there about two years ago. We took the train to Copenhagen.

[Unsent letter dated September 10, 1969]

Hi.

So we are in Amsterdam. It is such a nice city—I have the story for you clear in my memory, but let me start by telling you that Fantasio and Paradiso are closed and the meeting place is now the espresso bar . . .

. . . We arrived on Sunday and slept and then stumbled off in the company of Dutch pralines, which I can confirm are great candy. Monday, we went out to see the city and of course ran into some acquaintances. Tuesday, we all went to a jazz magazine with Don. We're here to make



Above: Diary entry, October 9, 1969; translation on right.

Below: Untitled drawing, ca. October 9, 1969.

contacts (they interviewed him for an article today). Then, we bought lunch and went to Vondelpark, which is so pretty. We sat in a large forgotten field with a playground in it, Don played the flute and the children came over.

On the way out we found a Rudolf Steiner library and got a taxi to meet some people. Don bumped into a man he met on a train five years ago . . .

Han Bennink, a musician, came to pick us up in his car this morning to take us to visit the houseboat he lives on with his family and it was wonderful.

After that, we went to do the article, then to the hotel, then we went out to the university where Don plays everyday at five o'clock. On the way there, we passed American Express where we bought a blue '62 Volkswagen that soon won't be recognisable at all. It was a transporter vehicle, but someone rebuilt it with a bed. We bought it from this lovely man who was a Doctor of Spanish at some university in California. Anyway, it's a long and strange story but it started right there on the pavement outside AMEX. So we're trying to figure out our plans and what's going to happen.

Love from Amsterdam and from all of us,

M

October 9, 1969

A blue BUS in Norway in Oslo and around benefit nr.1: it is where we find ourselves the WHOLE TIME!

In window: *Don Cherry, Moki, Neneh + Lanoo [Eagle-Eye]*

At Dartmouth, the college found us a hunting lodge eleven miles out of town. Don had two classes—one for music majors and an "open" class with 150 students. The big project was an opera in which everyone participated. We had an open house on weekends, with set and costume making, rehearsals, and food cooked by me. It was a dramatic time on campuses in the U.S., with strikes against the invasion of Cambodia, Vietnam, etc. The theater at Dartmouth had a revolving stage with an elevator. It was a fantastic event. Many students loved to bring their parents to meet "Professor Cherry and his family."

Our very successful experience with the students at Dartmouth inspired us to find a place where people could come and create together. Our engagement there had been the first and only time we had the pleasure of a salary: money every month. I had sent a bit of it to my parents monthly, to put towards buying a house. Buying property in the U.S. had been a futile undertaking, so we decided to

look for a home back in Europe, in Sweden, a place big enough for workshops, rehearsals, meetings, and more.

Moving from Pompanoosuc, Vermont, 1970

Almost everything I touch reminds me of projects, thoughts, ideas. If I did collect all of these on paper, my burden would crash me just like that.

With a mind scattered between the sun and the moon, between the growing of the day and the very fine songs of the stars at night, trips to planets I have not yet found out the names of, I now give myself the freedom to SIT DOWN and collect a dream of the days of this special hill. Days of grand projects mostly remain in my mind. I live in bricks and all the green becomes astonishing. What a combination, manufactured bricks with numbers stamped on, and green.

Since all my confusion is based on the continuous moving, the restlessness, the ever-so-unformulated future.

I have never found a place which says, "this is where you are gonna remain with seasons, thoughts, and work," so I come to live and still stay a guest each time since the date of leaving is definitely there in front.

So I meet people instead of saying I'm here. They ask when are you leaving? I am still here! I scream inside and must pack, search through everything, wishing I did not need anything!

In a minivan, we drove all the way to the Arctic Sea, to Norrland, where I was born. We had visited my parents there twice—in '67 and '68—the midnight sun and concept of twenty-four-hour light had mesmerized Don, who was fascinated by the "otherness" of the place. But it was too late. The area was being depopulated, with schools and stores closing in a landscape with vast distances that was not very practical for modern nomads. We turned around and drove over the tundra down through Finland to Copenhagen and to the U.S. Embassy to give the states another try. The children and myself got very short-term visas.

I went out into the street and called a real estate agent in Hässleholm, southern Sweden, in the area where my father was born, with beautiful nature and air. Knowing that they were discontinuing country schools in Sweden, I called up and asked, "Do you have an old schoolhouse for sale?" "Yes," he replied, "in Tågarp." I told him that we would be there in a couple of hours.

When we drove into the schoolyard for the first time, there was a rainbow over the house. "This is it, baby," said Don. We paid $4,000 for this heavenly house with eleven wood burning stoves,

no insulation, but lots of space, schoolrooms, teachers' apartments, and a good smell. This is how we found Tågarp Skola. We moved in on September 9, 1970. This anniversary is celebrated whenever we are there on that date. We got our belongings out of storage, including the piano that we could not get out of the van on our own. So Don resorted to practicing and composing newly inspired work in the van for a while, much to the amusement of our new and very curious neighbors. Finally, we called in the professional movers. We closed our eyes and held our breath when they carried it up over the stone stairs.[10] Tågarp became a center, its own universe, and Don's favorite place.

In one classroom, we built a small theater, and the other one became my studio. In the teachers' apartments, we painted all of the rooms different colors. Spring came–I made kitchen gardens and flowerbeds, all mixed for scent and beauty. Could I ever dream of how many meals I was to cook or overnight guest beds I'd make? No. With the air and atmosphere resounding with the most beautiful live music, it made me say yes to it all. Looking back, it all seems nuts. But it was beautiful. Live music at all hours. Musicians came from India, Africa, all over, and stayed to study with Don or in preparation for tours. It was an open house.

We had been invited by Pontus Hultén, the director of Moderna Museet in Stockholm, to do a demonstration of living art. At the time, the Centre Pompidou was in the process of being built and Hultén was trying to convince the French bureaucracy of similar ideas. In the summer of 1971, he invited us to be the live element of the exhibition "Utopias & Visions 1871–1981" at Moderna Museet. The exhibition lasted for seventy-two days, as long as the Paris Commune. We lived in one of Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes with my environmental art. Each day, I painted part of the floor as a diary, building up to a mandala. The visitors participated in live music, talking, dressing up, or photographing themselves in an automat, and other improvised activities. We communicated with people internationally via a telex that was hooked up to New York, Tokyo, and Bombay. The museum building had previously belonged to the navy. When the show closed at 6 p.m., I would go into an old prison cell where I had a kitchen set up. Neneh, seven,

10 Elsewhere, Moki writes of Don's first son, David Ornette Cherry, and his experience with this piano: "When David Cherry came to spend time with us in Tågarp in 1974, he found music through this piano. David's main interest prior to this was basketball. Today, he is a very accomplished and gifted musician, composer, and bandleader."

and Eagle-Eye, three, used to say, "We are going to play in the collections while you cook."

In August of 1972, we went with Organic Music Theatre to play festivals in the South of France, which was to be the beginning of six years of such engagements in France and Italy, from the tip of the boot in Sicily and Sardinia right up to the Alps.

Before these tours, all of the musicians used to come to Tågarp for rehearsals and preparations. I would work on sets, clothes, cooking, mulching the garden to be sure that there would be one there by the time we returned home, make dukiburgers for the road,[11] packing the bus with all the various gas stoves, etc. We stayed in nice camping grounds to make it more fun for the kids. Our favorite was Monte Antenne in Rome, on one of the seven hills, with beautiful pine trees. We always used to have press conferences there, with journalists enjoying good food and the musicians playing with that soft sound of pines in the background. Eagle-Eye, who is a musician, was in Rome undertaking some promotional activities a few years ago. He asked to be taken to Monte Antenne, but it is now built up with high rise condominiums. Sometimes we stayed on the grounds of the festivals. I found great joy in going to local markets with the children and finding the culinary specialities of each vicinity, always cooking, sometimes under absurd circumstances.

September 27, 1972
NEW YORK
GREEN
Big tapestry
Colors are the experience of light
Natural light
Clear air

I do not have a reputation. Am not a collectors item. Was born 1943 on the 8th of February.

Had a beautiful childhood. Spent summers in midnightsunland. Had Western experiences of different degrees, have not been further than Turkey. Want to travel through Asia and Africa, South America, Alaska, Australia, Afghanistan, Bali, Polynesia to look for real Earth-life.

11 Vegetarian aduki bean burgers.

June 21, 1973

Last Jain prophet Mahavira (500 BC)

In the fury of energies to collect, be careful with time. What a start today with slamsugaren.[12] *Don seems so irritated with me, he does not want me to go at the same time as the others. Eternal now.*

ETERNAL
NOW

Standing still
Dancing inside
Standing
Still dancing inside

The two fireflowers, one pos., one neg., one female, one male, reaching for each other out comes Ganesh, comets shooting behind on clear blue sky, pink cloud with THE DIVINE RIDER

June 22, 1973

I remember being sixteen, laying in my friend at the time Ulla's garden smoking our first cigarettes, talking about boys.

June 23, 1973

Everybody went to the party at Bjørn and Hanne's. I'm here with thoughts, dreams, finish Eternal Now, bags, Don's clothes, Eagle Eye's. The first time I met Allen Ginsberg was in Paris, Summer 1965. Don was playing in Le Chat Qui Pêche with Gato, J.-F. Jenny-Clark, Karl Berger, Aldo Romano. Don had a message. Allen was staying in the bookshop around the corner, over and over turns up little notes with his handwriting on until the last one: Om muni muni mahamuni shakyamuni svaha om muni muni mahamuni shakyamuni svaha.[13] *I have been spaced out for a long time. So much housework. Invisible duties.*

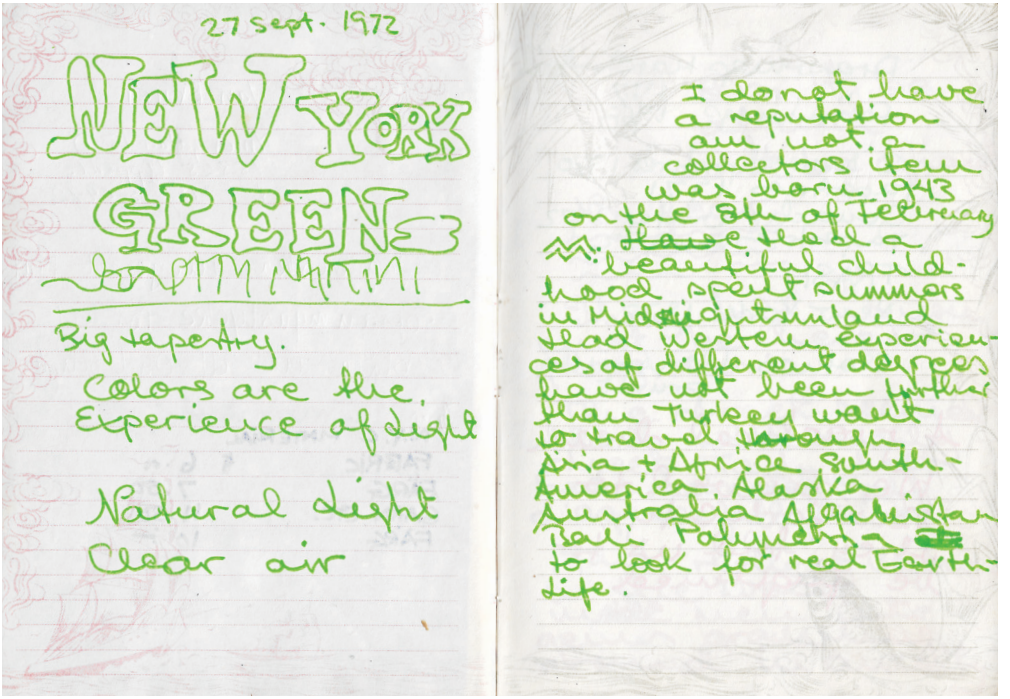
Musical composition.

NU

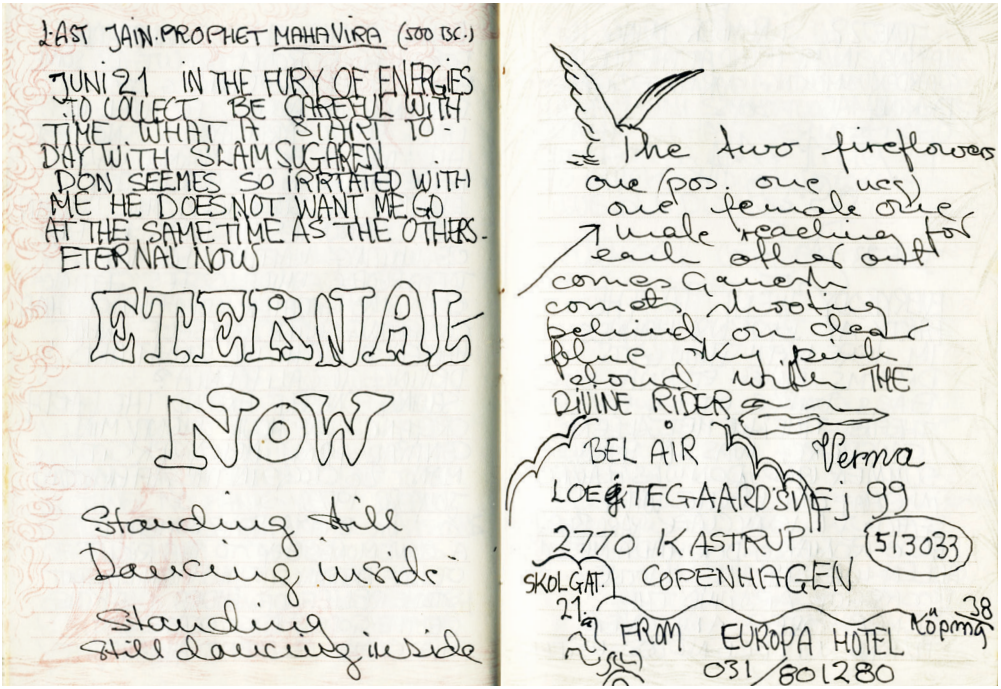
There is always a sound in the air and it is Now . . .

12 A play on *damsugaren*, Swedish for vacuum cleaner, most likely made as a joke.

13 This mantra is chanted in the beginning of "Tantra" from Don Cherry's 1973 album *Relativity Suite*.



Diary entry, September 27, 1972.


LAST JAIN-PROPHET MAHAVIRA (500 BC.)
JUNI 21 IN THE FURY OF ENERGIES TO COLLECT BE CAREFUL WITH TIME WHAT IT START TO-DAY WITH SLAM SUGAREN DON SEEMES SO IRRITATED WITH ME HE DOES NOT WANT ME GO AT THE SAME TIME AS THE OTHERS. ETERNAL NOW
ETERNAL
NOW
Standing still
Dancing inside
Standing
still dancing inside
The two fireflowers
one pos. one neg
one female one
male reaching for
each other out
comes Ganesh
comet shooting
behind on clear
blue sky pink
cloud with THE
DIVINE RIDER
BEL AIR
Verma
LOEGTEGAARDSVEJ 99
2770 KASTRUP
513033
SKOLGAT. 21a
COPENHAGEN
FROM EUROPA HOTEL
031/801280
Köpmg 38

CHICKEN CURRY + RICE ALL DAY LISTENING TO PERFECT MUSIC BY DON + CHARLIE DOUSSOUNGOUNI PIANO TRUMPET BURNED MY BACK. TOMORROW WE MUST ARRANGE MONEY FOR GETTING THE CAR SHIT. IS COMPLETELY OUT AND THE HEAD IS FUCKING AROUND LETTERS TO BE WRITTEN THINGS TO BE SEWN ALL THE MILLIONS OF DETAILS TO FIND A HOME BUT SLOWLY I'LL GET THERE AND REARMING BACK FOR THE ORIGINAL VISION OF THE "HOME" TO CONTINUE THE SETTLEMENT THERE IS STILL COFFE IN THE HOUSE GAULOISE FINISHED ONE WEEK LEAVING FOR N.Y. IDEAS PLANS A LOT UNBORN GLAD TO GO MEANS ALMOST GONE THINKING OF THE UNBORN ~UNCONCEIVED. GLAD TO BE IN TUNE. NO PANIC YET. DREAMS BURIED. IN THE YET NO SEE VISIONS OF FUJI HAMA. TAILORED COVERS JAPAN. NO SOULFOOD EXCEPT ALL GOD GIVES. GROWING NOT ENOUGH PLANTED IS THERE NOT ANOTHER YEAR THINNING PLANTS WILL

FINISH SEWING THE NEW LAMPSHADE FOR PURPLE ROOM. GO OUT DO SOME MORE THINNING THINKING OF PROVENCE IN AUGUST FESTIVAL IN ITALY SEP. 7 FAIRWAY? NO NOT YET ALL THE WORK TOMORROW CALL BOSSE KARLSSON NO FUCK UP CONC. EXHIBIT IN STOCKHOLM THIS AUTUMN YES CANOPIES. PICTURES PIECES OF WRITING. WAITING FOR THE TOFTA PEOPLE WHILE COFFE'S GETTING COLD. NO GREATER COMPETITION THAN COMPETING WITH ONESELF. WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE GREAT ARTS. DRIVING TO CALIFORNIA? SEWING ONESELF AROUND THE EARTH ORGANIC. ONE HOUR TWENTY MIN. CENTRAL PARK NEW YORK CITY MAN 2 O CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON JULY 2 1973 ~

~ in BHAJA NEAR BOMBAY IS A CAVE MONASTERY TO THE RIGHT OF THE ENTRANCE IS A MAGNIFICENT STONE RELIEF OF INDRA THE KING OF THE GODS HE IS SEATED ON HIS GIANT ELEPHANT AIRAVATA

Above: Diary entry, June 26, 1973.

Below: Diary entry, ca. June 26–July 2, 1973.

People involved in expressing music—musicians—are always trying to be in this now now now, to be special in this way, to find their absolute talent-gift is rare.[14]

June 26, 1973
Manhattan
Arrival positive was feeling very far out on the plane
Who called?
Jane called from Amsterdam

Chicken curry and rice, all day listening to perfect music by Don and Christer [Bothén]. Donso ngoni, piano, trumpet. Burned my back. Tomorrow, we must arrange money for getting the car. Shit is completely out and the head is fucking around. Letters to be written, things to be seen, all the millions of details to find a home, but slowly I'll get there and reach back for the original vision of the "home" to continue the settlement. There is still coffee in the house. Gauloises finished. One week, leaving for New York. Ideas, plans, a lot unborn. Glad to go. Means almost gone. Thinking of the unborn—unconceived. Glad to be in tune. No panic yet. Dreams buried in the yet unseen visions of Fuji Yama. Tailored covers. Japan. No soul food except all god gives growing. Not enough planted. Is there not another year? Thinning plants. Will finish sewing the new lampshade for purple room. Go out to do some more thinning, thinking of Provence in August, festival in Italy September 7th far away? No not yet. All the work. Tomorrow, call Bosse Karlsson, no fuck up concessions. Exhibit in Stockholm this autumn.[15] *Yes, canopies, pictures, pieces of writing waiting for the Tofta people while coffee's getting cold.*[16] *No greater competition than competing with oneself. What happened with the great arts! Driving to California? Sewing oneself around the Earth organic. One hour, twenty minutes. Central Park, New York City, Manhattan, two o'clock in the afternoon.*

14 *Nu* is the Swedish word for *now*.

15 Moki's first solo exhibition, at Galleri 1 in Stockholm's Gamla Stan district in 1973.

16 Tofta is a region in Gotland, an island off the southeast coast of Sweden. The "Tofta people" are Steve and Anita Roney, close friends of the Cherrys. Steve Roney ran a gallery and the Bombay Free School, and presented experimental films and non-Western music at Moderna Museet. Anita Roney would later collaborate with Moki on Octopuss Teater.

July 2, 1973

In Bhaja near Bombay is a cave monastery. To the right of the entrance is a magnificent stone relief of Indra the king of the gods. He is seated on his giant elephant Airavata.

We listened to music from all over the world and studied other cultures' philosophies and ways of thought, including Buddhist studies with Tibetan lama Kalu Rinpoche between 1972 and 1977. Our interest in Buddhist philosophy led me to make the thangka of Chenrezig (in Tibetan), or Avalokiteshvara (in Sanskrit). The Buddha of compassion being the most popular image in Buddhist iconography, I liked the idea of making an image that thousands of other artists had made before and will continue to create. It is based on strict geometry with the image adorning it. I made it in a two-and-a-half-by-two-and-a-half-square-meter guard's office in Paris and had no idea how it was going to work out until the day I could take it out of there.

To experience Love – To give Love – To receive Love –
To share Love
In Life – To make it Work through Work
To search for a Way to see if Life and Living in itself is
Art by being a Creative process
Don and Moki – we had that opportunity
We were each other's Muses
I loved his music and playing
He inspired me to express myself visually and Don loved
my work.

We toured Europe, the U.S., Japan, and Mexico. Don was a magic person for whom no doors were closed. We met the greatest people everywhere, learned so much, and had such wonderful experiences to thrive on for a lifetime.

As an adult I have allowed
myself to experience the ugly
and the beautiful of life.

I was a human being until I entered my teens. Then, I was transformed into a female. I have now entered back into the status of a human being. In the meantime, I experienced motherhood. I

Untitled drawing, date unknown.

was my husband's muse, companion, and collaborator. At the same time, I did all of the practical maintenance. I was never trained to be a female, so I survived by taking a creative attitude to daily life and chores. As a child, I totally lacked self-defense, so as an adult I came to have the experience of the ultimate beauty humans can offer each other, as well as the ugly and evil we can do to one another and ourselves. Thus getting the insight that heaven and hell are right here and now and no other place.

I am a visual artist in our society and I have to be more of an entrepreneur than a member of the community. I have never lacked the need to express myself, but have lacked the skills to knock on the right doors. Or to mingle in the right way so as to meet a supporting voice to say, "Let this woman in–she has something to share with us humans."

I went around to a lot of galleries in NYC in the seventies. My conclusion was: when I see a gallery, they say, "We do not view slides." I even went, by an appointment Niki de Saint Phalle had arranged, to see Leo Castelli, who advised me to go see the craft tree on Madison Avenue, which I thought was very bad advice. Not that I believed I was someone he would take on, but I did expect him to recognize my sincerity. Another incident occurred when I brought actual work, not slides, to someone I knew who had a gallery and was left in the room with a male assistant who put on a pornographic movie and never came back to look at the work. A very uncomfortable situation–my children were waiting for me.

I used to attend a lot of openings and when people asked me, "What do you do?" I answered, "I am an artist." "Which gallery are you with?" and I said, "I don't have a gallery," and they would walk off. So I learned to say, "I am in communication."

I have worked in diverse materials and expressions. Painting, fabric, wall sculptures with electric lights, ceramics, music, and theater . . . I love tools, power tools, all of them. They give me the opportunity to explore.

Since June 2003, I have worked mostly with photomontage. I find it a good vehicle to reflect the situation we are currently living and existing in. It being appropriated material matters a great deal. I have collected magazines and other material for a long time with the plan to make collages at some point. It started in the late 1990s through 2000, when I collaged furniture, objects, walls, and floors

with printed matter, global newsprint, and photos. It amused me to think that if we don't know the letters of the language we are lost. (Information age!) A coincidence got me started on making individual collage images. It is a very interesting expedition, finding the images. Coming from all sources, sometimes spending fifty, sixty, seventy years on one collage and bringing it to a feeling of nowness and concern is very exciting, like a ball that started rolling in ancient times that connects everything.

On my second birthday, my mother gave me a very sharp pair of scissors. It's interesting to arrive at something so familiar–scissors and paper–after a lot of life and experience. It might look back at you.

I am sitting here in Long Island City. I become stubborn and full of revolt against authoritarian ideas. This is an inventory, really. It's February 25th, 2007. Above is what happens when I try to write my bio piece.

POETRY AND APHORISMS
Moki Cherry

This selection of Moki Cherry's poetry, aphorisms, and musings–most of which date from the sixties and seventies–has been collected from Moki's notebooks and ephemera housed in the Cherry family archive in Tågarp, Sweden. This material has been provided by the artist's granddaughter, Naima Karlsson, and has been assembled and edited for clarity by Adrian Rew.

Jan. 9

Happiness

page 1.
I am happy to wake up
to first see all the colors

page 2
I was right before so happy
in my sleep dreaming

3. I was dreaming in reality

4. Reality is my dream

Happiness
page 1.

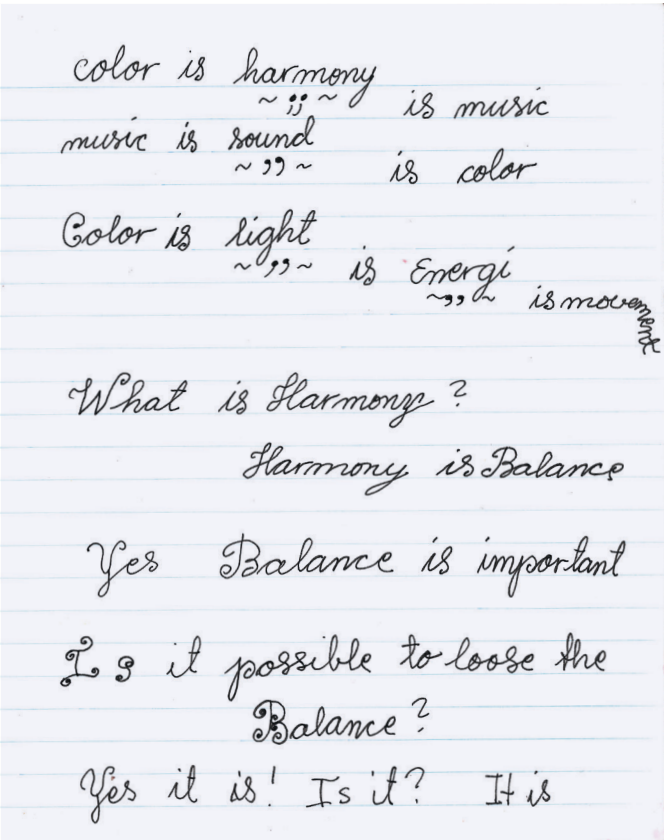
I am happy to wake up
to first see all the colors

page 2. I was right before so happy
in my sleep dreaming

3. I was dreaming in reality

4. Reality is my dream

January 9, 1969.


color is harmony
~ " ~
is music
music is sound
~ " ~
is color
Color is light
~ " ~
is Energi
~ " ~
is movement
What is Harmony ?
Harmony is Balance
Yes Balance is important
Is it possible to loose the Balance ?
Yes it is ! Is it ? It is

color is harmony
~»~ is music
music is sound
~»~ is color

Color is light
~»~ is Energy
~»~ is movement

What is Harmony?
Harmony is Balance

Yes Balance is important

Is it possible to lose the
Balance?

Yes it is! Is it? It is

January 9, 1969.

You can only have one
Birthdaypresent — Life
~~Son~~
Some people live a whole life
without making this discovery

and others try to work on
making it as short and
painful as possible

Green is a color of Life

My highest wish is that my
Love ~~(also includes)~~ is this color

When we look up the Creator
tells us that Heavens is blue

Conversations:
oo: People that likes to hurt
themselves must have done something
wrong that they must forget
through putting so much pain
on themselves that they can only
remember the last pinch

Ca. 1969.

You can only have one Birthday present – Life

Some people live a whole life without making this discovery

and others try to work on making it as short and painful as possible

Green is a color of Life

My highest wish is that my Love is this color

When we look up the Creator tells us that Heaven is blue

Conversations:
People that like to hurt themselves must have done something wrong that they must forget through putting so much pain on themselves that they can only remember the last pinch

Ca. 1969.

First comes a form and then an enormous thought of what actually might be able to happen. What actually might be happening right now. What does the invisible look like? I know that all the invisible has a look, it places itself in condition to the invisible.
music
the thought
flute
the sound
drums
the reaction
trumpet
the feeling
the feeling
the ruler

I cannot name my paintings since they very seldom yes never symbolize a particular historical moment. They are all dedicated to all the invisible powers that are ruling man and the universe. The possibilities of what can happen and what is happening in the universe are out of reach. Man is frustrated in his aim to rule nature and within this effort forgets to see and realize the paradise he was put to live in.

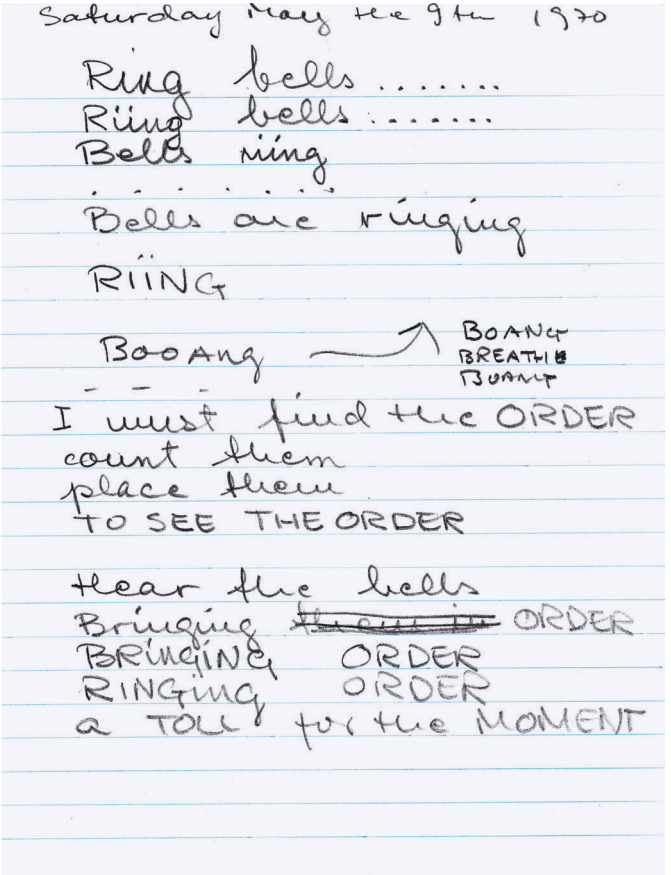
Life and breath
the most gifted
powers to gently
be handled to
feed the thirst
of thought

Ca. May 26, 1969.

I knocked on the door with a sign that said Destiny
and met a man called Fate
I got very nervous
trembled a minute asked what to do
Follow your intuition the Great Institution
and trust the voice of its Ruler
"Whatever you do he knows more than you," I was advised
I dressed in a cape black as the night but forgot the stars
Night has more light than the day cause you see all the suns
wondering what the children in the other worlds are playing
right now this very moment
Flying around untamed birds gold and green with a purple tail
Boy with six blue slender arms and transcendent mind
with impressions for food
and in love with all the other young up there in the sky
A magnificent visit to the planet of the happy
indifferent in time and space
with knowledge at Zero of the Evil, the dark and slimy
Where each color is a key to a tonal scale led by the birds
living with all the beings of this particular place in the Universe

A MESSAGE from this man called Fate behind his door of Secrets

Congers, New York, July 1969.


Saturday May the 9th 1970

Ring bells .....
Riing bells .....
Bells ring
. . . . . .
Bells are ringing
RIING

BOOANG → BOANG BREATHE BOANG
- - -

I must find the ORDER
count them
place them
TO SEE THE ORDER

Hear the bells
Bringing ~~the ... the~~ ORDER
BRINGING ORDER
RINGING ORDER
a TOLL for the MOMENT

Ring bells . . . . . .
Riing bells . . . . . .
Bells riing
. . . . . .
Bells are ringing

RIING

I must find the ORDER
count them
place them
TO SEE THE ORDER

Hear the bells
Bringing ORDER
BRINGING ORDER
RINGING ORDER
a TOLL for the MOMENT

May 9, 1970.

We are now
in the Kali Yuga
the age of the destruction
when man faces wars
only to destroy himself
helping the gods to
get their rest in the
Brahman night
a night with no stars
no oceans no light
no matter
when the all is
resting within the all
that is not

To be reborn
on the first day
of the next Brahma day

If the ones
with sight
retire now
from believing
worldly affairs
and trust only
the powers
of the Eternal Supreme
a better task
and joyful position
will come in the day yet not seen

May 11, 1970.

so I start calling praying
while counting cars
I begin saying breath
breath, breath
and soon my body is a chamber for the
Eternal Sound
the Universal Sound
which will be there
when my human shape
is no more
throughout Eternal Time
OM

Ca. 1970.

JUNI 13 1973
TRÄDGÅRDEN VERKAR VACKRARE I ÅR
EN DEL AV GRÄSET GÅR ATT KLIPPA

DEC 20 1973

The Secret dwells
in the roots of the
heart

OPEN UP CLEAR
TO TURN THE PAIN
OF HUMAN EXISTENCE
INTO MANYFOLD FLOWER

SUNSHINE FROM WITHIN
TO RECEIVE FROM WITHOUT

A LONG TIME PASSED IT
SEEMES WITHOUT THE PEN

DARK CLOUDS ON THE SKY
GOING TOWARDS THE
LONGEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

WHERE IS MY VIBRANT LOVER

THE DAY WAS QUIET
AS WELL AS THE SNOW

LAST SEPTEMBER WE MET
POET GREGORY OUTSIDE
CHELSEA HOTEL DON ASKED

" WHATS THE MOST
SILENT THING YOU KNOW?

" SNOW FALLING ON SNOW"

AND SO I THINK IN THIS
MOMENT

SMILE

WHATEVER THE NAKED TRUTH
SMILE MIGHT BE
MY GREEN HEART

EMBRACE THE SHADOW OF
ANGUISH AND REMEMBER

The garden seems more beautiful this year. It's possible to cut some of the grass.

June 13, 1973.

The Secret dwells
in the roots of the
heart
Open up clear
to turn the pain
of human existence
into a manyfold flower

Sunshine from within
to receive from without

A long time passed it
seems without the pen

Dark clouds on the sky
going towards the
longest night of the year

Where is my vibrant lover
The day was quiet
as well as the snow

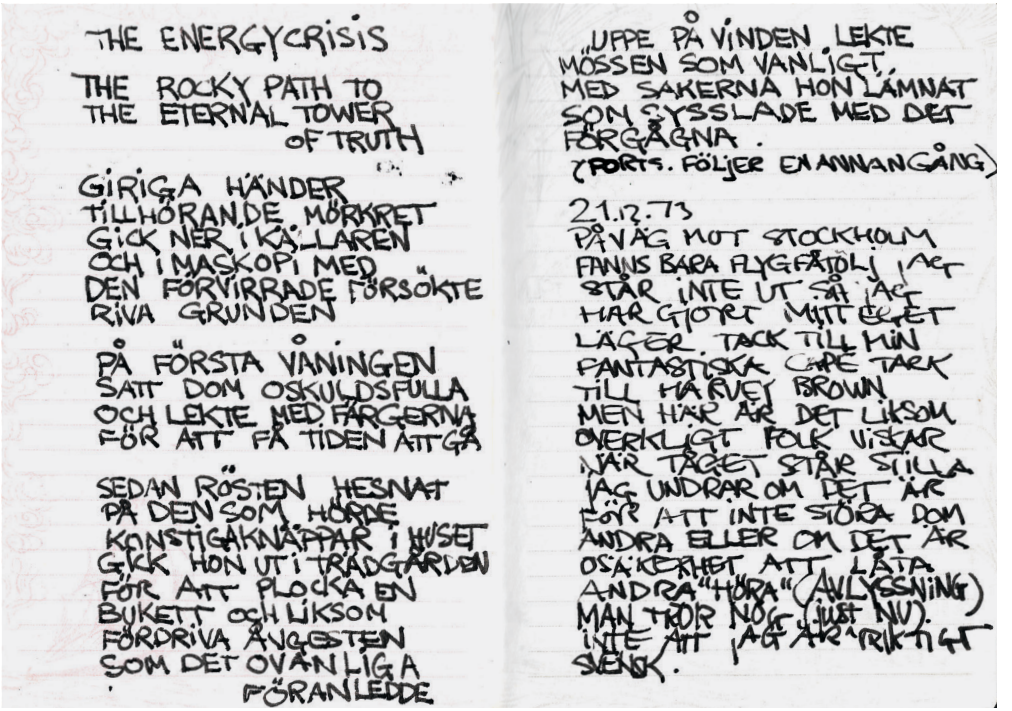
Last September we met
poet Gregory outside
Chelsea Hotel, Don asked

"What's the most
silent thing you know?"

"Snow falling on snow"

And so I think in this
moment

Smile



THE ENERGYCRISIS

THE ROCKY PATH TO
THE ETERNAL TOWER
OF TRUTH

GIRIGA HÄNDER
TILLHÖRANDE MÖRKRET
GICK NER I KÄLLAREN
OCH I MASKOPI MED
DEN FÖRVIRRADE FÖRSÖKTE
RIVA GRUNDEN

PÅ FÖRSTA VÅNINGEN
SATT DOM OSKULDSFULLA
OCH LEKTE MED FÄRGERNA
FÖR ATT FÅ TIDEN ATT GÅ

SEDAN RÖSTEN HESNAT
PÅ DEN SOM HÖRDE
KONSTIGAKNÄPPAR I HUSET
GICK HON UT I TRÄDGÅRDEN
FÖR ATT PLOCKA EN
BUKETT OCH LIKSOM
FÖRDRIVA ÅNGESTEN
SOM DET OVANLIGA
FÖRANLEDDE

UPPE PÅ VINDEN LEKTE
MÖSSEN SOM VANLIGT,
MED SAKERNA HON LÄMNAT
SOM SYSSLADE MED DET
FÖRGÅGNA.
(FORTS. FÖLJER EN ANNAN GÅNG)

21.12.73
PÅ VÄG MOT STOCKHOLM
FANNS BARA FLYGFÅTÖLJ JAG
STÅR INTE UT SÅ JAG
HAR GJORT MITT EGET
LÄGER. TACK TILL MIN
FANTASTISKA CAPE TACK
TILL HARVEY BROWN
MEN HÄR ÄR DET LIKSOM
OVERKLIGT FOLK VISKAR
NÄR TÅGET STÅR STILLA
JAG UNDRAR OM DET ÄR
FÖR ATT INTE STÖRA DOM
ANDRA ELLER OM DET ÄR
OSÄKERHET ATT LÅTA
ANDRA "HÖRA" (AVLYSSNING)
MAN TROR NOG (JUST NU).
INTE ATT JAG ÄR RIKTIGT
SVENSK.

Whatever, the naked truth
might be
smile my green heart

Embrace the shadow of
anguish and remember
the energy crisis

The rocky path to
the eternal tower
of truth

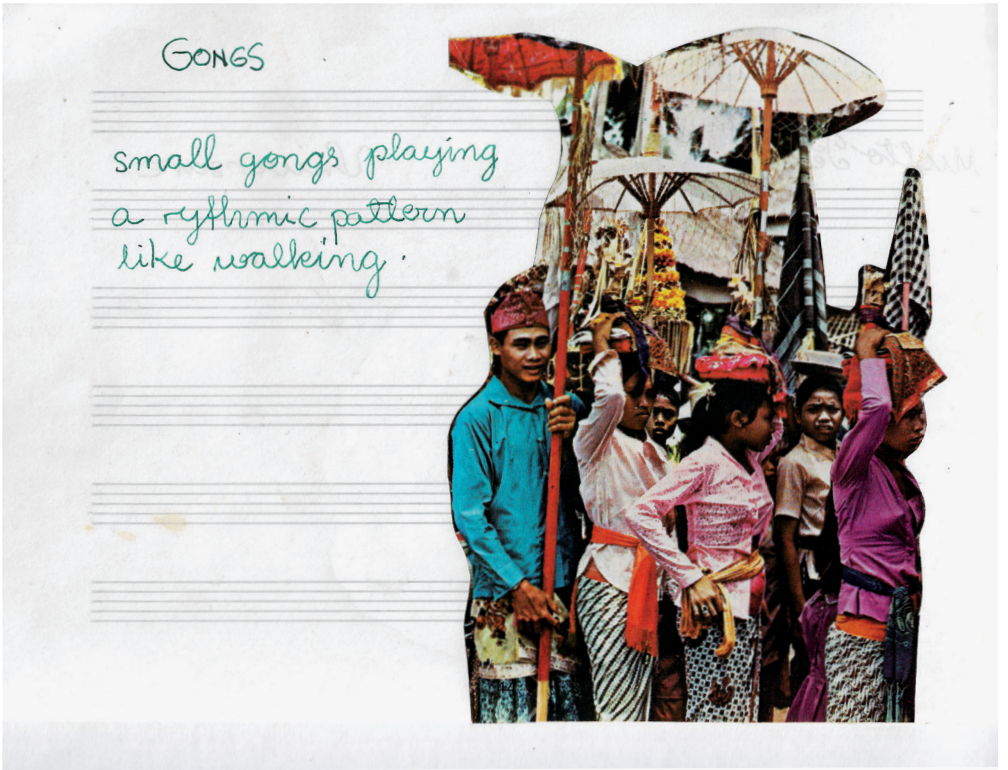
The greedy hands belonging to the darkness went down to the cellar, and in collusion with the confusion tried to remove the foundations. On the first floor sat the innocents and played with paints to help the time pass. Then a voice roared at the one that had heard strange creaks in the house. She went out in the garden to pick a bouquet and help dispel the distractions which the unusual situation had caused. Up in the attic the mice played as usual with things she had left there from the past.

December 20, 1973.

Solo, ca. early 1970s, collage.

Solo

ranging between three notes
all half seminotes and
all combinations
sung from the
throat



Gongs, ca. early 1970s, collage.

Gongs

small gongs playing
a rhythmic pattern
like walking

The Navel

As the Sperm penetrates the egg the cord named Attachment is formed
The Wound of the meeting
And here life becomes predicted by the Moment
As the Birth occurs Life already preceded for nine months
In total security, even tempered water surrounding all
So Life on Earth begins and people start searching for that cord
And Buddha puts the lotus growing out of the Navel
The invisible cord searching for a body to make new bodies, to create new cords

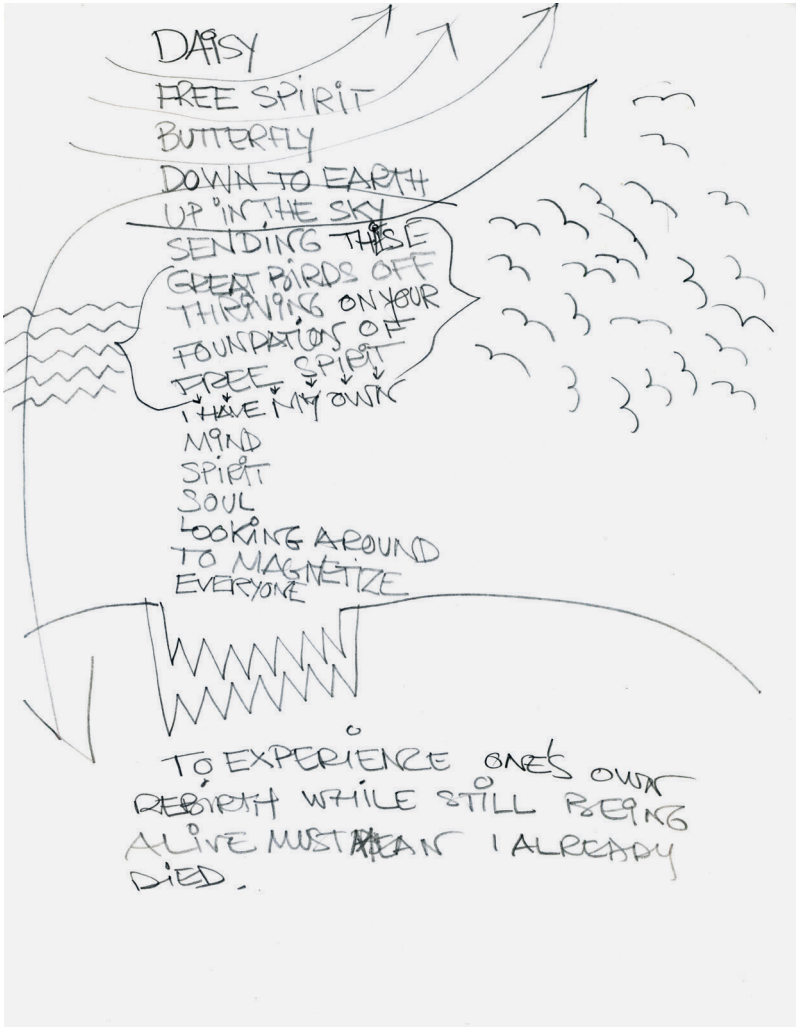
As a visitor on this planet in this Life I desire to share the understanding of the trip
Disguised by emotions dwells the jewel within
Please understand I'd like to show you that jewel open-hearted in exchange for a glimpse of yours

February 16, 1976.

Who dares to make the commitment of living in the moment? The futuristic play within Now.

No peace & love and all that crap. Grounded in the progress of Now. There is no one possessing and no one possessed. Dancing on top of a dragon's head.

Ca. late 1970s or early 1980s.

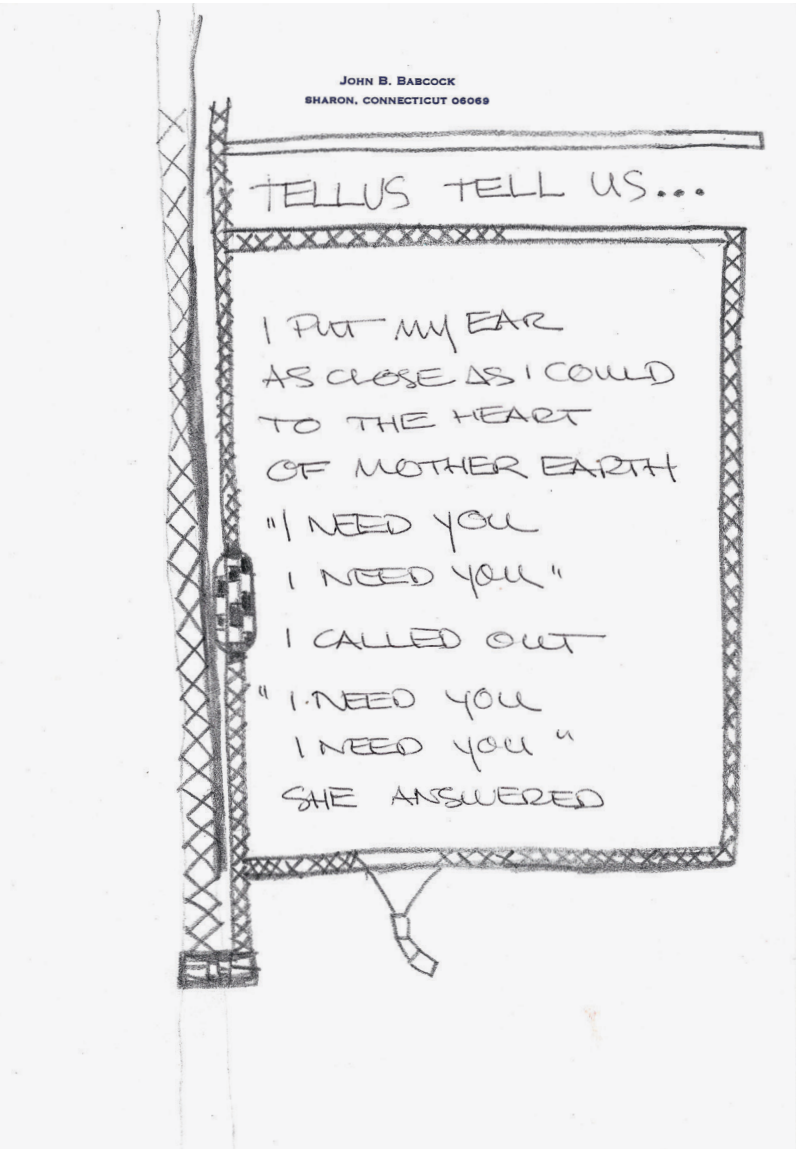

DAISY
FREE SPIRIT
BUTTERFLY
DOWN TO EARTH
UP IN THE SKY
SENDING THESE
GREAT BIRDS OFF
THRIVING ON YOUR
FOUNDATIONS OF
FREE SPIRIT
I HAVE MY OWN
MIND
SPIRIT
SOUL
LOOKING AROUND
TO MAGNETIZE
EVERYONE
TO EXPERIENCE ONES OWN
REBIRTH WHILE STILL BEING
ALIVE MUST MEAN I ALREADY
DIED.

Ca. 1990s.

Daisy
free spirit
butterfly
down to earth
up in the sky
sending these
great birds off
thriving on your
foundation of
free spirit
I have my own
mind
spirit
soul
looking around
to magnetize
everyone

To experience one's own
rebirth while still being
alive must mean I already
died.

Ca. 1990s.


JOHN B. BABCOCK
SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06069
TELLUS TELL US...
I PUT MY EAR
AS CLOSE AS I COULD
TO THE HEART
OF MOTHER EARTH
"I NEED YOU
I NEED YOU"
I CALLED OUT
"I NEED YOU
I NEED YOU"
SHE ANSWERED

Ca. 1990s.

Tellus tell us . . .

I put my ear

as close as I could

to the heart

of Mother Earth

“I need you

I need you”

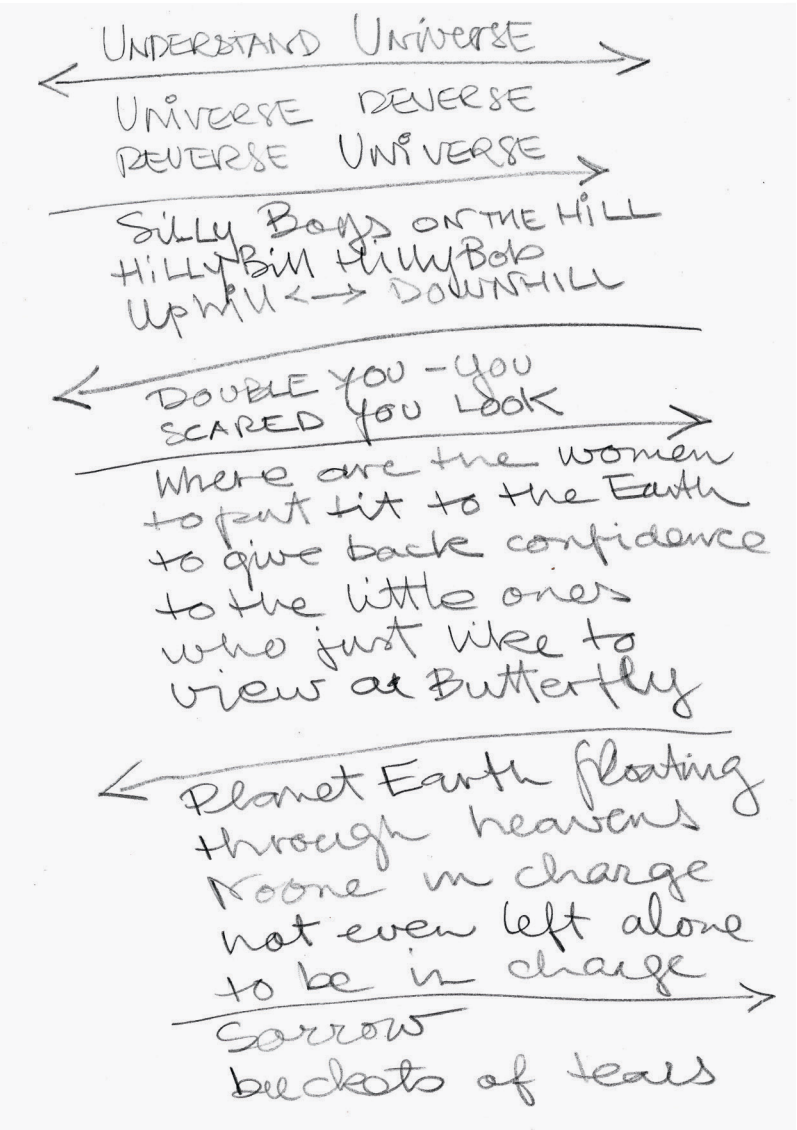
I called you

“I need you

I need you”

she answered

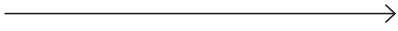
Ca. 1990s.


UNDERSTAND UNIVERSE
UNIVERSE REVERSE
REVERSE UNIVERSE
SILLY BOYS ON THE HILL
HILLYBILL HILLYBOB
UPHILL ↔ DOWNHILL
DOUBLE YOU - YOU
SCARED YOU LOOK
Where are the women
to put it to the Earth
to give back confidence
to the little ones
who just like to
view a Butterfly
Planet Earth floating
through heavens
Noone in charge
not even left alone
to be in charge
Sorrow
buckets of tears

Ca. 1990s.

UNDERSTAND UNIVERSE

UNIVERSE REVERSE
REVERSE UNIVERSE

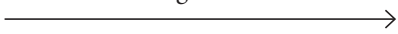


SILLY BOYS ON THE HILL
HillyBill HillyBob
Uphill ⟷ DOWNHILL

DOUBLE YOU – YOU
SCARED YOU LOOK

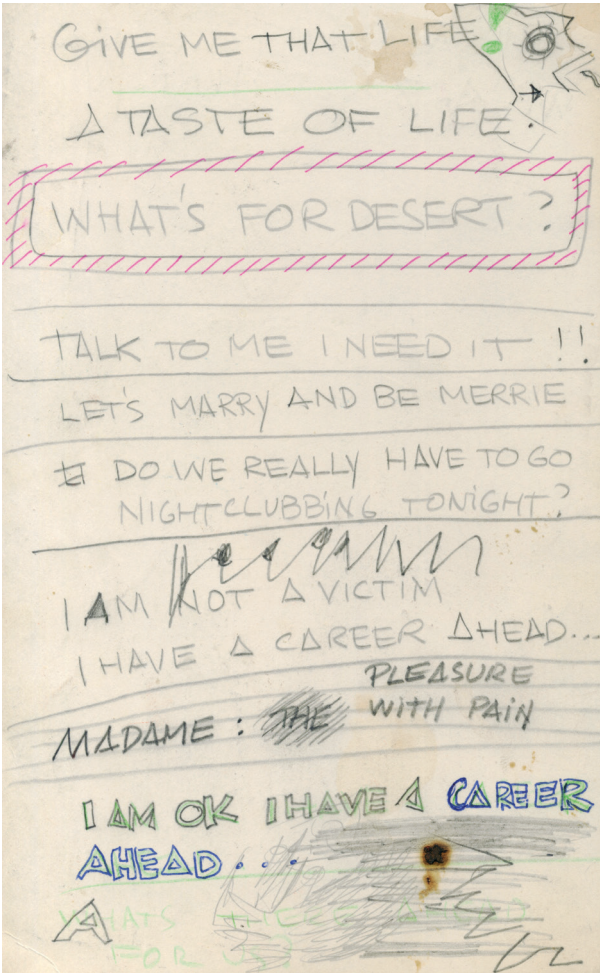
Where are the women
to put tit to the Earth
to give back confidence
to the little ones
who just like to
view a Butterfly

Planet Earth floating
through heavens
No one in charge
not even left alone
to be in charge



Sorrow
buckets of tears

Ca. 1990s.


GIVE ME THAT LIFE
A TASTE OF LIFE.
WHAT'S FOR DESERT?
TALK TO ME I NEED IT !!
LET'S MARRY AND BE MERRIE
DO WE REALLY HAVE TO GO NIGHTCLUBBING TONIGHT?
I AM NOT A VICTIM
I HAVE A CAREER AHEAD...
MADAME : PLEASURE WITH PAIN
I AM OK I HAVE A CAREER AHEAD...

Ca. 1990s.

Give me that life

A taste of life

What's for desert?

Talk to me I need it!!

Let's marry and be merrie

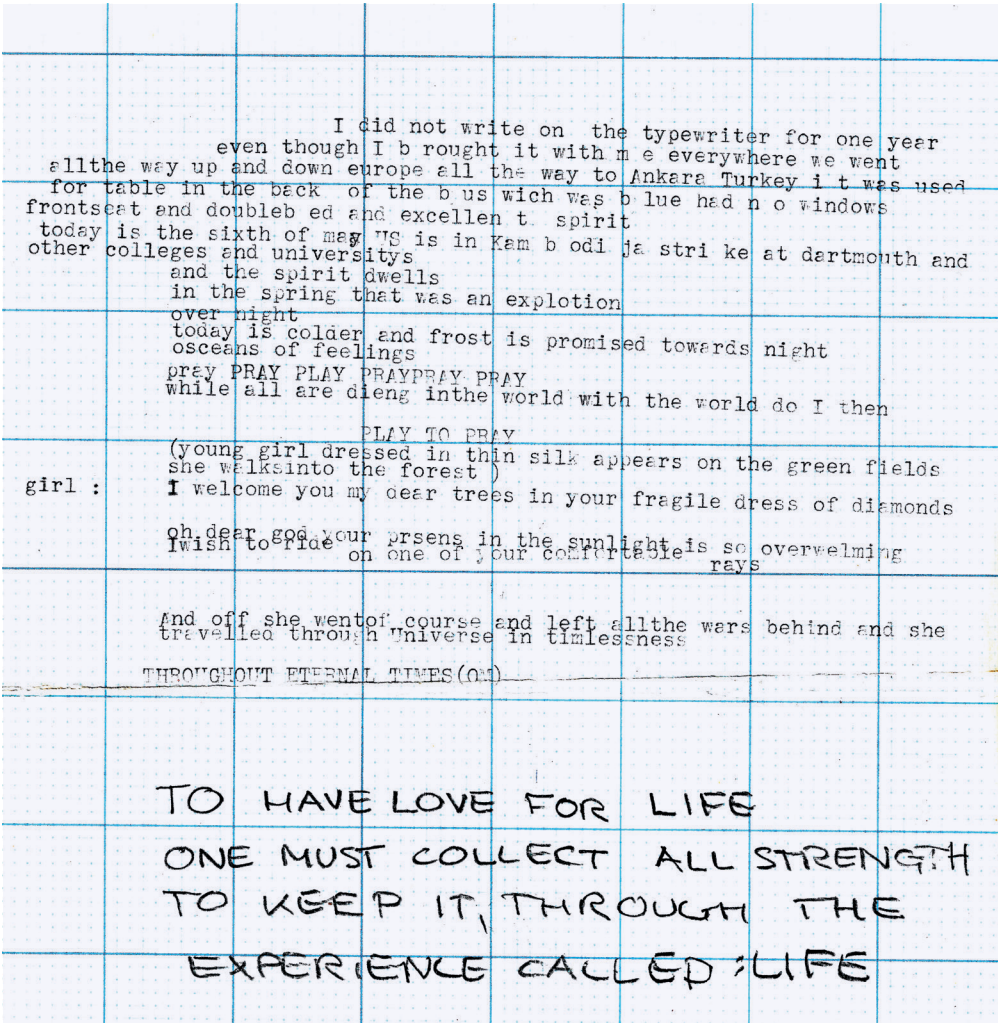
Do we really have to go
nightclubbing tonight?

I am not a victim
I have a career ahead . . .

Madame: pleasure with pain

I am OK I have a career
ahead . . .

Ca. 1990s.



I did not write on the typewriter for one year
even though I b rought it with m e everywhere we went
allthe way up and down europe all the way to Ankara Turkey i t was used
for table in the back of the b us wich was b lue had n o windows
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other colleges and universitys
and the spirit dwells
in the spring that was an explotion
over night
today is colder and frost is promised towards night
osceans of feelings
pray PRAY PLAY PRAYPRAY PRAY
while all are dieng inthe world with the world do I then

PLAY TO PRAY

(young girl dressed in thin silk appears on the green fields
she walksinto the forest)
girl : I welcome you my dear trees in your fragile dress of diamonds

oh dear god your prsens in the sunlight is so overwelming
I wish to ride on one of your comfrtable rays

And off she wentof course and left allthe wars behind and she
travelled through universe in timlessness

THROUGHOUT ETERNAL TIMES(OM)

TO HAVE LOVE FOR LIFE
ONE MUST COLLECT ALL STRENGTH
TO KEEP IT, THROUGH THE
EXPERIENCE CALLED: LIFE

Ca. 1970.

I did not write on the typewriter for one year even though I brought it with me everywhere we went all the way up and down europe all the way to Ankara Turkey it was used as a table in the back of the bus which was blue had no windows front seat and double bed and excellent spirit today is the sixth of may US is in Kambodia, strike at dartmouth and other colleges and universities

and the spirit dwells
in the spring that was an explosion
overnight
today is colder and frost is promised towards night
oceans of feelings
pray PRAY PLAY PRAY PRAY PRAY
while all are dying in the world with the world do I then

PLAY TO PRAY

(young girl dressed in thin silk appears on the green fields
she walks into the forest)

girl: I welcome you my dear trees in your fragile dress of diamonds

oh dear god your presence in the sunlight is so overwhelming
I wish to ride on one of your comfortable rays

And off she went of course and left all the wars behind and she traveled through the Universe in timelessness

THROUGHOUT ETERNAL TIMES (OM)

To have love for life
one must collect all strength
to keep it, through the
experience called: life

Ca. 1970.

MY MOTHER'S WORDS

Neneh Cherry

As I lower my hands over the keyboard I think about Moki picking up a pen—she loved a black ink refill. I am my mother's daughter for sure. Every day my hands seem to take her form more and more. I look at my hands, I see hers, it's not that they look the same, my fingers are longer I guess—but it's what they say. I laugh out loud, I miss her, but the gentle knowledge that she's there in my expression soothes my inner sanctum.

I had no idea that she wrote so much all the way through her journey—which is also mine. I find a magic familiarity in the sound of her words, and they resonate with the way I use them. Their harmony passes through my DNA and presents itself in my own tonality. The way she processes life in these texts brings me deep recognition, but also insight into her thoughts and feelings—our different homes and stops. Myself and Eagle-Eye were very much there, but in the playground of our childhood perspectives.

On nights before our days of travel, the sewing machine's drive was a lullaby. Moki sewing for the stage, for Don, for us (she even made the luggage). Those nights the fires would be going all night to dry clothes . . . the smell of clean laundry. Sometimes the sewing machine would stop for the vacuum cleaner, an Indian raga playing on the record deck, or an Ornette tune. A hundred details to finish before daybreak. Sounds of Don on the piano. I could feel them, I could hear them in my sleep. The sound of our security, the soundtrack of our life. Moki sat on the floor with the sewing machine on a low table racing against time, espresso pot by her side, coffee in a little self-gifted cup she had slipped into her handbag somewhere (much to our distress), maybe a bar in Paris, or in Viareggio, or Rome; Gauloises (no filter) in the ashtray, racing, racing in time. The sound of the last minute, but we'd always be on time. Moki out of breath, but the results—breathtaking.

I'm writing this in Tågarp, the mothership, our family headquarters, the source. Moki is everywhere and in everything. Her lifework is in every bit of the environment here. Art is life, so we carry on. I guess this is how she lives on. Naima, my eldest daughter, spent many summers here with her grandmother. As she got older she helped Moki to get shows and work finished, sometimes, of course, at the last moment. So in the most natural way she knew exactly how to continue with Moki and Don's legacy . . . so beautifully, and so important when, at times, I've just felt paralyzed and confused,

unable to function. Somehow, maybe it's healthy, natural, and right that the baton is in the hands of the next generation, my children, theirs, family, friends, love. The subliminal message goes on and on, still fresh and forceful, so here we are. Here and now, and what a privilege it is.

Tågarp, Summer 2020

Coca-Cola

FRAGMENTS ON BOUGOUNI, GOTHENBURG, MARRAKESH, AND NEW YORK

Christer Bothén

Christer Bothén (b. September 13, 1941) is a Swedish visual artist, composer, improviser, and multi-instrumentalist from Gothenburg. He has played as a member of Spjärnsvallet, Bitter Funeral Beer Band, Archimedes Badkar, Bolon Bata, and Fire! Orchestra, in addition to leading his own ensembles. Bothén's travels to Morocco and Mali in pursuit of traditional music throughout the seventies made him one of the first musicians to bring the sounds of the donso ngoni, or hunter's harp, to the world outside of Mali, in turn bringing him to Don Cherry's attention. Bothén regularly collborated with Cherry in the seventies, teaching him the donso ngoni and playing on *Organic Music Society* (1973) and *Eternal Now* (1974) as well as contributing to the soundtrack for Alejandro Jodorowsky's *The Holy Mountain* (1973) and participating in numerous live performances. The texts gathered here were written in Swedish in the early 2010s. Originally published in *Musikerminnen: svenska musikers egna berättelser* [Musician Memories: Swedish Musicians' Own Stories] (Eldscript, 2015), here, they have been translated into English by Jasmine Hinks and edited by Bothén.

Previous: Maalem Mohamed ben Lahcen in Jemaa el-Fna square, Marrakech, Morocco, 1977. Photo by the author.

It's the first Monday in January as I start to write this, so when it reaches three o'clock Hesa Fredrik starts up—an almighty sound blaring from rooftops beneath the iron gray sky.[1] The wailing is the same as it was during World War II. I have been hearing it for as long as I can remember. There are few sounds as all-encompassing—one can hear sirens answering from other parts of the city like a muezzin in Marrakesh, Morocco, or Kairouan, Tunisia. The sirens sit on the rooftops like black UFOs mounted on long masts. Every time I hear them, there is something deep inside of me that signals danger. Hesa Fredrik's bellowing takes me back to Gothenburg in the 1940s and '50s, winter trees outside, unperturbed by the mist, then as it is now, dark and damp. It's the early fifties and I'm looking out through the kitchen window of my family home—two rooms and a kitchen connected by a hallway, where there's a black wall-mounted telephone with rotary dial. In the living room there's an AGA radio with a green, glowing eye, and radio station names written out beside it: Luxembourg, Hilversum, Berlin—magical names. I used to switch to shortwave and carefully turn the off-white bakelite dial round and round. Sound streamed from the radio, noises of the most varied kind—slow waves; beeps and signals. It was like traveling in unknown worlds. Electrical iridescent harmonics rose up only to disappear, swallowed up by a pulsating haze. The radio's eye opened and closed as I sat beside it for hours; it was my music, played on a low volume because my adoptive parents couldn't stand to be exposed to this peculiar beauty for too long. Hesa Fredrik, on the other hand—no one could escape.

Even when the great war was over, its shadow fell over Europe. In the darkness of the attic, my father's gas mask still hung on a nail. At the kitchen table, I nagged for a musical instrument. But someone at my father's workplace, a ball bearing factory, had tipped him off. There was apparently a Jewish person selling old equipment from military bands in north Gothenburg, in Nordstan. There would be no more discussion of getting me something to play.

My father and I took the tram to the city center during a drizzle. We were going to check out the old instruments in East Nordstan, just to look. It was a dark but lively part of the city, crowded and with older, roughcast buildings. There were trucks and

1 *Hesa Fredrik* [Hoarse Fredrik] is a nickname for the regularly tested Swedish siren system. Officially named *Viktig meddelande till allmänheten* [Important message to society], the system was founded in 1931, when the sirens were sounded on the first Monday of every month during peacetime. Today, Hesa Fredrik is activated in March, June, September, and December on the first Monday of the month at 3 p.m.

many people moving around. On Postgatan, a street infamous for its brothels, there was a shop that today seems like something from a fairytale. Then—a bewildering experience, bordering on frightening. We stood at the store's great display window, where it was possible to glimpse cornets lying dented, large bassoons and trumpets which had been lost to darkness and dust. We went inside. A bell rang! It was like stepping into the house of a magician—dark with high ceilings and all around the walls were instruments of frightful dimensions. A sousaphone hung overhead, a mighty contrabassoon stood leaning against a wall, wherever you looked there was more: bass tubas, clarinets, trombones, oboes, banged-up saxophones, and objects I didn't even know the names of, half instruments.

My father and the proprietor spoke in low voices. Behind the counter there was an inner room lit by a yellow-orange light. There, I glimpsed a dark, bearded man in a hat, leaning over a book. I had heard a lot about Jews. Was this the Jewish world, with all its silent wind instruments? Suddenly we were outside again, out in the damp and chilly, black-and-white world. My father closed the door behind us and the little bell tinkled. We walked toward the central station. The illuminated trams clattered as they passed. All the men wore hats. The black water of the canal reflected neon signs, flickering off and on in the growing darkness. AGA RADIO Good Swedish Radios, AGA RADIO Good Swedish Radios, AGA RADIO Good Swede . . . my father cleared his throat and drove his hands deeper into his 1940s coat. He had a clarinet case under his arm—so began my lifelong relationship with the little black pipe.

I grew up on German operettas, such as Ralph Benatzky and Robert Stolz's *Im weißen Rößl* [The White Horse Inn] and Franz Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* [The Merry Widow], and on Johann Strauss's waltzes. It was a musical world which was impossible to reconcile with the increasingly disturbing information about what was going on right outside my door. The word *carpetbombing* etched itself in my brain, mixed with images of emaciated prisoners in concentration camps, mounds of corpses, and burnt ruins. The Allied planes took a shortcut and thundered across the Gothenburg sky while my family sat in our small basement shelter with our neighbors. I started to hate operettas.

Once, my parents took me to the Gothenburg Concert Hall. I must have been around nine or ten years old. I entered the largest

room I had ever seen. My childish gaze soared up and around what seemed to be a constantly expanding room made entirely of wood. On stage—an upside-down ship! When seated, my feet could barely reach the floor. There were a lot of people both in front of and behind us, a hubbub of voices that stopped when old men in suits appeared from the side door and entered onto the radiantly lit stage, some holding musical instruments others approaching theirs that had already been placed amid the maze of music stands. Some of the men began playing notes that shot up to dizzying heights, others leaned toward each other or closed their eyes or carefully pressed on and twisted the buttons on their instruments.

Sound rose and fell in the vast room. A few sonic outbursts flashed past quickly, then the sound returned to its hazy state of balance, a shimmering stillness. This was music like I had never heard before. I leaned forward in my wooden folding chair and tried to get a better view of what I was hearing, but the old men on stage looked quite normal. So the mystery wasn't in them. It must have been in something over their heads—under the huge roof, in the empty, illuminated ceiling. What they had produced, this invisible universe, was detached from the individual men.

To my great disappointment, the piece ended abruptly. The music that followed sounded like a huge, groaning machine lurching forward—the sound of the large orchestra completely overwhelmed me. I believe they were playing the immensely popular Hans Christian Lumbye pieces *Copenhagen Steam Railway Galop* and *Champagne Galop*.

What could it have been that affected me so much before the proper concert began, while the musicians were tuning their instruments? When a large orchestra comes together and tunes, there is no musical narrative. Everything stands still, so to speak. To me, this common activity, listening and playing, became a much more important experience than what followed. It's possible that my listening to the mysterious sounds from the shortwave band on the radio had prepared my ear for this experience. That I had misunderstood the social situation of the concert, was, of course, very clear to me. This was just further proof that, for the most part, I was in another world.

When we left the concert hall in the evening darkness and crossed beneath the bizarre Poseidon statue on Götaplatsen, my parents were still elated from the festive music. At the same time, the boy who walked between them in his itchy woolen golf trousers was in a state of astonishment on account of what he'd just heard—which seemed not to have been intended as music, or even

something to be listened to. Unbeknownst to them, the orchestra tune-up had created a frighteningly beautiful counter-image to the concert music he was beginning to hate—a breathtaking, drifting composition just for him? This was long before he would receive a clarinet, before he would spend hours with La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela in New York, before he would go on tour with Don Cherry, listening to a slowly swaying drone performed by a small ensemble, in front of projected, prismatic images that rotated infinitesimally as they orbited one other.

I had my first clarinet lessons with an older man who lived in a small villa with an orchard about a half hour's walk from my parents' home. I do not remember what we played, just that I thought it was so wonderful to produce a note with the clarinet—it sounded so beautiful that tears ran down my cheeks.

The friendly man must have been almost scared; he asked if I was sad and stopped the lesson early to offer me fresh pears from his garden. At the next lesson, the same thing happened. I tried to explain that they were tears of happiness. After that, there were no more lessons in the villa with the pear trees. Instead, I got hold of a traditional jazz clarinetist who was quite famous in Gothenburg at the time, Kenneth "Hasp" Fredriksson. He came to my house when I was still living with my parents. He stank of solvent and wine and we played "Tin Roof Blues" in a two-part harmony. The tears flowed again.

In the seventies, Gothenburg had an old run-down district called Haga. Most of the area consisted of three-story houses where the first floor was made of stone and the upper two were made of wood. The streets were cobblestone and many of those who lived there wore clogs, creating a noise that bounced between the walls of the houses—especially on fall evenings when the fog was dense and the smell of rotten seaweed drifted in from the sea on the humid wind—only to suddenly disappear, and the foghorns from the furthest reaches of the archipelago could be heard all the way in the heart of the city.

I came to this neighborhood following a horrible divorce, let down by my friends and my wife—which of those friends had she not slept with? We had two children together. I left the two-story villa we lived in and moved into a small one-room studio in Haga with an outdoor toilet and no hot water. It had been empty for a long time, ever since a distant friend had committed suicide there. His girlfriend offered to let me move into the apartment, which

was like a mausoleum. Nothing had been touched since the night of his death. Dust had settled over every item. This friend had tried to take his wife with him in death. He had invited her to the apartment after dark and he had taped the front door shut. He sat in the small kitchen just inside the door with a hose leading from the gas stove to a plastic bag wrapped around his head. By the time she arrived the whole apartment was filled with gas, but something had prevented her from switching on the kitchen lights after wrenching open the door. Firefighters later found that the filaments in the lamp had been exposed.

As a kind of ritual to preserve my sanity, I started covering the apartment and everything inside it with aluminum foil. At the same time, I began experimenting with sound. I invited my friends over for boundary-transcending soirees and recorded them all with microphones encased in large glass demijohns. I played the inside of the piano and overdubbed with clarinets. The metal foil project took on increasingly bizarre expressions. I pretty much stopped sleeping. In the end, I threw out the bed and on the nights when I was able to sleep at all, I lay on the kitchen floor with my legs under the table.

Finally, everything was covered with aluminum–walls, floors, ceilings, bookshelves, books, cabinets, clothes hangers, chairs; even the windows were covered. I advertised it all as an art project. The room received some attention in the art pages of the *Göteborgs-Posten* under the heading "Exhibition where there is nothing to buy," and then visitors started to come. I installed a pair of strong industrial lights and intermittently played recorded bird songs. I only allowed one person in at a time and I closed the door behind them. They knocked when they wanted to be released. Many visitors found it all unbearable, though a few did not want to leave the room at all. There, the only thing physically present was their body; everything else was reflection and uncertainty. Some undressed, others came under the influence of drugs. I was visited by astronomers, psychologists, artists, friends, and strangers. The room was kept open for three weeks.

I carried on living in Haga in apartments without heat or hot water, with kerosene stoves that stank and tiled stoves that made wonderful fires, with outdoor toilets, with moisture and cold; the summer months when all the windows and doors were open, the voices that echoed between the courtyards, the outside parties that lasted until the morning and then continued somewhere else.

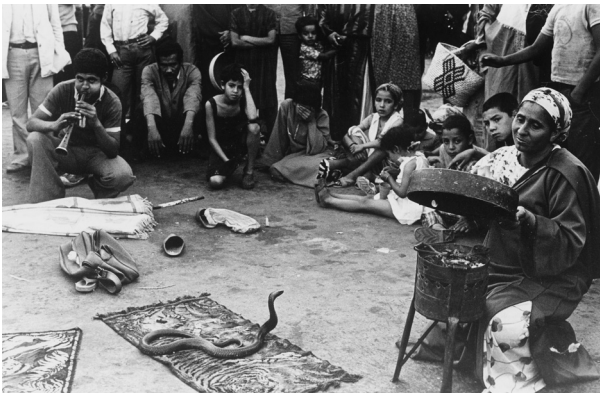
Was it the drug? It probably was. And the opportunity to have some freedom to consume this mythical drug—*kif*. This was the reason so many of my friends, and eventually I myself, went to Morocco. My first visit was in the winter of 1968, I think. I hitchhiked down. La Place, Jemaa el-Fna, the main square—and the music I found there, or that found me there, was transformative. Marrakesh became a city I would return to for the rest of my life. Jemaa el-Fna was then a flourishing site of traditional North African music, storytelling, poetry, and magic, filled with acrobats, thieves, whores, salesmen, bicycle artists, and holy vagrants! Masters played here, and there were various small and large groups of musicians and dancers. For me, this was the center of the world, and its hub was about two hundred meters southwest of Cafe Matich.

There, in the growing darkness, on the hot, cracked asphalt, a Black man with gray stubble sits on a piece of old sheepskin in front of an upside-down bicycle. In front of him there's a tray with a teapot, a few glasses, a sebsi pipe, a mototti pouch, and a number of coins. In his arms he has a large semi-rectangular, three-stringed bass lute. He beats rhythmically on the lute's hide cover. At the top of its neck, a metal tongue is pierced by metal rings that reverberate in rhythmic complement to the bass tones. The repetitive phrases are constantly changing, shifting into new forms, with an ever-accelerating tempo.

I stay that night until darkness falls and the musician, Maalem Mohamed ben Lahcen, turns on the lantern. People sit in a semicircle, and someone dances in the middle: a man in a well-worn and patched-up djellaba dances until he's sweating, then tilts his head back and points to the full moon before exposing his stomach and putting his index finger in his navel, then he bows to the master and disappears. I stay every night until the master musician turns his bike upright and slowly tramps away from the almost-empty square in the dark. In response to my persistent questioning, I am told that this is music played by Ouled Bambara, the sons of Bambara—descendants of the slaves taken from Mali, Senegal, and Guinea. This is Gnaoua! A few years later I found myself in the land of the Bambara people, in Mali.

It's 1971 and I travel to Gambia for the first time, where it is possible to make oneself reasonably well understood in English. I spend most of my time with a kora player, Demba Jobathe. We smoke huge joints that he rolls with newspaper. I learn to tap the basic rhythms with a spoon against the gourd of the kora. He plays at

Maalem Abdellatif el Makhzoumi (Sidi Amara) enjoying his morning kif in Marrakech, Morocco, 1977. Photo by the author.



Above (opposite): Maalem Abdellatif el Makhzoumi (Sidi Amara) and Mahjoub Khalmous performing in Jemaa el-Fna, Marrakech, Morocco, 1977.

Middle (opposite): Sufi musician Oulad Sidi Rahal Jilala in Jemaa el-Fna, 1977.

Below (opposite): Berber Orchestra in Jemaa el-Fna, 1977.

Above: Berber Orchestra in Jemaa el-Fna, 1977.

Maalem Abdellatif el Makhzoumi (Sidi Amara) performing
"The Red Suite" in Marrakech, Morocco, 1977. Photo by the author.

some private events and I become a kind of mascot for him. At one of these performances, a man comes up to me and asks what the hell I am doing in Gambia. I'm required to show up at his office the next day. He asks to look at my passport and he sees that I came from Dakar. "You should fly here, stay in a hotel, swim, and then go home. Your two-week visa has expired. Within two days, you need to be out of the country, you understand?" When I meet him in Banjul a few days later he just grunts angrily. Several years later, I hear the strings of a kora at Sergel's Square in central Stockholm, something completely rare in the early seventies. As I approach, I recognize Demba Jobathe, who immediately asks me if I know anyone who will marry him so that he can get a residence permit and settle permanently in Sweden. I do not remember where I was going, only that I was in a great hurry, and answered that these sorts of weddings were very common a few years ago, but have almost stopped happening now due to problems with love, divorce, etc. Before we quickly say goodbye, my advice to him is to try Norway. Demba settled in Norway, where he formed the first Norwegian-African group, Sabba, meaning "three" in the Mande language. We never saw each other again.

After traveling from Dakar to Bamako, Mali, I travel to the north of the country, to Mopti, near Niger, just south of Timbuktu and surrounded by endless swamps. Before long, I am at death's door in an extremely modest camp-like hotel on the outskirts of Bougouni, in the Wassoulou region of southwestern Mali, near Guinea. I can't even walk. Lying on the platform of a military jeep, I am taken to a hospital in a neighboring village. Thanks to a number of giant syringes, a slow recovery begins. I protest when I am treated before everyone else, but fall silent when the doctor calls me an idiot. I understand enough French for that. In the small hotel I get to know Lamin, an English-speaking teacher. I tell him that I actually came looking for music, preferably the oldest music that can be found. "Hunters' music?" Lamin promises to help me.

It is too expensive to stay at the hotel. Lamin helps me move into a compound with a family. Two basic rooms in a house made of clay and straw. One day, an unknown man steps into the room where I am seated. To my amazement, he is wearing an outfit just like one I've seen at a museum in Dakar and in his hand he has an instrument exactly like one the museum had in a glass case.

He sits down opposite me in the cramped room, and what follows is a dizzying several hours of singing, incomprehensible stories, and solo playing on his harp-lute with a hissing rattle. The music and songs fill the room to the breaking point. We stare into

each other's eyes. I am bathed in sweat. At times, he gets up and dances, so the whole room fills with dust. Suddenly he falls deafeningly silent in the forty-degree heat of the little room. Then he makes sure that I accompany him out to the yard, where his bike is parked. I sit on his luggage rack as he rides through Bougouni, holding his string instrument in my hand. The strings are singing in the wind. I feel a kind of happiness. In that moment I am exactly where I want to be. I feel no desire to escape.

Tjarte de dialla ninkorro, a small village on the outskirts of Bougouni, that was where this musician, Broema Doumbia, lived. He became my instructor and friend, and he made a donso ngoni for me. I began a long apprenticeship in his compound. His wives offered us food and we lay in the shade during the hottest hours. Now and then, Lamin came by and helped to translate, but Broema and I could easily communicate across the language barrier. He told me I was the first white man he had spoken to. Sometimes other hunters came by. It soon transpired that Donso Ton, the Brotherhood of Hunters to which he belonged, was divided over the fact of my being there. One group felt that no knowledge should be passed on to me, and that I shouldn't even be allowed to touch a donso ngoni. The other group thought it was a positive development, that I should tell them of the hunters in Sweden. (I had said that I was a white hunter. It was true, but it was their music I was chasing.)

Broema took me to several evening gatherings and rituals. I sat among the musicians as the fires burned and the dancers held their guns, shooting in the air. I had a rifle tossed at me and was forced to get up and dance. The bitter taste of the kola nuts filled my mouth and the smoke from the gunpowder was dense. Occasionally I could feel the disapproval of some of the hunters, it had an almost physical presence. Much later I realized that it was due to a combination of Broema's protection and pure luck that I came away with my life intact. After a while, I noticed that at least a few of the young people danced when I sat and practiced. Just before leaving Bougouni, Broema attached a leather case to my instrument. That's how I know that I'm playing the instrument, rather than it playing me. We parted at the bus station; both of us had our instruments. Broema said goodbye with the words, "You can go as far as you like, but between us it is never far."

At that time Bougouni was a very small town, almost a large village. The buses departed only when they were full. I held the instrument in my arms on buses across Burkina Faso and on a train through the forests, down to Abidjan on the coast of Côte d'Ivoire,

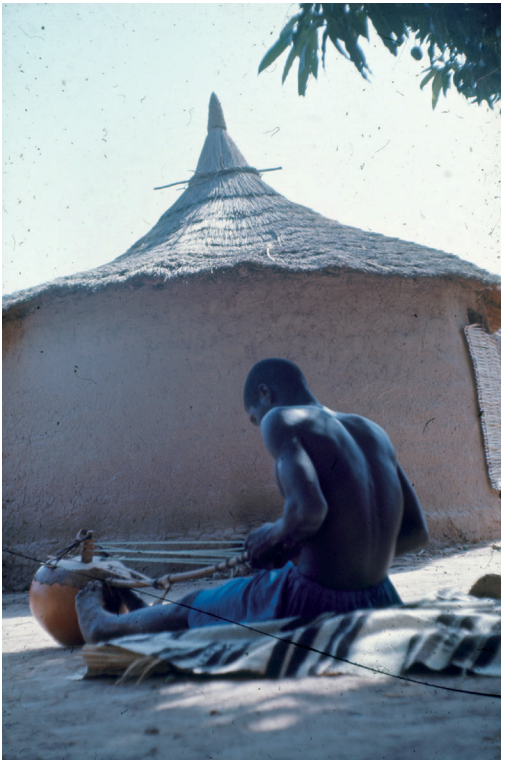
aboard a fishing boat to Dakar, on a passenger ship to Marseilles, and on a train from there to Gothenburg. Now my magical instrument stands in my single room in Haga.

Perhaps because of my early experiences as a child—the shortwave radio, the sound of water barrels in summer—and my five years at an art academy, profound doubts and questions about music-making began to weigh on me. What was music's relationship to art? Can it be art, or must it always—like a music box—repeat variations on the same theme? Above all, what is music? Or, does the real mystery lie in the act of listening? Music expresses something that cannot be expressed in any other way.

When I heard Albert Ayler's band with Don Cherry in Copenhagen it was a shocking experience, not so much because of the high volume but because the whole room was immediately filled with an almost painfully raw, electric hypersensitivity. Everything buckled and swayed, the music became a living being. There's a very special beauty in music that is played once and never again, improvised music. An improviser who's carving out their own formulation, finding their own voice, is a poet you have to grapple with.

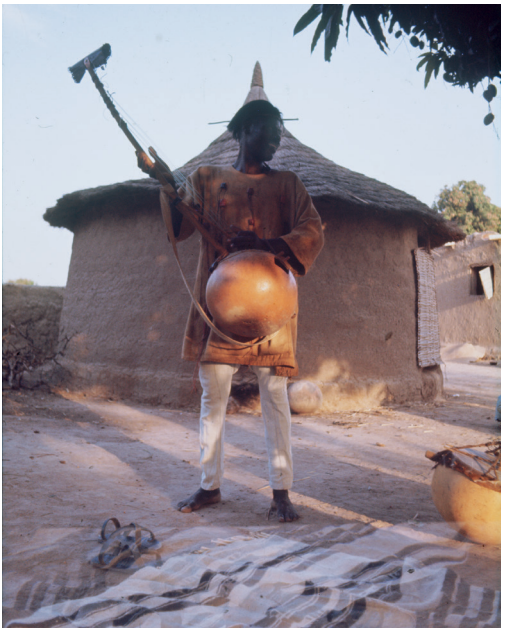
Don Cherry knocks on my door in Haga. Standing there in the stairwell, I recognize him immediately. I think he must have taken a wrong turn. What is he doing here? But his question, "Are you Christer Bothiiin?" makes me invite him in. Naturally, I recognize him from when he played at the jazz club Artdur in Gothenburg with Okay Temiz, but I also have LPs of his groups and with Ornette Coleman, of course. He is a leading figure of the new music, of the increasingly freer so-called free jazz—improvised music. The fact that Don Cherry is now stepping over the threshold of my apartment in Haga will be of crucial importance to both of our musical lives.

Don is clad completely in Moki's creations—a colorful knitted pullover with a matching hat—as he always was at that time. A celebrity. Once inside the small kitchen, he starts asking what I played and whether I had lived in Mali and whether I knew of a certain African string instrument. The magic instrument stands in my only room. "How did you get it home without breaking it?" "I carried it like a baby!" Then, a long silence. Our first meeting was characterized by these long, contemplative silences that weren't at all unpleasant. The sound of a donso ngoni is quite special—the deep tone from the six strings together with the metallic hissing from the rattle attached to the neck. And at that time, in the early



Above: Broema Doumbia tuning the donso ngoni in Bougouni, Mali, ca. 1971–72. Photo by the author.

Below: Broema Doumbia with his hunting dog and bicycle in Bougouni, 1971–72. Photo by the author.



Above: Broema Doumbia playing the donso ngoni and Christer Bothén practicing the karagnan while Doumbia's family listens, in Bougouni, ca. 1971–72. Photo by the author.

Below: Broema Doumbia playing the donso ngoni in Bougouni, ca. 1971–72. Photo by the author.

seventies, it was even more special, as it hadn't been heard at all outside of Mali. After we have played together for what seems to me an eternity, he asks if I want to help him and Sabu Martinez make music for a play.

"Yes, of course! When is it going to happen?" "We start tomorrow."

It turned out to be William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at Gothenburg City Theater. We played and improvised through the days. Sabu mostly played congas, Don the trumpet and all kinds of flutes, and I played donso ngoni, clarinets, and zither. Meanwhile, the rest of the ensemble was preoccupied with what seemed to be endless meetings and eternal discussions that only gave rise to more disagreement about what ought to be done and how. This had been going on for I don't know how long. At a typical meeting, where we had all gathered on the floor in a circle and gotten stuck in some insurmountable conflict, Don suddenly stood up. He smiled, spreading his arms wide, and declared: "I know what this play needs, it needs a huge big gong—and I will find it for you!"

Everyone nods and smiles, not understanding what this actually means, but simply happy that someone has finally come with some positive energy, which moves most people to tears.

Don takes me to one side and whispers in my ear that I should pack my instruments and enough clothes for a few days and then take the train to Hässleholm, where he will meet me.

"Sure, when?"

"Tomorrow."

The next day, Don really did pick me up at the train station in Hässleholm. We went to his school in Tågarp, the place that today has an almost mythical aura around it. Moki met up with us, bringing the children and lots of fabric, bags, sacks, and kitchen utensils all loaded onto the Volkswagen bus. We were already on our way. While he steered the bus to Christiania in Copenhagen, Don talked about his vision for the school—a creative center for artists, musicians, and writers where anything could happen. There, in Christiania, there were alternative rules regarding housing, family, drugs, and much more. It was a haven for many artists due to the low rents.

The supply of cannabis was largely unlimited and in the early 1970s it was almost possible to keep heavier drugs and crime at bay. One of the many artist collectives there was waiting for us—with incredibly surreal long dolls mounted up high on poles—ready to leave with their own caravan. On the way down, we took the road past Hauterives, France, so that I could show Don and Moki

the fantastic building made by the postman Ferdinand Cheval, Le Palais idéal. They were captivated by this extraordinary work of art. Inspired by this, Don described seeing the towers in Watts as a child, and what a strong impression the experience made on him. The Watts Towers were built over a period of thirty-three years by the multidisciplinary artist Simon Rodia. The postman Cheval's construction also took thirty-three years. A strange coincidence. Le Palais idéal later came to be featured on the inside cover of Don's double album *Organic Music Society*.

I really have no clue where we are going other than that we are heading to France to perform. I could not have imagined the size of the huge festival awaiting us, with the great stars of jazz, set up to be broadcast on national television. When we finally get down to Chateauvallon, in the South of France, we set up a kind of camp in a grove beside the festival area. Later, we drive around the harbor. This is where Naná Vasconcelos suddenly steps into the dazzling sunlight flowing through the bus's open door. I ask him what he plays and in answer to my question he performs a completely incomparable solo tapping a matchbox against his naked torso. We have no rehearsals but play with each other up until the concert: Don, Naná, the saxophonist Gérard "Doudou" Gouirand, and myself. Naná's berimbau and my donso ngoni are so closely related that it is incredibly easy to play together, and we do so deep into the cool night.

The concert becomes a performance, a continuation of our nomadic stay outside the festival area. The children run all over the stage, the dolls sway in the air, Don tunes the tanpura. Everything takes place in a completely undramatic, super hippie context. "We are the Organic Music Society," proclaims Don. While playing donso ngoni, I notice with growing fear that a gigantic TV camera is slowly rolling towards me, finally finding its way down to my fingers to film my hands from only a few centimeters away.

It all ends in a parade of the dolls and I start to wonder whether giving such a strange performance at this huge festival wasn't something of a statement on Don's part. To head in a different direction. In any case, he walked a path that would lead him to something new and untested, which much later would be known as world music.

On the way back from the South of France, we drove through the mountains to the Paiste factory, where they made percussion instruments. It turned out Paiste had a sponsorship deal with Don, so we were shown around the site. One room where people sat hammering out gongs and cymbals was full to the brim with a hideous sound. In another room shown to us by the director, there

was a gong so large it barely fit between the floor and the ceiling. The director approached it with a club in his hand. "We tried to make a gong that has every sound," he stammered with a kind of reverence as he began to work on it–tenderly stroking, testing, listening, and brutally attacking it. The gong responded with an enormous spectrum of sounds–we witnessed a dialogue between human and resounding metal.

A photographer took a picture of Don, who in turn made a short positive statement, and then a couple of large gongs with stands were loaded onto the bus and we drove further north through the hazy mountain landscape, past Christiania and past the school in Tågarp.

Once we arrived in Gothenburg, we pulled into the back of the City Theater, which has a row of small windows facing the parking lot. Don, in his colorful clothes and Sami hat, set up the gong while I ran in and announced, "Now we are here! Now we are here!" I rushed down the stairs and while Don played fanfares on his pocket trumpet, I struck the enormous instrument. It thundered. All the little windows open and smiling, laughing faces looking out–the whole ensemble was happy, happy!

How long had we been gone? I do not know. Nobody cared. We had come back safe and sound with a huge gong that would save the show. Sabu Martinez was the only one who did not smile his happiest smile. We improvised the music, Don on the trumpet and various flutes and myself on donso ngoni, zither, and I don't know what else. After Don and I recorded the music on tape, we left the project, but Sabu Martinez remained in the papier-mâché palm on stage, where he would play the congas live each night. For whatever reason, I got to keep the gong indefinitely. It was never used in the performance.

Don Cherry and Christer Bothén, ca. 1973.

REFLECTIONS ON DON CHERRY

Christer Bothén

This second text by Christer Bothén, reflecting on his time with Don Cherry, his travels to New York, and his studies of Gnaoua music in Marrakesh, Morocco, was newly commissioned for this volume. It has been translated from Swedish by Jasmine Hinks.

I had the privilege of playing with Don Cherry on and off for several years. We toured around Europe and he invited me over to New York. I played donso ngoni but also tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, and piano. I can't say that I felt in any way mature or knowledgeable enough to play with Don—but it was he who wanted to play with me. I knew it was "the sound of the donso ngoni" that he really wanted, but it was also the way that I played it. He really encouraged me and I understood that he liked my songs, as parts of them found their way into his own music.

During my stays at the school in Tågarp, he and I often sat at the piano playing songs; I played mine and Don played his own and songs by Ornette Coleman. He then showed me combinations of sounds, scales, and chords. He also tried to explain to me the harmolodic concept. Then, when Steve Roney came home from his Africa trip with a ngoni for Don, I taught Don the basics of the instrument as well as my own innovations on how to play it. In return, I was suffused with Don's and Ornette's music and their free attitude. Don's instrument was actually a kamele ngoni—it has a higher tone than the donso ngoni and its history is more closely connected with modern Mali and its then-emerging pop music.

At some point in the early seventies, some younger hunters and musicians started playing the donso ngoni, the hunters' harp, at regular parties where people sang and danced. This was seen as sacrilege. No one knew who started it, why anyone would do such a thing. I believe it was done to make the young women dance—they really like to move to the donso ngoni, but as an instrument it's closely bound to a respect for life and death, courage and magic. Hunters' music really isn't for dancing. So over time, these young people constructed a similar instrument, a little smaller and with thinner strings and a higher tone, which was called the kamele ngoni, the youth harp-lute. Satigui Sidibé, who was nineteen years old at this time, was excluded from the hunters' brotherhood immediately, but they took mercy on him after several years. Yoro Diallo had his instruments smashed by his outraged parents.

But there is another version of this story, namely that the Donso Ton hunters and their non-Muslim philosophy, traditions, and music were considered a disgrace and a threat to Muslim Mali.[1] The Donso Ton formed a state within the state, and were thought to exercise a bad influence through their music. Besides, they were armed to the teeth, and not only with harps.

1 *Donso ton* (or *donzo ton*) is a Jula term referring to a decentralized network of hunters' associations active in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Mali.

It's been said that young hunters and musicians were bribed by government front men. In exchange for large sums of money, the theory goes, hunters' harp would be used in light-hearted pop music, which would degrade general respect for the music and philosophy of the hunters. Later, in the eighties, the kamele ngoni became immensely popular. The instrument symbolized change and new thinking, a youth movement that not only opposed the neocolonial mentality but also rejected the griots' eternal praise of a corrupt elite. Gradually, a style of playing developed around it that was different from the traditional donso ngoni style.

But one and the same thing can have different meanings depending on where one is in time and space: for Don, the kamele ngoni connected African American music with its African roots, but for the people there in Mali, the instrument represented a radical break with tradition. But none of us knew that back then.

All I wanted was to play, sculpt, paint, and draw. But how could I learn how to play? I had a good deal of knowledge about drawing and painting after more than six years of studying at an art academy, but playing was still a mystery. I had tried to struggle my way through books with scale exercises, progressions, turnarounds. I had even bought Nicolas Slonimsky's book *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns*. However, I had a hard time applying all this information to the type of music I wanted to make—which was related to image-making. Could music be treated as an art form? Could it be changed and developed in the same way it was in the visual arts? Could Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Henri Michaux have something in common with music? I have stood in front of these artists' paintings and thought, *this is how I want to be able to play*, *this is how I want to make music*. But how would that sound—what was it that captivated me in, for example, Rothko's paintings? His works are completely consumed by their material; the material is everything, and as such, it transcends itself to become something else. The whole message is the color. Brilliantly, the complete materiality of the picture becomes its opposite—could equivalents be found in new European art music? Yes. But it seemed to lack the nerve one finds in improvised music. I have always had a deep fascination with music that's played once and never again. I wanted the frenetic presence conjured up by Michaux's ink paintings; the still, static electric charge of Rothko's color fields, of Pollock's 1950 black-and-white dance in *Number 32*.

My experience with improvisational music came from playing clarinet in traditional jazz bands. I had started a few of my own groups, one of which was a Jimmy Giuffre–inspired trio. We played

a super quiet version of "I Got Rhythm" and received an honorary award at a jazz competition for young musicians. I also won my first soloist award as a clarinetist. But I was always looking for something else, it never sounded like I wanted it to. Maybe it was something I heard in my inner ear when I saw—really saw. Did I mix visual impressions with sound, and vice versa? Was it all just confusion?

After the stay in Mali, I moved with my girlfriend to Bäsksele, a small village in Sweden's Vilhelmina municipality, more than six hundred miles north of Gothenburg. The village was basically just a road with a few houses and barns on each side. We rented a small place from an older couple, Ernst and his wife, who, according to rumors, had been the most beautiful in the area when they were young. Winter came. The starry sky arched above the blue and white landscape in the minus-forty-degree cold. White smoke rose from the old barn where there were four cows and a bull. Dressed in wolf furs, Ernst and I sawed down trees in the forest by hand. We loaded the timber onto a wooden sleigh pulled by a giant horse; its hooves were like church bells full of clumps of ice. I practiced music during the day and in the evenings I taught sculpture in a town twenty-five miles away. In one of the rooms, the large Paiste gong that Don had picked up on the way back from the Chateauvallon Jazz Festival hung beside my wind instruments and my donso ngoni. The wood burned in the stoves. The cold made everything in the red wooden house creak and crack. The snow was many feet high. Ernst burst through the door without knocking. "Christer, Christer, they're on the phone from New York—come quickly, it will be expensive." I hear Don's voice on the other end of the line, "Christer, can you come to New York?" How did he get the number to Ernst's farmhouse? There was no telephone in the house we were renting.

I traveled with Bengt Berger. It was the winter of 1973, and when we arrived in New York there was a garbage strike on, and a rainstorm. We checked into the Chelsea Hotel and then went out into the howling American night in search of pizza and beer. On the street corners lay large mountains of wet garbage bags; broken umbrellas littered the surrounding asphalt, their bare spokes fanned out and their torn black cloth fluttered in the wind. There were the classic grooved tin trash cans, the fire hydrants, the big taxi cabs, and the big rats as well. The city gave the impression that it was collapsing and rising in a violent, endless cycle.

We recorded in a massive building with many studios on different floors. On one of the first days, I stepped out on the

wrong floor and saw James Brown through a window, standing and singing into a big U47 microphone with both his hands held up to his headphones. We ate at a cheap restaurant during a break. Outside the window I saw an old woman find a paper package on the street. Entering the restaurant with it, she sat down at a table next to ours, and opened the container, which contained moldy meatballs. She ate with good appetite and a rotten stench spread. We were going to record music for Alejandro Jodorowsky's film *The Holy Mountain*.

Jodorowsky was a mythical figure at that time. His film *El Topo* was a kind of underground masterpiece and its reputation spread quickly. Jodorowsky had come from Mexico to New York in 1970 and wanted to show *El Topo* in cinemas. John Lennon and Yoko Ono championed the film, and it ran to sold-out crowds for six months as a midnight screening at the Elgin Theater in Chelsea. John Lennon's manager, Allen Klein, who had bought the rights to *El Topo*, undertook the production of the upcoming *Holy Mountain*. For this film, Jodorowsky said he wanted music that was more than entertainment–he wanted music with a deeper meaning. And so it was that Don Cherry and Ronald Frangipane composed the work, with Jodorowsky conducting.

It was a spacious studio and full of people. I recognized several from the Jazz Composers' Orchestra. Alejandro was a very flamboyant presence, sometimes "conducting" the music with bombastic gestures. Occasionally the film was played on a large screen and the music was improvised in direct connection with the moving images, like with Miles Davis's soundtrack to Louis Malle's film *Elevator to the Gallows*, which came out in Paris in 1958. Jodorowsky stood behind Don as he played and sort of poked his fingers against Don's back–up and down and hard and gently and up again and up again–to show how he should play. We went to rent an enormous marimba with a few wooden bars; I had to climb a small set of steps to be able to play it. I had my donso ngoni with me and it kept going out of tune due to the weather and the heavy rain. I spent a lot of time outside the studio trying to get the leather straps that held the strings to fasten correctly. I wanted to be ready when it was my turn to play, but there was never any donso ngoni. Instead, I played the guinbri, a North African lute. The recording featured on the soundtrack album was a short version of a song with me and Bengt Berger called "Pissed and Passed Out."

We went with Don to Ornette's on Prince Street. But even without Don, we tried to see and hear as much as we could. We went to Studio Rivbea, Sam and Bea Rivers's place. We went to a nice bar

high up in the Empire State Building to hear Stan Getz–they didn't want to let us in, but we claimed to have come all the way from Sweden just to hear Getz play in the Empire State Building. They probably didn't believe us, but they let us in. We went to Rashied Ali's place, a rather small, oblong-shaped room, and we managed to get up right next to the band–Joe Henderson's quartet, I can't remember who the bassist was, maybe Dave Holland. Rashied Ali played drums, and a little to the side sat a guitarist whose face was hidden by the brim of his hat. He looked at the floor and didn't play any themes or accompaniment. The music was free but still quite conventional–until the guitarist started playing. Then, almost immediately, there was a kind of undefined diagonal harmony, the rhythm stumbled, the whole composition bent. The notes seemed to somehow burst out from all possible directions in the room. The rhythm section capsized and slid away like it was aquaplaning. When the solo was over and the music tried to gather itself into a normal mode, the man in the hat raised his head a little and looked out into the room with an almost shy smile. So it continued for the rest of the evening. No guitar in the theme, very sparingly as accompaniment during the tenor solos, and then a total change of perspective, always played with his face hidden beneath the brim of his hat. His sound was both new and familiar; there was something reminiscent of contemporary European music, and at the same time there were similarities with traditional music from Mauritania. On the way home, Bengt and I agreed that the guitarist would either become world famous or be forgotten completely. James "Blood" Ulmer. A voice of his own.

I was in New York and played with Don two or three times. We hung out and played in a small basement apartment on the Lower East Side. Brick walls. To play with Don in New York had a certain difference. Don's playing was somehow reflected in the city's brokenness, its hectic bustle. His strange mix of pentatonic scales and cascades of notes with a sharp pitch, far beyond the harmony–those fast cascades that often started high up and tumbled down with a kind of jubilation.

"Brilliant" was a word Don often used when it came to how he himself wanted to sound, and as an ideal for improvisation and perhaps music in general. "He has brilliant musical ideas," "I want my playing to be brilliant," "a brilliant improvisation," etc. His improvisations really could have something sparkling about them. What also set him apart from most other trumpeters was

the fragility of his playing: that state where the note is close to bursting. That state of sudden perplexity, where something slips within a phrase and certain notes sound completely wrong, only to sound completely, ingeniously right in the next nanosecond, due to his subsequent phrase. Dangerous acrobatics, up high, with no safety net.

We also played at the Newport Jazz Festival in New York: a group consisting of Don Cherry, Moki, Frank Lowe, Carlos Ward, Charlie Haden, Ed Blackwell, and Jane Robertson, plus the Swedes—Bengt Berger and myself. Moki's tapestries hung behind us, with their lyrics and flames. During the sound check, Don called me over and asked me to come to him at the piano, where he showed me an accompaniment—a bass line—and a completely improbable chord sequence for a song I had never heard. He would do that quite often. Suddenly, during a concert, there could be a trumpet signal, which indicated a sudden change. And then, a completely unknown song. In such situations, it could feel as if you ended up with your trousers down. It was an unwritten law that we should follow Don. Did he do that just to shine in front of the audience? In part, it could feel as though you were being exposed to a Zen Buddhist education, being given unsolvable koans by a nurturing master. I chose to lean toward the latter, without having any illusions about it.

In New York, I got to know Frank Lowe. He had a kind of "high spirit." He spoke quickly and enthusiastically; he played as if he was possessed. He had a very distinctive way of making the tenor sax scream in ecstasy. He would lean into my shoulder and say in his low, excited voice: "I do not want to sound like Coltrane, I do not want to sound like Sanders. I want to sound like both at once." We became closer friends, traded licks, and blew our heads off on our tenor saxophones in Central Park at night. I hung out with him in different places in Harlem; sometimes I had the donso ngoni, sometimes the tenor. We played with Frank's friends, we visited Marzette Watts—I think Kalaparusha Maurice McIntyre was there one time. Marzette came up to me and said, "Ah, you are from Sweden—do you know Frippe Nordström?" He was the only Swedish musician people had heard of. He was the first to record Albert Ayler.

Someone in the group had a studio, possibly Marzette, and during the night there were some tenor and donso ngoni duos. Frank took me aside and whispered, "He's recording us without telling us, let's go." Frank had a very particular way of playing when it was just the two of us, tenor and donso ngoni: an intense, hoarse, fast

Newport Jazz Festival, New York, 1973.

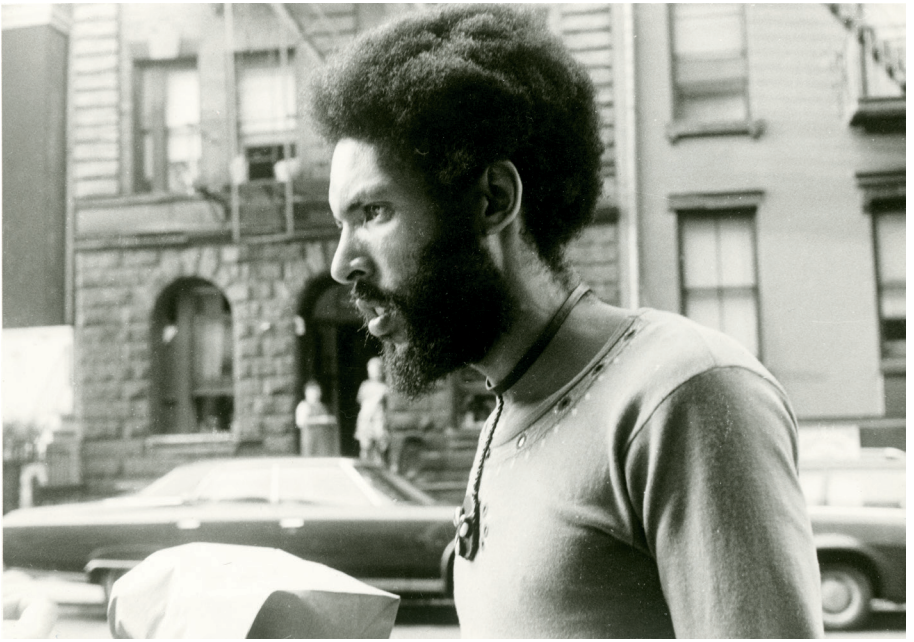
whisper at low volume, with a lot of blasted flageolets. I never heard him play that way in other contexts. Too bad it was never recorded.

We drove around New York. We passed Moondog, who was standing on a street corner in full get-up. Frank hung out of the window and shouted at someone he knew. "There he is, The Wizard!" And then he turns to me and says in his low, excited voice: "You know, this guy is not playing free, he's playing *super* free!"

Years passed without us seeing each other or keeping in touch. One early spring evening I'm walking in the dark among the trees in a small park in Stockholm. Against the light of an outdoor restaurant I see a silhouette. I can't resist the impulse and call out, "Frank . . . Frank, is that you?" The solitary, bent figure stands still. "Frank Lowe, what the fuck happened to you?" But it's clear what had happened. Mats Gustafsson invited him to Stockholm, and we did a gig at a small club in Gamla Stan, the old town, but Frank was only half-there. One of the brightest burning lights was about to go out. Poisoned.

It took a long time to realize that I really had the freedom to play completely as I wanted, that it was my own artistic compass and nothing else that should decide how I sound. It would take years of practice before I could get closer to the music I wanted to make. What I learned from Don had mostly to do with attitude, to hold fast to spontaneity and creativity. I see no great purpose in repeating Don's music today; ironically, it would be in complete opposition to his spirit. Don was once asked how he would characterize his music. He replied something like "I am an improviser. All I want is that people can say about me, 'This is Don Cherry improvising– that's him, and he improvises.'"

The German composer Mathias Spahlinger has said that the "infinity" that defines the "material of new music" entails an unlimited number of pitches and durations as well. Spahlinger's own aesthetics have a political dimension, too. He believes every artist has a personal responsibility to prevent intolerance and to stand against unfreedom. Within the sphere of human expression, the arts, or whatever you might call it, music has a special position. This is perhaps mainly due to its elusive, almost mystical character. It cannot be touched and it just disappears. What does music mean? It doesn't represent anything other than itself. What is it, really– a reflection of the innermost vibrations of matter and the universe? Is it in any way related to the vibrations that comprise us, and consciousness itself? Or to the spiritual–is it the case that



Above: Frank Lowe in New York, 1974. Photo by the author.
Below: Moki Cherry in New York, 1974. Photo by the author.

the musician, or the composer, just dips their spoon into a stream of music that flows from omnipresent gods? Why does it have a direct connection with our souls, and why does it also appeal to our intellect in such a direct way? Why do we make this abstract art of vibrations? Can this information only take this airy form—a message, a mystery? The French author Jean Genet wrote of the necessity for artists to add a touch of shadow to a world that has been overanalyzed. Musicians fumble humbly in the dark.

One night I'm in Bamako with some musicians and they really want me to go with them to the house where Mali's only grand piano stands. I'm European—I have to play the piano for them. We go there late at night when the moon is like a bowl in the sky. In a large, dark, and empty room, in an abandoned French colonial villa, there it stands: the grand piano. Like a wooden animal, on three legs and far from home. The terribly dry, hot climate has warped the whole instrument. The lid is slightly open like the mouth of a crocodile. In the moonlight, the large instrument begins to look somehow African. When I place my hands on the keys, it is so out of tune that it sounds eerie in the large dilapidated building. I am seized by an unexpected feeling, almost a sadness. I have to leave. I am suddenly gripped by a violent longing for the sound of a well-tuned piano. I hurry away, leaving the instrument alone in the dark room, where the brittle wallpaper turned to dust on the floor. It will be months before I have the opportunity to hear a well-tuned piano again. So what's the point of music? Well, it might be that music is able to express a deeply human experience that cannot be expressed in any other way.

When I was growing up in the fifties, my family had no running water in our small summer house on Sweden's west coast. We had a well that used to dry out during warm, arid summers. Mom washed our clothing in a large tub. Father collected rainwater in two large, wooden barrels that stood at the corners of the house. There, the drainpipe went down with a tongue that folded out, resembling the lower part of a bird's beak. Father prepared for the rainy days by keeping the gutters clean and studying the clouds. He really, really looked forward to the rain. When it finally came, I listened devoutly, walking between the two big barrels. I was always captivated by this strange music from the corners of the house. The water whispered secretly, timelessly. After the clouds had dissipated, the

rain stopped, and the sun returned; the water would continue to drip into the barrels. I'd ask Pappa to lift me up so I could look over the edge of the barrel, and down there in the play of the cool, dark water, I'd see our silhouettes dancing.

You wake up in an unfamiliar city and hear sounds entering in through the open window. Passersby speak in a language you do not understand. Their steps and voices disappear in an alley, someone shouts the same short phrase over and over again: Is it a prayer, a salesman, or someone who wants—what? You do not know. You hear fast steps and a nearby door slams shut. Out in the town everything is strange and unfamiliar: the smells, the sounds, and the few signs you cannot read. Soon you have disappeared down the winding streets.

This is how it feels to hear new, unfamiliar music. At that moment, you are in a kind of virginal state with untrained ears. If you then enter into the music, that city, and discover its architecture and construction, you may even learn to understand what it was that fascinated you from the beginning. Then there is no way of returning to that first experience, when you did not know whether what you heard was being played forward or backward, when the rhythms turned and twisted and changed all the time. But the music does not stop talking to you, it only opens up other mysteries. When you first hear this music you have virgin ears; should you try to keep them as such? Open, untrained ears are good—but for life? That's maybe a bit much. Many things are not what they first seem to be.

I return to a city that has played a crucial role in my life, where I came to a turning point. To arrive in this city is also to leave it, to depart the city as it exists in my memory and to let that place be swept away by the tidal wave of time. In a 1940s travel brochure I have from Morocco, there is an image of a stork standing in a nest, high on the edge of a crumbling wall. When I first visited in 1969, I was amazed to see this same scene, completely unchanged, high over people's heads. Later, when I lived in Marrakech in 1977 and passed by the stork at least twice a day, I did not even look at it. Every time I have visited the city since then, I have not even thought about this nest on top of the wall. But recently, as I set out through the winding streets to find my way back to the small dead-end where I once lived, I turned a corner into the afternoon crowds. And there, in the cool winter sunlight, set against the still winter

sky on the crest of the narrow ruin: the stork's nest–as if nothing had happened. Thirty years of my life.

The city–here I manically pursued music studies and everything felt connected: music and dance, joy and tragedy, people, saints, and djinns; incense, blood flowing from sacrificed animals, liturgical colors–the sandy light. The poverty and the smells: kif and mint tea.

It's 1977 and I live in an apartment with a small veranda and two small rooms. I hear nothing but Gnaoua music. I practice–practice and take notes. I hang out only with my teacher, Maalem Abdellatif el Makhzoumi, and other Gnaouis, or people inside their circles. Together we make strings from goat intestines beside a stream outside the shrine to Saint Sidi Amara. My hands still stink a week later. It's the month of Sha'ban and every night I am at derdeba ceremonies, or attending Gnaouan lila rituals, which involve animal sacrifice and constant music. At these dramatic gatherings, you might cut or burn yourself, or dance in a trance until you fall to the ground spinning–and I sit with the musicians in the middle of it all, disguised as a Moroccan. But then the fasting begins in the month of Ramadan and the rituals are over, so we gather at Abdelatif's place or at my house after the sun goes down, and we eat, smoke kif, drink tea, and play hours of toned-down Gnaoua music with whispered songs. Maalem Abdellatif or Maalem Mustafa Bakbou might play. It's a kind of musical soiree that lasts into the morning, endlessly recounting traditional stories and legends. The speaker is sometimes interrupted by someone who corrects the narrative and then takes over storytelling. Sometimes my friend Farid whispers translations to me in rough English. This continues for hour after hour, some of the musicians fall asleep as they play. In the cool morning, my little room is full of sleeping men leaning against each other and lying on mattresses and raffia mats. But not every night; the end of Ramadan approaches. As the sun sets, the narrow streets are filled with the sound of long copper nafir trumpets being blown. Every night, several young women knock on my door and shout "La soup, Monsieur, la soup!": the long-awaited hot soup that marks the end of the day's strict fasting.

The function of Gnaoua music is to heal and purify. It is part of a far-reaching and ancient tradition, with its branches and roots in Mali and Guinea in the south, and in Ethiopia and Harar to the east–a folk tradition that also includes knowledge of the human psyche. The music is one part and comprises a large pantheon of

ritual laws such as liturgical colors, sacrifices, blessed milk, etc., all performed in a specific order. Here, there was no doubt or challenge in making music. And the discourse was about the right emotion and the problem of how the right emotion might emerge through the music. Abdelatif's answer was simply to play correctly, so the right emotion was expressed. I did not love these musicians, I adored them. And I envied them.

Alone at night, I hear the lizards eating on the roof. In Jemaa el-Fna square my master sells plastic toys in the evenings, joining so many others at the end of Ramadan in stalls that run the length of the square's east side. Everyone sells the same stuff from small huts covered by tarpaulin or plastic drapes or rigged-up raffia mats. In the evening, I sit on folded cardboard. In front of me there are dolls, cars, balls, and brightly colored flowers, all made of plastic and spread out on a large piece of tarp. Many people are out and about—they are glue-sniffing street children, beggars, poor foreigners—and there is anticipation in the air. As they pass, the only things illuminated by the light of the plastic lanterns are the bottoms of their djellaba and their bare feet against the asphalt. The merchants from the Sahara pass by with murmuring voices; the light catches their white-and-yellow sandals beneath their sky-blue robes as they disappear into the night. Bicycles and mopeds rattle past. Some of the riders stop and lean against their handlebars. Their upper bodies and heads are in darkness, through which their eyes gleam. Families with children stop and inspect my wares; I sit on the ground in the harsh, crackling light while haggling, pointing to various toys with a wooden stick about a yard long. With a few powerful waves of the stick I chase away the kids who get too close—the master is out on business and has left me here with change, a pot of mint tea, two glasses, and a small transistor radio playing Moroccan music, held together with tape.

The music on the radio changes without me noticing—this is not Moroccan music or Gnaoua music, is it another station? I do not understand what it is I'm hearing and I have no way of identifying it. It's a kind of string music, but the whole composition is badly tuned, entirely askew, as though everyone's playing is equally wrong. The source of this horrific phenomenon is not my inability to hear the melodies, but rather the peculiar tonality of this ongoing sham. The instruments are being played in such a stiff and sluggish manner. I'm completely paralyzed by them in the Moroccan night, hypnotized by music I can't understand, which just streams out of the small taped-up radio to my left. Something's fucking wrong.

In the back of my mind, an alarm bell rings saying that it is not the music that is skewed, it is my hearing and I'm not snapping out of it. My listening is taking place from a different standpoint than it's supposed to; I hear the music at an angle from which it can't be grasped. And then it's as if a train changes tracks, I know what it is: ordinary, well-tempered, Western string music, a fairly well-known piece, maybe Mozart. Nobody has played incorrectly, everything is as it should be. The whole ordeal probably lasted only a few seconds, maybe half a minute. For a few seconds, had I been listening from outside my culturally determined perspective?

Today everything exists simultaneously alongside everything else, but in my own music nowadays, my African experiences and studies are not as obvious. They exist as an ingredient among all other inspirations and influences, and while I still play donso ngoni and guembri on special occasions, I have chosen, generally, to limit myself to the bass and contrabass clarinets. These empty pipes have so many variations, enough for many lifetimes. One thing that fascinates me about improvised music is that it can never be described as finished; it doesn't solidify into a definitive form. The music sounds the way it does once, and then never again. Therein lies both its strength and its weakness. The sound of a clarinet is not as fully defined by jazz as the saxophone is—with it I can relate more freely to the Nordic tradition, to contemporary European music, and to the art of improvisation. I continue, sometimes, to create pictures alongside my musical compositions and improvisations, but my scores tend to turn into images and my images increasingly resemble scores.

"Relativity Suite" rehearsals at the Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center, New York University, November 27–30, 1972.

RELATIVITY SUITES

Ben Young

In 1992, New York's WKCR radio station hosted a weeklong Don Cherry festival, likely the most comprehensive documentation of Cherry's career to have been undertaken in his lifetime. It echoed Cherry's years of involvement at the station, and the research carried on long afterward. Fifteen years later, in December 2007, multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee visited the station to help annotate the broadcast of a newly restored recording of Cherry's original 1972 "Relativity Suite" performance. This essay synthesizes the findings of both the festival and the later interview on WKCR's daily program "Jazz Alternatives," hosted by Ben Heller and Ben Young.

Relativity Suite names multiple projects by Don Cherry: a standalone composition, a New York City workshop with the Jazz Composer's Orchestra (JCO), and a 1973 Jazz Composer's Orchestra Association (JCOA) LP that unites those two items. This essay summarizes the way these different iterations speak to one another, and situates the *Relativity Suite* within Cherry's broader vision of Organic Music, realized, loosely, from 1970 to 1976. As archival Cherry recordings are released, we can fill in more and more detail from every step of his musical journey. Volumes like you're holding are both evidence of the recent increase in interest in Cherry's work and further resources for navigating his nonlinear path.

"Convergence" is a central concept of *Relativity Suite* and of Don Cherry's entire working method: he brought disparate elements into unison. From his home base in Sweden, Cherry traveled around the world, convoking or joining thousands of musical environments, putting artists in touch with one another, and bringing the harvest of his travels—new friends and their musical systems and instruments—into his own music. Bridging, uniting, enveloping—converging. Skim the surface of his musical output and the titles tell you what he's got in mind: *Togetherness—Complete Communion—Total Music Company—Eternal Rhythm*—"Whole World Catalog"—"Sound Ritual"—*Organic Music Society*. Across the period from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, he expresses convergence verbally through those slogans. Each bears its own musical direction.

Composing for the JCO

Cherry occasionally camped in one place long enough to design and build an edifice. Half a dozen times in this period, he ballooned his open concept to work with large clusters of improvisers from around Europe. But when Cherry was commissioned to write for the JCO in 1970, there was still very little on tape—and nothing on record—to indicate how he would use a large group. In Sweden he had built something special, but that specific magic was shared with US audiences on only a few occasions, of which "Relativity Suite" is the key example. If the piece were to be staged as new work today, the promotional copy would subtitle it an "experience": not so much a program of songs as an evolving ritual, an engulfing wave that upsets our senses of form, genre, and the passage of time. Cherry's presentations in the early seventies were all about that sort of experience.

Album cover for Don Cherry and the Jazz Composer's Orchestra's *Relativity Suite* (JCOA Records, 1973), illustration by Moki Cherry.

The album *Relativity Suite* was a portable souvenir of that experience, like the folio of postcards brought back from a vacation: vivid, well-focused pictures of some natural phenomena, captured from a closer point of view than you'd be able to get from a trail. But freezing those frames sacrifices the panoramic experience of being present in the biosphere. On the LP, catalog number JCOA 1006, there are clearly compartmentalized pieces built around individual soloists; the melodies and choice of instruments clue us in to the sources animating Don Cherry's musical catalog.

Cherry was always hungry to learn about the world's musical cultures—this spirit would later lead to his adopting a "Multikulti" brand identity for his band and its records. It is difficult to isolate the different musical traditions that inspired Cherry. Broadly speaking, at the start of the seventies he was exiting a period characterized by the influence by Turkish music. In *Relativity Suite*, South Asian music is paramount. It's the obvious referent in "Trans-Love Airways" and the opening track "Tantra." Then comes East Asian music, as played by Selene Fung on the Chinese zither *ching* (or zheng) in "The Queen of Tung-Ting Lake." The title of the second track, "Mali Doussn'gouni," refers to an instrument from Mali, also spelled donso ngoni, that was Cherry's latest fascination. (More on that later.)

Cherry learned much from the musicians with whom he performed. He was captivated as well by sounds from Brazil and South Africa, each interest sparked by a musician from those countries. Brazilian Naná Vasconcelos was very much a part of Cherry's European vision at this time; he was even part of Cherry's workshop at NYU (though absent from the record). What Cherry learned from the South African pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, also known as Dollar Brand, is as complex as a double helix, but Ibrahim's compositions and folk tunes had an immediate effect. Since *Relativity Suite* was commissioned to be Don Cherry's music, he left Ibrahim's songs out of the picture, but we still get a remarkable cameo from an Ibrahim collaborator, the alto saxophonist Carlos Ward, on "Desireless," a short track showcasing Carla Bley's piano playing. As much as we now understand how essential Ward was for Ibrahim and Cherry, going into the *Relativity Suite* project, his history was more closely entwined with the JCOA than with either of them. The other featured saxophonist on the album, Frank Lowe, also stuck with Cherry for years to come. Lowe and Cherry met no later than when Cherry was a guest observing the September 1972 sessions for Lowe's *Duo Exchange* (Survival Records, 1973) with Rashied Ali.

Lowe's rasp and fire were cast in the role pioneered by Albert Ayler and Gato Barbieri as the complement to Cherry's lead voice.

The record concludes with "March of the Hobbits," showing off the New Orleans parade chops of Ed Blackwell with a blithe, bulletproof melody reminiscent of Albert Ayler. It's the first song on the concert's set list. It had played *passim* across Cherry's musical oeuvre and surfaced in performances with Ibrahim and elsewhere, at least as early as 1968. The concert version of "Relativity Suite" has much in common with the one on the record, but pieces of the composition are arranged in a different order, played for longer or shorter lengths, and repeated more often. At least one of the recurring themes from the performed version was left off the recording. On the LP, individual tracks have names and timings; start and end points are clear. On side B, there are even spirals—the physical separators visible on the disc—to delineate the tracks.

Much of the ensemble playing on this project came from the standard personnel of the Jazz Composer's Orchestra. The Orchestra had grown out of the Jazz Composer's Guild, for which Carla Bley and Michael Mantler had written in 1964–65. Their aim was to unify the Guild's players into an orchestra that would feature members of the greater group as soloists and, eventually, to commission some of those same figures as composers who would write for the whole orchestra. Bley and Mantler maintained remarkable momentum on their live and recorded projects, with each feeding into the work of the other through the early seventies. They launched the JCOA label in 1968 and eventually developed that into a business framework called New Music Distribution Service. By the early 1970s, the principle had broadened such that the JCO could be the vehicle for records by affiliated musicians, including Clifford Thornton, Roswell Rudd, Grachan Moncur III, and Leroy Jenkins, and for shorter and longer commissions from composers not steadily part of the organization: Sam Rivers, Bill Dixon, Alan Silva, Wadada Leo Smith, and others.

"Me and Mike were just asking our favorite players if they wanted to write a piece," Bley recalled, "and I think they all said 'yes' . . . I think Don was the first person we asked. . . . The Jazz Composer's Orchestra paid for it; it wasn't an outside thing . . . either me or Mike begging Timothy Marquand for the money. The one Don did for JCOA was one of my favorite albums."[1]

Each of the JCOA guest composer records evolved through public "workshop readings." Instead of rehearsals toward a concert,

1 Carla Bley in conversation with the author, June 2, 2020.

these were open rehearsals where the general public was invited in to witness the process. "Relativity Suite" was developed over four nightly sessions, each from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., and then performed publicly on the fifth night—Friday, December 1, 1972—for free.

In 1972, multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee had taken part in a performance by JCO of work by his colleague Clifford Thornton. (Look closely at the photograph on Clifford Thornton and the Jazz Composer's Orchestra's *The Gardens of Harlem* [1975], and you'll see McPhee pictured as one of the players in the concert.) But he wasn't able to make it to the studio for the 1974 recording of it; he couldn't get the time off from work. McPhee also missed out on the recording session that became the record for Cherry's JCOA project. Later, he would say:

> Ironically with the *Relativity Suite*, after about a week or so of preparation, it came time for the recording. Because of rationing, there was a problem getting gasoline: You could only buy gasoline on odd or even days, depending upon what your license plate was—odd or even, or however it worked. I wasn't able to get gas, so I couldn't make that recording session either. For me, that's tragic.[2]

Instead, McPhee takes us to the workshop environment: "Don was up on the stage," he says, "from the very beginning, he spoke to us a bit about the piece, and what he intended to do. And then he had a series of banners that were created by Moki, his wife. Each day there was a different banner."[3]

Paul Motian took down the personnel for the first of the workshop sessions—a slight variation from the ensemble that played the final performance, and significantly different from the ensemble that played on the record:

> Leo Smith, Enrico Rava, Joe McPhee (trumpet); Sharon Freeman, Bob Carlisle (French horn); Brian Trentham, Jack Jeffers (trombone); Howard Johnson (tuba, baritone saxophone); Carlos Ward, Pat Patrick, Dewey Redman (reeds); Leroy Jenkins, Jan Cherry, Nan Newton, Dave Holland, Charlie Haden (strings); Carla Bley (piano); Ed

2 Joe McPhee, interview by Ben Heller and the author, Jazz Alternatives, WKCR, December 19, 2007.

3 McPhee, interview.

Blackwell, Paul Motian, Nana Vasconcelos (percussion); Mocqui Cherry (tanbura [*sic*]).[4]

Mike Mantler was listed as "conductor," but that role appears to have been logistical more than musical. He did, however, play trumpet during the final performance, at least. Note also that Frank Lowe, a very prominent soloist on the record and during the end-of-week concert, was not, apparently, part of the lineup as the workshops began. McPhee again takes us to the floor of the rehearsals: "All of the parts were sung to us. There were no written charts or anything. Don sang a section, and we would repeat it; it went back and forth like that until we had it internally."[5] Cherry's method asked for a different level of investment from the players. Some might be at other jobs between the workshop sessions. For "Relativity Suite," they needed to do more than just come prepared with a folder of sheet music or notes; they had to adapt to a new system of perceiving and retaining the guidelines. McPhee again: "I don't remember a name being given to any section at the time; those came later. We realized after days of this that a certain visual image represented a certain section of the work. The musicians had to remember all these modulations for each piece—as identified by the banner. The flags were large—they weren't little things that he waved, but these big tapestries. There were hand signals as well. It's quite complex."[6]

Cherry's method of communicating is reflected in one of the more readily available video documents of his music from this era, an Italian broadcast from 1976. He directs the studio audience's attention to the tapestry behind him, then actually stands up and crosses over to it, indicating how words and rhythm correlate based on the "Om Shanti" text that Moki had sewn into the fabric. The tapestry was the symbol, score, and at times lyric sheet for the music. (And, as we know, sometimes the record cover, the clothing, and more.)

JCOA's original plan had been to record audio of the "Relativity Suite" concert and edit it down for the LP. But recording so many voices in the round spoiled the clarity, and further line noise on the tape sealed the deal that it wouldn't be useable. McPhee: "It was so exultant. Every time Don got up on the stage and showed us those various parts, there was such a glow about him. It was a family

4 Paul Motian, 1972 datebook. Shared by Cindy McGuirl / Paul Motian Archives.

5 McPhee, interview.

6 McPhee, interview.

"Relativity Suite" rehearsals at the Eisner and Lubin Auditorium,
Loeb Student Center, New York University, November 27–30, 1972.

experience." Having open rehearsals eroded the division between the preparations and the performance. And yet the goal was still to have one culminating event that was a continuous reading of the piece:

> Each day we worked on just one piece that was identified by the banner for that day, but it all came together for the last night. After a week of putting all these disparate parts together and saying, "How's this going to work? How are we going to remember all that? What do these images mean?" But then it became very clear: The night of the concert, there was no problem about that.[7]

What we hear on the recordings mirrors what the players would have seen in the switch from one of Moki's tapestries to another one. For example, the record echoes Cherry's use of strings for maintaining continuity between the concert's different sections. In the words of John S. Wilson, reviewing the performance for the *New York Times*, "Strings have always been a stumbling block in jazz groups, but Mr. Cherry has managed to find a very valid place for them."[8] The entrance and exit of the strings section aids the transition from one part of the piece to the next.

Even if not hi-fi enough for LP, the tape was good enough to air on New York's WBAI radio station a few days later. On an aircheck from this broadcast, the radio announcer, likely Candy Cohen, can be heard describing, with some bewilderment, another spontaneous element: an unidentified man had entered the studio and played an unidentifiable instrument. "He told Don before the performance that he had been sent from God to play this instrument during the performance. About an hour into the performance, you hear something that sounds like a human voice, but definitely isn't a human voice; that's the Man from God playing . . . I think it's a ram's horn of some sort." This particular random emanation was a novelty at best; surely concertgoers had better things to remember.

The stranger's presence is useful to us, though, for two reasons: One is to introduce the spirit of the 1970s, for those who weren't there. It's likely that the surprise guest at the Cherry concert of December 1, 1972, was the Moondog-like character affectionately known as "Recorder Wade"—or, less respectfully, as "Crazy Wade." Wade was ubiquitous in the early seventies. He showed up at

7 McPhee, interview.

8 John S. Wilson, "Jazz: 'Relativity Suite,'" *New York Times*, December 3, 1972, 85.

avant-garde jazz shows to make himself heard, usually joining on flute from the audience. That this mascot existed as a given part of free jazz culture in the Loft Era, and that he was accepted into the show is . . . well, remarkable, at least. The vignette also says something about the artistic stance of Don Cherry, whose output embodies what producer Tom "47" Greenwood once described to me as "Wide Open Music." If not outright welcomed, this walk-on figure could be folded seamlessly into Cherry's show—playing a solo that sounds not too far off, in terms of timbre, from Dewey Redman's signature projection on tenor. Ornette Coleman also attended the "Relativity Suite" concert—not joining in, but hearing his own style reflected in a remarkable alto solo that must have been played by Redman. Cherry's hut, again, was the place where all tribes converged.

The creative process leading to *Relativity Suite*, no matter whether you regard the live concert or the studio recording as the definitive version, had been gestating for some time. Let's peer into the plasma out of which it arose. The first stop is only a few days before the first session: for probably the first time in the United States, Don Cherry performed under the billing Organic Music Theater at a broadcast of the WBAI Free Music Store, apparently on November 24, 1972.[9] On this post–Thanksgiving Day weekend, the Aboriginal Music Society had cancelled a Free Music Store appearance at the last minute. Cherry was asked to fill in, and he reached out to some of the same players who would join him the following week for "Relativity Suite." Of all the music adjacent to the suite, this WBAI event was closest, content-wise, to what Cherry might offer in an ordinary concert. Guest vocalists (including some Cherry had met shortly before at a music class with Pandit Pran Nath) sang and read from stories collected by Sufi writer Idries Shah. The set began with a handful of pieces by Ibrahim, with on-the-fly instructions to direct new friends and initiates in the improvised flow. Audience members were given a standing invitation to sing along and join in the fun. And it *was* fun—for the whole family. This broadcast was young violist Janice "Jan" Cherry's performance debut alongside her father.

Don Cherry had been at Artists House for a late September weekend, performing with Ornette Coleman's quintet in a reunion of sorts. He would borrow every single member of that group,

9 The date of this event is sometimes recorded as November 25. While possible, this is unlikely, as Motian, for one, was on 10th Street until 7:20 p.m. that night at one of the sessions for his ECM leader debut, *Conception Vessel* (1973).

save Coleman, to be principal soloists for his December orchestra project. He returned there a month later to perform one weekend with Abdullah Ibrahim; Ed Blackwell was the only other common ingredient for both the Coleman and Ibrahim shows. Going into the *Relativity Suite* projects, Cherry had just finished an autumn's worth of performances in the US and Europe with Ibrahim, where he and Carlos Ward had skated on top of the underlying net of Ibrahim's piano. As the Free Music Store appearance attests, the pianist's pieces were as likely as Cherry's own to be performed at these concerts.

Organic Music Theatre

Organic Music Theatre was an open, full-senses experience cocreated by Don and Moki Cherry. With or without that brand name, Organic Music was the principle that Cherry applied to his own music around the world beginning in 1970–71. *Relativity Suite* was a tangible marker of this major new component of Don Cherry's artistry in the first years of the decade. Organic Music Theatre spurred that change. And when Cherry returned to the US to work on music for other composers, he also shared his findings from Organic Music Theatre's Scandinavian home base with US audiences.

Cherry pronounced this Organic Music Theatre manifesto on a contemporaneous record, saying on part one of "Relativity Suite" from *Organic Music Society* (Caprice Record, 1973):

> *We can be in tune with time;*
> *We can be a slave to time.*
> *Or we can be in total aspiration, trying to catch time.*
>
> *There must be a fourth way—to flow with time.*
> *This is the organic way; this is the way of the organic society—to flow with time.*

It was a G-rated, straightforward, and pure delivery, easy for children to digest and, indeed, at least partly intended for consumption by Cherry's own kids, his extended communal family, and Swedish elementary school music students. Children were involved in playing the music as well, and even when they weren't the piece was informed by Cherry's work with kids—the profound simplicity of their unison, the act of introducing an instrument in a show-and-tell way, with a story about it or the person from whom one learned

how to play it. For Cherry this meant referring, for instance, to Vasconcelos and the berimbau. Elsewhere, he magically juxtaposed easy-to-follow, universal melodies with thoroughly wide-open and undefined sections–allowing for a flare-up by Frank Lowe, or for his own scribbled solos–or allegorical children's tales, or spiritual manifestos, and so on.

McPhee extrapolates from what Cherry communicated to the 1972 orchestra:

> We carefully unteach children, but they have a very natural way of discovery and experimentation, and it comes without being judgmental. I think that's what happened with Don–sometimes by not saying anything, but just creating an environment that one felt comfortable in . . . he didn't say, "I don't think your solo works here." There were no limits except for my own awe of the group of people–Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden, Carla Bley, Ed Blackwell, Sharon Freeman–all of them; they're in that room. So warm and natural and inspiring. And certainly Don was the magnetic center of that; you could feel it. What did he call it? Organic Music Theatre? That's exactly what it was–that's probably the best description of the event, organically learning that music note by note as sung by Don, as directed by him, and as inspired by Moki.[10]

The full spectrum of Organic Music Theatre is best set forth in *Organic Music Society*, the two-LP collage of an album which wasn't yet released when Don arrived in New York for the *Relativity Suite* workshops (though he seems to have brought with him a tape containing rough draft of it.) That LP was itself a souvenir of the infinite richness of Don and Moki's international, intercultural, and interfaith communal activities in Scandinavia during those years. *Organic Music Society* was also the first place that any composition by Cherry got referred to as "Relativity Suite"–here, a track containing a reduction of a piece in two parts, sonically related to "Mali Doussn'gouni" from the JCOA record. *Organic Music Society* was also home to "Resa," renamed as "Trans-Love Airways" on *Relativity Suite*. The original title reflects the Indian solfeggio names for the second and first scale degrees, "re" and "sa," sung

10 McPhee, interview.

on those pitches. The later title was lifted from a lyric off a 1966 Donovan record.

Web of the World

In the 1960s and again in the 1980s, Don Cherry loved to work out recreationally at the piano, riffing on Thelonious Monk's and Ornette Coleman's tunes as well as other standards. As much as he favored that music, Cherry leaned away from the jazz norm of playing one song as a discrete package—with variations interpolated between statements of the theme. However elastic they were in character, Monk's and Coleman's compositions still used that prevailing model. Cherry's music, by contrast, tended toward the infinite. Perhaps this quality explains his attractiveness to twenty-first century audiences: swathes of sound overlap in the manner of modern electronic music. Melody manifests more often like a chant than via the cyclicality of jazz tunes. The segments are atmospheres or fields—perhaps defined by a groove, but not measured into verses or choruses. In compositions without structures to signal change or an ending, it's up to the conductor to direct those transitions manually.

Almost a decade before Relativity Suite, Cherry showed us his model for blended, continuous delivery of several pieces, welded in the moment into a single phantasmagorical flow. While the boundaries of transition from one to the next were tangible and clear, there would be no pause in the stream, no letup of musical energy. His long-form works—1965's *Togetherness* through *Relativity Suite*—were chains of individual ideas. This dynamic is audible in copious performance tapes and on records such as *Complete Communion* (Blue Note, 1966) and *Symphony for Improvisers* (Blue Note, 1967). The *Mu* duets with Blackwell (BYG Records, 1969–71) helped verify that the methodology could work for even the smallest group, on a long timescale.

Cherry's Organic-period music stresses the melodic simplicity of folk music. Turning Organic Music Theatre works into an orchestra piece meant adapting simple, often scalar lines—some of them profound and mesmerizing—into sectional work, mostly in unison, for large groups. Almost every time he makes instruments move together, they play in unison. Harmony surfaces in the workings of the harmonium or the harmonica—designed for fixed, basic intervals. There is usually very little harmonic change, and certainly none of the tricky sequences of jazz's middle period. If Cherry had

Moki Cherry seated with tanpura in the Eisner and Lubin Auditorium,
Loeb Student Center, New York University, November 1972.

"Relativity Suite" rehearsals at the Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center, New York University, November 27–30, 1972.

ever had a proclivity to write tunes that cycle harmonically, it was in the earlier years of "Cherryco" (one of the oldest Cherry melodies, first recorded in 1960), or in the later years of *Art Deco* (A&M Records, 1989). Not here.

The systems of Indian classical music were closest to Cherry's praxis at the time of *Relativity Suite*. On the recording, we hear their influence at the surface level of instrumentation (sarangi, tanpura, tabla) and on the level of form: Indian rhythmic solfèges and ragas, and chants from Hindu spiritual practice. Cherry's experience in Western Asian and South Asian musical traditions also led to a clear sense of how structured improvisations unfold in ragas and maqamat, which feature opening, exploratory movements that establish pitches for the piece, and lead sections that introduce its rhythmic cycles. He often introduces the harmonic, melodic, and rhythm elements separately, and gradually builds an underlying web of sound that puts the soloist in a position to move, like a spider, freely around this webbing.

Attendees of the December 1972 sessions who had been keeping up with Cherry's music may already have had his latest record, *Eternal Rhythm* (MSP, 1969), which was four years old when released in the US earlier in the year. That record celebrates the communal chaos of free jazz, where the underlying "web" is most often still propelled by the rhythm sections; even some of the greatest miracles of the *Organic Music* LP come from Okay Temiz being at once bodacious and supportive—as he is on "Bra Joe from Kilimanjaro." In the *Relativity Suite* record, we don't really hear those jazz elements as the underpinning. The web is a basic layer, more or less constant or repetitive, sometimes planar and sometimes patterned, mostly in odd-metered rhythmic cycles: piano ostinato, tabla, tanpura drone.

Or the donso ngoni, a six-stringed lute whose name is usually translated as "hunter's harp," and different from the smaller, simpler, guitar-like djeli ngoni. Here, we come to a conceptual linchpin for Don Cherry's music across this whole period. The donso ngoni makes a sound that Cherry wanted to have in his music—probably even before he knew about the instrument—and he made that sound even when the donso ngoni wasn't around. Something about it resonated with Cherry.

The instrument is set up to play a sort of endless, rolling arpeggio, defining an underlying harmonic fabric. When he handles it the gourd resonator is in front of him, its neck out to the right, with both hands plucking the open strings. Hearing the donso ngoni, Cherry seems to have found the instrumental voice of a gesture he had started making long before: the most surprising piece on

his 1961 leader debut on the still-unreleased trio session is listed in the ledgers of Atlantic Records as "Black Elk Speaks." Its vamp introduces us to Cherry's version of the sound of wide-open spaces. Henry Grimes toggles a one-chord ostinato throughout the piece, a skeletal version of what would become Cherry's preferred platform for delivering his music for years to come. Undoubtedly Cherry's web was also inspired by Abdullah Ibrahim's signature sustain pedal matrix of sound.

In Cherry's work from 1972 onward, the donso ngoni is his favorite second instrument. His path to it is a little circuitous. Woven into his fluid socio-musical scene in Scandinavia were multi-instrumentalists Naná Vasconcelos and Christer Bothén. Don was fascinated with the string devices they used and soon took up their instruments, beginning with the Brazilian berimbau, of which Vasconcelos was a master, and eventually adopting the ngoni. Bothén, who plays the instrument on *Organic Music Society*, had studied it in Mali and is the key witness to Cherry's adoption of it.[11] Subsequently, Cherry named the second piece on *Relativity Suite* after the donso ngoni, though the instrument appears on neither the track nor the record. On Cherry's most visible project of the seventies, *Brown Rice* (EMI, 1975), the name comes up again; this time Don whispers the words ethereally through a reverb unit—once again without playing it. Cherry was, however, playing the instrument by the time of his 1975 stand at the Five Spot in New York, when he introduced it to his bass man William Parker. Parker, too, was transfixed by the its sound and still plays it forty-five years later.

Some other Malian instruments classified as ngoni have more room for virtuosity—many more strings, which you capitalize on by using both hands at all times. They, too, can accompany singing, but these ngoni are more likely to be the whole show themselves. The donso ngoni lies in the sweet spot, being an excellent accompanying instrument that's portable, for use by mobile hunting people. It was naturally taken up by Don Cherry, the international griot. As he roamed the world, Cherry was constantly throwing flares of music, kindling melodies in any environment, and accepting music-making invitations from all quarters. He moved freely about the globe and deposited modest musical seeds that are still being discovering in far-flung and surprising conjunctions with people such as Tiny Grimes, Lou Reed, Tullio De Piscopo, the Watts Prophets, and

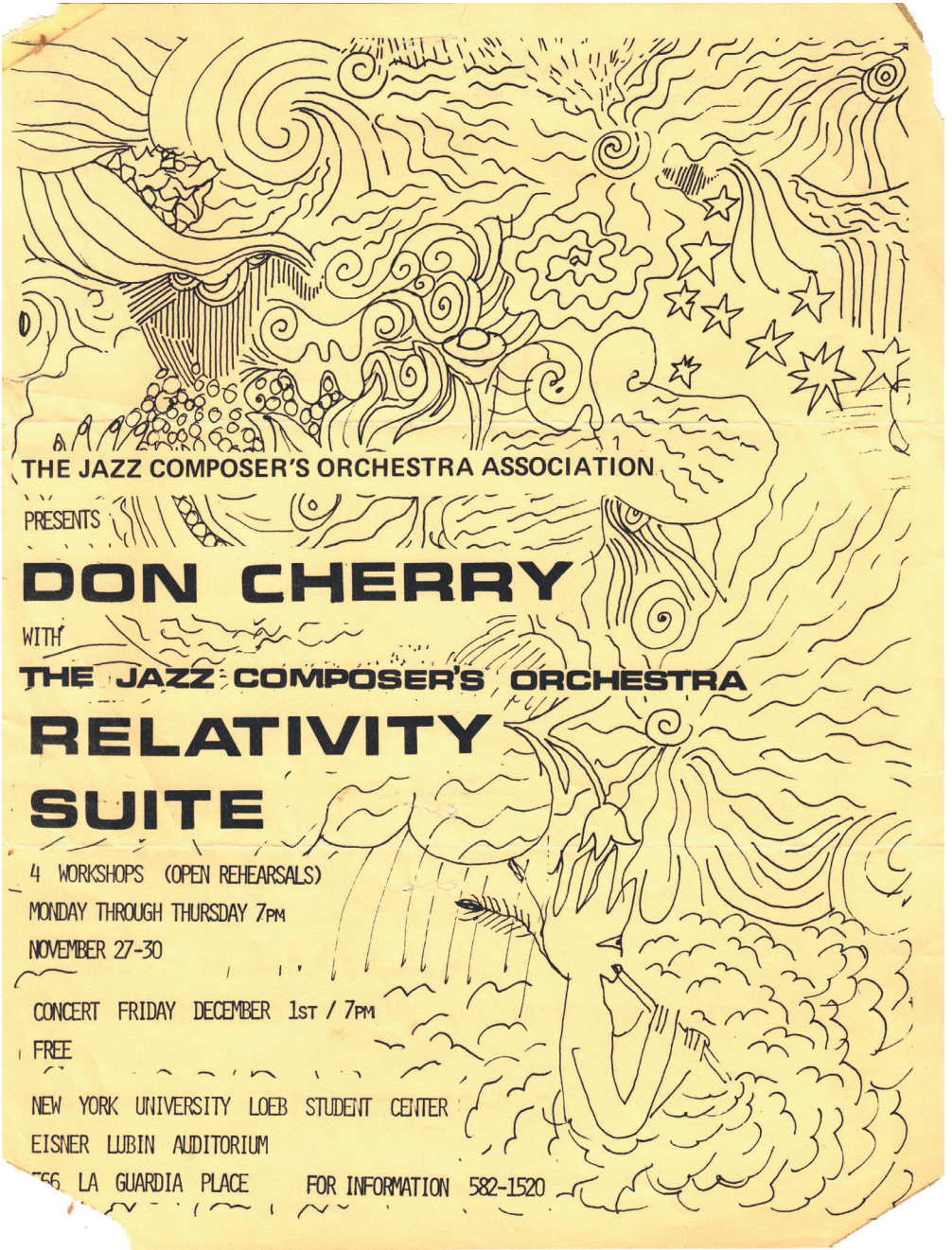
11 See the two essays by Christer Bothén in this volume: "Fragments on Bamako, Gothenburg, Marrakesh, and New York," 351–70, and "Reflections on Don Cherry," 373–88.

Brion Gysin. One of Cherry's associates recently reviewed answering machine tapes from the 1980s to find several messages Don had left them from the field. Cherry used the machine as a notepad to record sparks of melody as they came to him. He was a griot on the go, with a story to tell.

Somewhere along the way, Don Cherry spoke and embodied this maxim: If you're a musician, you should be able to make music right where you are, using whatever you've got on hand. Cherry's example of hand-held, analog, low-fidelity tools opposes the seventies' world of sound reinforcement, the push to make concerts as electronic and deliberate as a studio session might be. As jazz-rock "fusion" became more pompous and technologically overcooked, Cherry's real innovation was in streamlining and simplifying. Jazz musicians had a leg up on this principle from the beginning, with a mobile, transitory music that didn't require much infrastructure or postproduction to reach perfection. Following Coltrane, it was commonplace for jazz musicians to carry a small, blow-able something on their hip. Cherry's flutes had been the thing in the sixties, as Frank Zappa knew from having Cherry as a guest soloist. The donso ngoni played this role later, beginning with the period of *Relativity Suite* and continuing to the end of his life.

Allegorically speaking, Cherry was a troubadour, carrying everything he needed on his back. By contrast, the JCOA was a kingdom built around a castle, a self-sufficient, sturdy edifice that could briefly welcome a traveler from afar, such as himself. Hunter-gatherer versus agrarian; or, for Simone de Beauvoir, immanent versus transcendent. This dichotomy isn't perfect, but it can be useful for our consideration. We're close to running out of the free radicals of avant-garde jazz in the vein of Don Cherry—individuals who drift from one domain into another, who fruitfully splice their wisdom into the thatch of so many other designers' frameworks. Cherry was early on this scene, Perry Robinson and Roswell Rudd had some of this same quality, and veteran multi-instrumentalist Daniel Carter is one few survivors living out this vocation. (Interestingly, in an earlier life, using a different variant of his name, Carter was an auteur, composer, and leader—he even wrote a piece for the JCO in 1973. He came to realize that wasn't his thing and now eschews that past self altogether, and he's kept moving ever since.)

There is a quality to Don Cherry's entire being and musicality that, at least implicitly, warns us against the impulse to "write it down," and might contradict the notion of assembling a standing Orchestra, or a corporation, around the music—or writing an article



 Poster by Moki Cherry for "Relativity Suite" rehearsals and concert, 1972.

and editing a journal about it. It's for the rest of us to put up plaques saying *Don Cherry created a masterpiece here*; Cherry's objective was to flow. His accomplishments were *scrivo in vento*—written on the winds in which he put his full faith, to propel him along and keep good things coming his way.

To Make a Record

The JCO convened once in Soho for a four-hour rehearsal on the afternoon of February 13, 1973, and then recorded this material for JCOA 1006, Cherry's *Relativity Suite*, just up the street at Blue Rock Studio the following day, Valentine's Day. Paul Motian initially reported the recording session's parameters in his notes as "7:30 p.m. until never," then updated the ledger to show that they finished at 3 a.m. The masters were mixed on March 8. Funded by the New York State Council on the Arts, the JCOA was about to begin a flurry of activity—a spring season of open workshops with input from Karl Berger, Daniel "Danny" Carter, David Izenzon, Gunter Hampel, Frederic Rzewski, and others.

Don went up the road to New Hampshire for a March 5, 1973, appearance at Dartmouth College, where he had been a teacher and artist-in-residence three years earlier. The occasion for one of his next returns from Europe was a performance that summer at the second Newport in New York concert series. Contrary to best-laid plans, the *Relativity Suite* album was still at the plant, and was not on sale until until summer's end. An announcement in *Billboard*'s September issue recommended "Desireless" as the pick track—surely the most digestible to general listeners (and the shortest). At Newport in New York, Cherry's Organic Music Theatre would present "Relativity Suite" with personnel including Christer Bothén, representing the essential, skeletal elements of the orchestra rendition—in Central Park, no less. After Moki's journey to the US in the fall, Don's return to the States incorporated another key collaborator from his European experience.

The trail of Cherry's recorded activity gets more difficult to track shortly after this Central Park performance: only a couple of shards mark his 1974 year. By the time we catch up with him again a couple of years later, he has crossed a continental divide that began with *Brown Rice*, sloped into the groups Codona and Old and New Dreams, and resulted in new sets of friends from all over. We can look forward to Magnus Nygren's comprehensive

biographical writing on Cherry to sort out what went down in the gap. Meanwhile, we marvel anew at the *Relativity Suite*.

Special thanks to Carla Bley, Jim Eigo, Verna Gillis, Karen Mantler, Raphael McAden, Cindy McGuirl / Paul Motian Archives, Joe McPhee, Judy Rhodes, Phil Schaap, Steve Tintweiss, and Thierry Trombert.

"Relativity Suite" performance at the Loeb Student Center, New York University, December 1, 1972.

Above: Don Cherry (*piano*), Moki Cherry (*tanpura*), Paul Motian (*drums*), Eagle-Eye Cherry (*seated at center*), Charlie Haden (*bass*), Jane Robertson (*cello*), Leroy Jenkins (*violin*).

Below: Don Cherry (*seated next to piano on left*), Eagle-Eye Cherry (*seated on left*), Paul Motian (*drums*), Jane Robertson (*cello*), unidentified violinist, Leroy Jenkins (*violin*).

Don Cherry and Neneh Cherry with unidentified person on tour in Italy, ca. 1975–76.

ORIKI FOR DON CHERRY; TO BE PART OF A GATHERING-WORK

Fumi Okiji

Don Cherry, sitting with a *kesing kesing*–topped donso ngoni between legs, is explaining the spatiotemporal confluence his body-space affords.[1] He strums a minor seventh interval, a chugging ostinato, passed to him by a fellow player of this West African instrument. He marvels at how familiar the tune had seemed to him. How it had sent him, and now sends us, to other times, places, and bodies, creating a scat of African, black, blues, calabash, trains, racket, and rattle. Blues people and African folk are (en)twinned *after* the fact of their noted separation. Our travels are facilitated by both modern imposition *and* anamnestic dream and vision–a condition of having to be on both sides of the Atlantic *and* of a distinct African episteme. "When he played this rhythm it was so familiar to me because I could relate it to all the blues players that I heard like T-Bone Walker, B. B. King, John Lee Hooker. It's like the sound of the railroad train. *Nwaa waa! Oh, the railroad train / Goin a clicky-clacky, clicky-clacky, down the line*."[2] Cherry, playing the shunting, two-note figure on the sub-Saharan harp of hunters and storytellers while evoking the spirit of the blues, tests principles of nonlocality for the "aesthetic sociality of blackness."[3]

1 Body (*Leib*)-space does not refer to Cherry's personal body, but rather the "intersection between [his] individual life and [a] historical process," a provisional perspective, subject to change, sketched by his playing the blues on a West African harp. The notion of body-space refers to an intimacy the "fulfilment" of which is the "annihilation" or "the 'downfall' of the self-sufficient individual." Yet, we should not think of this breakdown of the sovereign individual as the triumph of "collective identity." Rather, "it is a collective–a totality–that emerges from the progressive disintegration of identity . . . it is a movement that disrupts structures and challenges hierarchies" (Barbisan, 5). See Walter Benjamin's essay on the second manifesto of the Surrealists: "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019). For an excellent primer on how concepts of the body develop in Benjamin's work, see Léa Barbisan, "Eccentric Bodies: From Phenomenology to Marxism – Walter Benjamin's Reflections on Embodiment," in "Discontinuous Infinities: Walter Benjamin and Philosophy," special issue, *Anthropology and Materialism* I (2017): https://doi.org/10.4000/am.803.

2 *Det Är Inte Min Musik* (*It Is Not My Music*), directed by Urban Lasson (1978; Stockholm: Sveriges Radio 1), 16 mm, 58 min.

3 Alongside giving praise to Don Cherry, this essay can be read as an explication of a conceptual marriage between Laura Harris's notion of the "aesthetic sociality of blackness" (formulated by way of a consideration of the figure of the "motley crew," a "collaborative insurgence," a "revolutionary subject," in the words of Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker) and Denise Ferreira da Silva on difference without separability (a repudiation of universality, historicity and determinacy, these foundational tenets of modern German thought). See Laura Harris, *Experiments in Exile: C.L.R. James, Hélio Oiticica, and the Aesthetic Sociality of Blackness* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), and Denise Ferreira Da Silva, "On Difference without Separability," in *32nd De São Paulo Art Biennial: Incerteza Viva: Catalogue* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2016).

Laura Harris speaks of blackness as that which "manifests itself in what is perceived as . . . unruly creativity and disorderly sociality," in constitutive distinction to the modern subject and to this subject's "commitment to the idea of its own freedom as self-determination, as the self-conscious exercise of pure individual will, secured by self-possession." A subject that "must at all costs defend itself . . . however violent its defensive maneuvers may be."[4] It is important to draw to the surface that Hegel's infamous denial of the capacity of Africans to realize human freedom was a rejection not only of bodies and climate/land but, perhaps more essentially, of an African way with space and time.[5] And that way—so contemptible that it failed to qualify as even an underdog of universal history, and failed to register even as an unsatisfactory moment to be sublated by the dialectic—is one of equivocality. It rests on an inability or refusal to make an exception of oneself in relation to the earth and everything in it, and is closely related to an inability or refusal to accept self-preservation as sovereign instinct.[6] It is a way with time that courts unruliness in order to preserve non-ultimacy; it mounts blackness as the lawlessness of the imagination, and blackness as "dispossessive force," as manifest so vividly in Cherry with ngoni.[7] It is the nonidentical, nonlocal sociality of the inseparable that is being shared.

4 Harris, *Experiments in Exile*, 11.

5 On this, James A. Snead's "On Repetition in Black Culture" is required reading, although going directly to the source (the record of and notes from Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history, and on spirit) helps nip any incredulity in the bud. For Hegel, Africa is an "unhistorical" region where inhabitants have "not progressed beyond merely sensuous existence, and [have] found it absolutely impossible to develop any further" (*Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H. B. Nesbitt [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 172). Indeed, "the mind of the natives remains closed, feels no urge to freedom and endures without resistance universal slavery" (*Philosophy of Mind*, trans. Michael Inwood [Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2007], 45). The European comes up against a "character . . . difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle which naturally accompanies all our ideas—the category of Universality" (*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree [London: George Bell, 1894], 97).

6 In this I echo the insights of Denise Ferreira da Silva, Laura Harris, and others, including Stefano Harney and Fred Moten. See, for instance, Harney and Moten's "Improvement and Preservation: Or, Usufruct and Use," in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, eds. Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin (New York: Verso, 2017), 83–91.

7 Fred Moten, "Knowledge of Freedom," in *CR: The New Centennial Review* 4, no. 2 (2004): 269–310; Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1.

Olabiyi Babalola Yai's exposition of the Yoruba concept *ìtàn* complicates the conventional understanding of Africa as a discrete, frozen, bounded cradle of humanity and, distinctly, as an inaccessible, impossible origin of the black. The definition of the term is often reduced in translation to "history," robbing *ìtàn* of its spatial register, the expressive tools on which it relies, and its broad application as a sort of epistemological comportment. It is an order of oral or folk practice, and also a more fundamental propensity "to spread, reach, to open up" temporally and geographically.[8] It's a way with time and the earth, a way to (a) world, that invariably has something poetic about it. Cherry's blues on ngoni helps highlight that *ìtàn,* when understood as a near-synonym to diaspora, as we find in Yai, is both extension *and* coincidence, geographical and temporal shuttle *and* mounting. The intimacy that Cherry points to paradoxically makes clear the distinction between diaspora as "lamented" brutal imposition and diaspora as an African epistemological preferential, even as *imposition* and *preferential* manifest as scrambled refrains in black art.

To speak of this music is to speak for it, and that really means to speak as part of it. Not to identify with it but to join its ensemble. To become a part of its gathering-work. Perhaps the only preparation required to participate in such a gathering is to reach beyond the unease of presuming oneself part of its "anagrammatic" experiments.[9] Peter Szendy takes us part way there with his exposition of the critical yet collaborative nature of musical arrangement: the "transformation of a text to make possible its performance for another category of instruments than those for which it had been written."[10] Focusing on various figures from the Romantic era, including Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt, who produced adaptations of symphonies for piano, Szendy writes of the voyeuristic pleasure he has in listening to the fruits of this métier. He "love[s] them more than all the others," these musicians who retell a work, who rearrange it, in order that it be accessible to an outsider instrument or an anachronistic audience.[11]

8 Olabiyi Babalola Yai, "In Praise of Metonymy: The Concepts of 'Tradition' and 'Creativity' in the Transmission of Yoruba Artistry over Time and Space," in *Research in African Literatures* 24, no. 4 (1993): 30.

9 Borrowed from Nathaniel Mackey's "Alphabet of Ahtt," in *School of Udhra* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1993), 43–44.

10 Peter Szendy, *Listen: A History of our Ears* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 35.

11 Szendy, *Listen*, 35.

The breach of authorship that arranging demands questions the stability of the "original," placing in doubt the priority that intention and meaning assume over "letter," and suggests that the work's fullness (whether we understand this as its Idea, its underlying intention, or as the abundance discoverable in its material or that emerges from the turns of its form), can only be approached by a diasporic movement that disperses authorial responsibility among all its tellers—including these auxiliaries whose enquiring contributions, credited or not, allow the work to become more itself. To "interpret music means: to make music," says Theodor Adorno, and while he is speaking of musical performance rather than of its commentary, this passing comment that, I must confess, fails to represent the complexity of Adorno's thoughts on the affinity between music and language, opens to some potential insight into the atonal, paratactical kinetics of some of his own writing.[12] And it helps explain the lapses in convention occurring here. The expert "transducers" that Szendy so admires are perhaps of a much broader church than first thought. The "plastic play of several players," disparate, often temporally dispersed players, includes those who specialize in translations that jump medium (from the musical to the literary, for instance). They contribute to the gathering—a mismatched ensemble, but one in which members unite in utmost dedication to their "listening instruments," their first and common sonic implement.[13]

I mention above that Szendy takes us only some of the way to appreciating the claim made at the start of this section: "To speak of this music is to speak for it, and that really means to speak as part of it. Not to identify with it but to join its ensemble." He doesn't collapse the distinction made between original and translation so much as he points out their common insufficiency and fragmentation. He wants us to appreciate how translations call attention to these qualities, and to the desire for companionship this partialness betrays—the "great longing for . . . complementation" in the original work. The "active, critical listening" that he hears in arrangements is also a *speaking alongside* that which has been listened to. Black expression at first glance appears replete with examples of such practice. Consider: Moten telling of his preparation for playing with

12 Theodor Adorno, "Music and Language: A Fragment," in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music* (London: Verso, 1998), 3.

13 Szendy, *Listen*, 68.

Cecil Taylor;[14] Mackey's serial epistolary novel *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* (1986–ongoing)*;* the doubling performed by bass player William Parker's multiform literary work; Zora Neale Hurston's refusal and/or failure to maintain her ethnographic authority; and Yai's understanding of the "critic" or, rather, *gbenugbenu* (literally, "one who carves with one's mouth") as "by necessity" an artist (*gbenagbena*). Yet despite apparent resemblance these practitioners of the black radical tradition hold a fundamental distinction in relation to Szendy's musical translators. The contributions do not challenge the autonomy of some original, thereby highlighting the latter's desire for complementarity. These black collaborators each, in distinct ways, challenge the very necessity and the priority of an original, and so, translation–adaptation, arrangement, interpretation, and indeed the specific provocation it carries out–does not capture the incendiary character of Africanness/blackness, even though the resemblance is striking. The dispersal that translation gestures toward (its critical moment) belongs to black work's unity-constitution; the black work is a gathering that is also, always, a dispersal.[15]

We need to take black expression's irrevocable folk-orientation seriously. While not precluded, the notion of the hermetic, original work of (mostly) single authorship–a manifestation of what Adorno refers to as high-bourgeois "sovereign freedom"–is not essential to this episteme.[16] I am forever disappointed by my own surprise with the literature when it turns out, once again, that the *differentia specifica* ascribed to Africa by the general social field is merely an undesirable feature of that field itself–a feature it seeks to suppress.

14 See Fred Moten, "Sound in Florescence: Cecil Taylor *Floating Garden*," in *Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies*, ed. Adalaide Morris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 213; and Charles Henry Rowell, "'Words Don't Go There': An Interview with Fred Moten," *Callaloo* 27, no. 4 (Autumn 2004): 956.

15 In fact, one could read musical translation explicated by Szendy as a case of the modern European tradition attempting to return to its folk, an attempt to find a way to circumvent the seemingly intractable authority of the sovereign composer. Translation is the irrepressible communion of expression as such, busting through the seams of the straightjacket of self-sufficiency. See Andrew Kania's "All Play and No Work: An Ontology of Jazz," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 4 (2011): 391–403; and my own *Jazz as Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), if you are unconvinced by this idiosyncrasy. In distinction to that of the modern European, I understand the tradition as not populated by works, in the main. Kania tells us that jazz is "all play." I agree, at times calling this play "work."

16 Theodor Adorno, *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964–1965* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2006), 24.

From the perspective of modern European music, oral or folkloric music appears to be governed by top-down forms, reinforced by innumerable meager translations, mere dialect slants on immutable "always and forever" monuments, mediums in endless deference to a higher authority at the expense of freedom of expression. In challenging this restrictive description, there is no need to deny a place in black music for apprenticeship in shared forms (those hand-me-down "songs and games.")[17] In fact, it could be argued that even free-form black music is always engaged in some mobile squat of expressive significance that approaches the cross-generational sociality so readily recognized in the jazz and blues standards. The music that is most experimental does not shun tradition or deny its fundamental trans-individuation. What the European perspective most often fails to grasp is that blackness and sovereignty (to which so much of the former's energy is directed and which much of its artistic expression valorizes) repel each other. The musical discourse of the black folkic is not driven by a higher, prior, more originary authority, under (and toward) which musicians labor. It is not that the African/black is yet to become aware of an inherent freedom, sovereignty awaiting release by a coming to self-consciousness.[18] Rather, any comparable African/black notion is always already subject to dispersal. Actually, this is not strong enough (not to mention liable to be confused with the supposed prize or anticipatory achievement of liberal democracy). In the African/black case, anything that might approach what is understood as sovereignty would be *founded in dispersal* (not in the uncontested province of a supreme being, divine or secular, nor its permutation in the stories that liberal democracies tell about themselves).

Yai writes:

> The ideal artist [*gbenagbena*] in Yoruba tradition is an *are*. Lagbayi, the paradigmatic Yoruba sculptor, lived as an *are*.[19] No etymology of the word has been attempted, but the plausible one would derive it from the verb *re*, which means to depart. *Ares* are itinerant individuals,

17 Theodor Adorno, "On the Social Situation of Music," in *Essays on Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 427.

18 Here I have in mind Hegel's prerequisites for inclusion in universal history. See footnote 5.

19 Olabiyi Babalola Yai, "Tradition and the Yoruba Artist," in *African Arts* 32, 1 (1999): 35. Lagbayi is a "historical/mythical figure" whose oriki includes the line "Oko san mi ju ilé lo" ("I am better off on the farm than in the hometown").

> wanderers, permanent strangers precisely because they can be permanent nowhere. They always seek to depart from current states of affairs.[20]

Always of "imminent departure" and "post-expectant" arrival, to borrow from Nathaniel Mackey. "Dwelling in mobility," as I have written elsewhere.[21] Cherry is of the black and African *ghenagbenas* who stay put awhile to seduce and lead astray. Among them are those who choose to lead artistic lives, those called to a mystic's vocation, and those who, finding themselves in bowels of ships, have no choice but to make home in transit.

In contradistinction to the sublating stockpile of the dialectical movement that innervates the tradition to which Szendy's arrangers belong, black forms' proprioceptivity is kinked by a diasporic disposition. This diasporic preferential must be understood as preceding European imposition and the enforced and responsive movement this sparked. For instance, Yai tells us that "the Yoruba have always conceived of their history as diaspora." Their scattered gathering deportment "is neither necessity or lamented accident . . . but the normal order of things historical."[22] The motivation of this particular form of worlding is a relation to the earth and its inhabitants that refuses to make an absolute exception of itself, that refuses to be absolute master of nature, despite its awesome threat and the fear it inspires. It calls for comportment that cultivates uncertainty and equivocality, that is devoted to a manner that "favor[s] circuitousness," a way with the musical material that is better understood as polyglottic than translated.[23] Black music does not need an original, and its participants across various media provide no translation—instead they cultivate "plastic [diasporic] play" toward a defining commitment to equivocality, to help loosen the grip and dampen the irresistible attraction of self-preservationist control.[24]

To speak as part of the gathering-work is not only to place oneself in a crew. It is also to cultivate the manners of address appropriate to such a site of expressive energy. The gathering work

20 Yai, "Tradition," 35.

21 Nathaniel Mackey, *Splay Anthem* (New York: New Directions, 2006), 5; Nathaniel Mackey, *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* (New York: New Directions, 2010); Okiji, *Jazz as Critique*, 51.

22 Yai, "Tradition," 30.

23 Adélékè Adéẹ̀kọ́, *Arts of Being Yorùbá: Divination, Allegory, Tragedy, Proverb, Panegyric* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 32.

24 Szendy, *Listen*, 68.

wants your body (which needs to be understood in its materiality–resonating chambers, ear drums, kinesics apparatuses), but it *requires* a body-space, a makeshift vector/host, a point of contact for the elusive, plastic gathering/dispersal. To speak as part of the work is not to listen to Szendy's arrangers or to Adorno's interpreters, but to become a "transducer," not for any original work but for the sociality constituted by constellations of response to a call we hear after the fact, if at all. Don Cherry tells us: "It's actually not my music because it's a combination of different experiences, different cultures, and different composers that involves the music that we play together, or that I'm playing when I'm playing alone."[25] Playing together or alone; playing alone, together. Urban Lasson's 1978 documentary *Det Är Inte Min Musik* (It Is Not My Music) begins with Cherry crouched in the Swedish countryside cupping a whistle to his mouth, his phonographic instrument pricked and tuning, so that he might get with whatever it is the birds' descant gestures toward.[26] This gathering-work, the first of many shared in the film, helps to establish the notion as capacious enough to take in "non-human species as well as the inorganic elements of technology."[27] It also draws attention to the precarity of the congregation; the refusal or inability to install immutable "central command" compounds this.

As I have spoken of elsewhere in relation to pianist Cecil Taylor's own unfurl/enfold practice, with particular reference to Taylor's play with the branch outside his apartment window, it would be a mistake to consider Cherry's play as limited to mimicry. This gathering might more interestingly and more essentially be understood as a sort of Benjaminian mimesis.[28] Yes, the practice

25 Cherry in Lasson, *It Is Not My Music*.

26 This practice with bird call is not unusual in the black experimental tradition. Eric Dolphy in beautiful conversation with John Coltrane for *DownBeat*, April 12, 1962: "At home [in California] I used to play, and the birds always used to whistle with me. I would stop what I was working on and play with the birds." See also footage of Roland Kirk, child on his shoulders as he plays with animals in a zoo, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF5yN4_mkNs.

27 Barbisan, "Eccentric Bodies," 5.

28 In "Doctrine of the Similar," Benjamin writes about the loss of the talent our distant ancestors had (a talent that children still do have) for "perceiving countless similarities." Some of these similarities occur in the commonplace realm, between things that can be empirically sensed (seen, heard, smelled, tasted, felt), while other "magical correspondences" require an interruption of the senses or, perhaps more accurately, occur independently of the senses (even as our sensuous play provides the opportunities for these seemingly mythic moments). Walter Benjamin, "Doctrine of the Similar (1933)," in *New German Critique* 17 (1979): 65–69.

Three stills from Urban Lassons's *Det Är Inte Min Music* (It Is Not My Music), 1978, 16 mm, color, sound, 58 minutes.

can at a certain register be understood as a training of tone and phrase, but it is also a practice of corresponding with that which exceeds the senses. It might be understood as a practice toward nonsensuous correspondence, or more accurately, a practice that confounds material and senses, toward what Cherry understands as "brilliance" or "being in tune," and what William Parker terms "the center of the sound."[29] It is related to the void that Moten hears "about two and a half minutes into 'Mutron,'" a 1982 duet Cherry recorded with Ed Blackwell.[30] Cherry's sensuous wanting to get with the birds, his making himself of that scene, providing the body-space for a gathering to which we too are called, is also a wanting to get with whatever it is the *vox mundi*, the choir of questionable tuning, is straining toward.

Cherry exemplifies a way with time and earth committed to equivocality. It is a worlding driven by an inability or refusal to make an absolute exception of himself in relation to the earth and all that is in it. A way with time that cultivates a stammer in order to preserve non-ultimacy, an inability or refusal to accept self-preservation as sovereign instinct. Cherry the world traveler, itinerant wanderer (black and African), for whom—to borrow a fitting sentiment from Coltrane—"the whole face of the globe is community," travels light.[31] He tells us, "It's actually not my music."[32] And demonstrates through his practice that "all that we have (and are) is what we hold in our outstretched hands," to borrow from Moten.[33] And to be sure, it is our diasporic disposition that we have to offer, our dispersal and gathering, what we are, and all that we have. We arrive empty-handed, with no property or legacy, no interest to draw on, no gifts to present. We arrive in counter-Odyssean empty-handedness, calling for and offering no sacrifice.

Watch Cherry playing his *kesing kesing*–topped donso ngoni on a busy New York City street. He provides the body-space for a happening that draws passersby, in cars and on foot, into its orbit. The driver of a brown estate—sitting in or holding up traffic, children

29 Eyal Hareuveni, "William Parker: Everything is Valid," *All About Jazz*, March 7, 2005, https://www.allaboutjazz.com/william-parker-everything-is-valid-william-parker-by-eyal-hareuveni.php.

30 Fred Moten, "The Subprime and the Beautiful," in *African Identities* 11, 2 (2013): 238.

31 Leonard Brown, ed., *John Coltrane and Black America's Quest for Freedom: Spirituality and the Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17.

32 Cherry in Lasson, *It Is Not My Music*.

33 Moten, "The Subprime and the Beautiful," 238.

hanging out of the back seat window–intermittently doubles up Cherry's vocals. For how long? Ten seconds? Half a minute? I am struck by the immediacy, the acute nature of the intimacy hit upon by the passing section. Their deep dive into the portal opened up an anamnestic communion, like an involuntary memory of the feel and taste of pressing lips that could not have possibly met theirs. In this life. Nor this world. These participants move out of view, but their song plays on. This brief encounter, its impossible kiss, no doubt played on in their imaginations, and it repeats on us, too. This diffused gathering is not confined to the live fragment captured by video. And I would argue that the thoughts being written here have become part of the lingering, fugacious happening that Cherry's ngoni-extended body-space sets in motion. I would like to think he would insist on my participation, and so I try not to resist the song that breaks out here and there. His practice pulls mine into orbit, and I prepare to catch whatever the happening is spreading.

The happening makes us ("I&I") temporarily (again), but it is not a gathering-work of agreement. It deals also in "qualm and qualification," in "caressive abuse *and* kisses."[34] Cherry's mood doesn't fuse. The attitude of spread and reach cannot anticipate agreement or identity. We might embrace each other now, but there are no holding patterns. Our world, and the communal series it inspires, must be incompleted by the uncertainty; it must bank on the unreliability of our brilliance. Ours is a thrown-together, ill-thought-out reply to an awaited call, the "rub and cyclone . . . eye," of a sound that we could not possibly have heard in advance.[35] It is a practice of delay effect (echo, chorus, reverb, tremolo, flange, feedback) that scatters and scrambles us, until we find our tuning, until we fall, momentarily, unfathomably into mu–that portal through which we might become everything again. The "momentary utterance" of complete communion that facilitates our sensuous, material, bodily speaking with one another; our aesthetic social non-identity without-separation (to cut Denise Ferreira da Silva with Laura Harris one more time). Whether in conference with birds or hosting "different experiences . . . cultures . . . and composers," the gathering holds open these differences (so, no fusion but a superimposition of instance and everything), committed to a breach

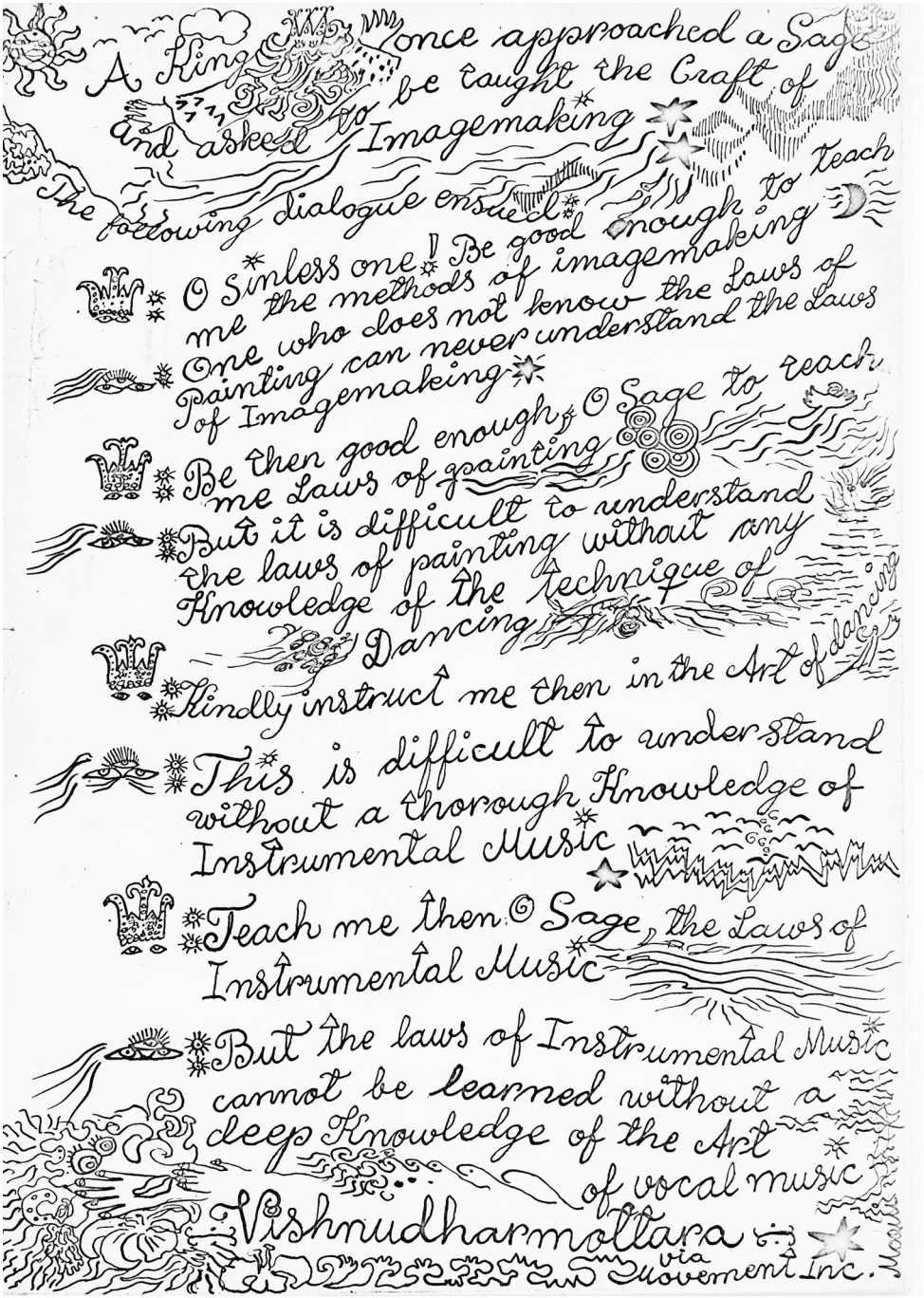
34 Nathaniel Mackey, "Sight-Specific, Sound-Specific," in *Paracritical Hinge: Essays, Talks, Notes* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2004), 234; Fred Moten, *All That Beauty* (Seattle: Letter Machine Editions, 2019), 76, emphasis added.

35 Moten, *All That Beauty*, 76.

of discursive security.[36] A gathering that precedes, exceeds, and questions societal bonds is our aesthetic sociality. Societal breach by way of (under)common *òrò,* our always-imperfect repetition, our stammered folkic comportment, speaking (alone) together on all manner of things, in answer to a brilliant question that is always yet to come.[37]

36 Cherry in Lasson, *It Is Not My Music.*

37 Òrò is literally translated as "speech," "communication," or "word." However, in its more comprehensive rendering it includes a "matter at hand" or a "case being dealt with." It can refer to a situation that calls for communal consideration, an occasion for sustained reflection, a chance to hold each other in conversation. It helps us consider what orality might mean beyond a handing down of information from elder to student.



Moki Cherry, *Vishnudharmollara*, ca. late 1960s.

TÅGARP PUBLICATION NUMBER ONE

eds. Keith Knox and Rita Knox

This journal was compiled in the fall of 1971 by physicist and jazz critic Keith Knox and chemist and photographer Rita Knox, a British couple who were friends of the Cherrys, while Keith lived at the schoolhouse in Tågarp. This first and only issue of their planned publication offers a window into the multidisciplinary, internationalist, and utopian impulses converging in the milieu around Don and Moki. Much about this document, including the number of copies printed and whether it was distributed, remains unknown; there were perhaps only a few dozen, intended for the local community. A version was supplied to us by Steve Roney, the founder of the Bombay Free School (intended as a transnational pedagogical project, the School served as vehicle for his various curatorial activities) and the subject of an interview in the publication, who uncovered it in his personal archive.

The journal also includes an essay by Swedish Fluxus associate Bengt af Klintberg, profiles of Babs Gonzales, an American jazz musician, and Pandit Pran Nath, Don's Indian classical music instructor, and an interview with American composer Terry Riley, whose music Don was teaching and performing. The reproduction here replicates the formatting of the original, with the addition of a drawing by Moki, which was originally intended to appear on the cover. It has been lightly edited for clarity of meaning and consistency of style.

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1 Attributed here to Michael J. Lindfield, this text was written by Alice Bailey and appeared under the title "The Great Invocation" in 1937. Published by the Lucis Trust, a theosophical society based in New York, the mantra was intended to be widely translated and distributed. Lindfield was one of many individuals helping to spread the word.

TERRY RILEY — THIS IS OUR PERIOD

an interview by KEITH and RITA KNOX

The discussion which follows was taped in August 1970 during Terry Riley's third visit to Sweden. He was here at the beginning of the sixties together with Ken Dewey, as part of a street theater and Happenings group which caused uproar and sometimes sensation in various parts of Scandinavia. In 1967, he came to Sweden on a commission from Swedish Radio and the Royal Academy of Music, and his main work at that time was a long composition for a group of forty teenagers at Nacka School of Music, just outside Stockholm. He also worked at the Music Academy with a group which included Bengt Ernryd and Bo-Anders Persson, each of whom have taken Riley's musical inspiration to the jazz and psychedelic areas of Swedish music. His stay was the storm center of a huge row which his music had triggered in academic circles, but he found a surprisingly large measure of support from a mainly youthful body of enthusiasts and admirers. In 1970, he was brought into Stockholm's Museum of Modern Art for a concert which Riley himself described as "the best he'd ever done," and which was definitively the last of his series of long organ and saxophone performances. At the end of his stay in Stockholm, he participated in a private concert together with La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, departing immediately for New Delhi to continue his studies as disciple to his guru, Pandit Pran Nath.

Terry Riley's best-known recordings are on the Columbia label and include In C (MS 7178), A Rainbow in Curved Air (MS 7315), and, with John Cale, Church of Anthrax (C 30131). His compositions have been performed by the London Symphony Orchestra and the Soft Machine, among others, and his name has become something of an underground legend in the rock and avant-garde areas, certainly in Europe. His music has been exciting to performers and followers of avant-garde straight music and to heads and rock enthusiasts generally.

Terry Riley hails from San Francisco and his astrological signs are sun in Cancer, Scorpio rising, and Aries moon.

.....

RITA KNOX: What would you say you are really interested in doing?

TERRY RILEY: I'm not so interested in music that ... in this record I was trying to do something, the John Cale record, I was trying to make the kind of synthesis of beat music and what I feel heads, what I would consider maybe had a spiritual message in the music. I shouldn't say a synthesis though, because I think maybe that's just impossible to do, but at least I was trying to see what those instrumentations and those kind of feelings, the kind of thing that I liked about certain rock music that I'd heard, I could work with something that was close to my own nature. I don't think that I'd try to do that again, that's what I meant. Because it's like when somebody says, "OK I have this orchestration, I want you to do music for it." But it's harder to get the inspiration that way. So what I want to do is to continue working with the instruments and the sounds that I'm really interested in and maybe develop a few that I haven't been able to make yet.

RITA KNOX: Really you're just going further back on this spiritual music trip, because I feel that in Rainbow and particularly on the other side, there's a tremendous kind of feeling. If you can listen to that in a big place, it has a tremendous church quality, not in the sense that you recognized bits of Bach or anything like that, but it had this enormous spiritual quality, the kind of tranquility about it that you associate with going into a sacred building, a sense of peace.

TERRY RILEY: Yes that's certainly a direction that I'm into, I guess. That's been the main kind of work I've been doing, at least for the last few years. I mean, that record summed up the period I spent in New York developing those ideas.

KEITH KNOX: But now you're much more into pitch and rhythm?

TERRY RILEY: Well the thing is that there are certain things that I think are subtler, that I propose. Maybe I can find ways to do it with these instruments, but I've reached the point where I felt like I couldn't do some of the subtler things I was doing, things I was working out. It was still on a gross level and, however I had to do it, working so much

with electric amplified sound, the instruments are clumsy and they make mistakes. For instance, if you're playing and suddenly a plug comes loose and you get a loud blast of sixty cycles, what that does to me, it completely stops everything and it takes a long time to recover the motion. You know what you're really thinking and still this is ... or the tape recorder suddenly starts wowing or fluttering, or there's several things that can happen and almost invariably happen, because of the state of the art in electronics and the kind of equipment we're using. You feel not only that you have to start all over again, but it's almost impossible to get that mood back because of that kind of thing that you're fighting. And then you become so aware of the equipment that your mind is not free to go completely into sound. You don't only have to lose the sense of the equipment you're working with, but it's just you have to lose the sense of your body and everything else that you're constrained with. And it's just another extension, we start out with our voices and what we had to worry about at the beginning was that channel, keeping that channel pure, that sound channel. And that's the science, that's what I'm interested in here. Start out with the very beginning thing, singing. That channel comes right from your very inside, that sound, and if you can make that smooth and beautiful, you can do anything. You can just keep extending out from there.

RITA KNOX: This is in some ways quite a trip out from where you were at Nacka School, when you first came here.

TERRY RILEY: Oh yes, but I think that I always feel like very few weeks ago I was very naive, compared to what I am now. And now when I look at Nacka, I really feel I was accepting being in high school, compared with doing this, in terms of knowing where I was. I was much more lost and I knew I had a sound that I was after, that I felt was really important and interesting. But there was a lot of unknowingness about certain things that I was doing, which I feel were not relevant to that sound.

KEITH KNOX: What I liked about your music at that time was that it forced people to play intuitively. That had a great deal, as far as I was concerned, to do with pitch.

TERRY RILEY: Everything is relevant, though, to your own development, you see. I was doing this, to be quite frank, because I needed it. And I still do. I mean, I still do need to do that kind of music. But the thing is, I should go further, there's another need that arises which joins that and so I don't think I've lost that in terms of I still need it so I'll still do it. It's part of musical practice but I think I'm adding onto those things, you know. And I'm dropping off just those things about that which were getting in the way. There were developments, for instance I don't think my personal life was as together, because I didn't have the right kind of disciplines into it and I'm starting to realize more and more that music is like being an athlete. You have to be really finely tuned and aware and in shape. You have to live regularly, you have to have good food habits and you have to have good spiritual habits, and everything that goes with it. Otherwise you can't get yourself together enough to really make beautiful sounds. I mean, if your life's not that way your music can't be that way.

RITA KNOX: But you had that feeling in any case, quite clearly stated in the scene at the Radio House, in the sense that people were asking you about one, the hassles and two, the performance. Then you clearly stated that it was all a continuous thing, that came through very clearly.

TERRY RILEY: Well I guess it's just adding ... but I know that you know my living habits were sometimes fighting me. It's just simple things that you do. The word discipline means such a weird thing in the West that I hate to use it all the time. But if the disciplines are making something work, like everything has a discipline, a tape recorder has a discipline or it doesn't produce sounds, an instrument has a discipline and these are the things that make it work that I would call disciplines, whatever they are. And when you find one little cog which you turn over and CLICK, that makes that work, it just keeps teaching you what you're doing. So I guess everyone has to build their own. So when I look back to 1967 I feel a lot of cogs that were left dangling, and since then a lot of them have clicked and I feel these are the dangling ones that I allowed to click in. It's maybe not that I don't see them click in, but they only click in when ...

RITA KNOX: What would you say was the end purpose of music?

TERRY RILEY: Well the word spiritual is the one that seems to be all-embracing, but it's a spiritual endeavor. Making music is a spiritual endeavor and maybe that's its highest purpose anyway. And then it can go right down to the grossest quality of being entertainment. Maybe even passing that and going into negative spirits, which could kill a man, it could be a weapon. It can go to the highest point, where it can unite us with God, or it can take us down to the point where it gets on the grossest human level of violence. You can see it. I mean you can see a clear arc of music going up to the highest, finest vibration that we know and that would represent the highest things that we can think of. If we talk about union with God, or whatever terminology that person would understand or have a feeling for, that's where it can go. A lot of people will say, "Oh crap man! Not that bullshit, that spiritual stuff about music. It just makes you feel good man, it swings, all music is the same, all music produced by everybody is the same."

KEITH KNOX: You're approaching this point by pitches and by rhythms, rather than by mathematics. That's nice!

TERRY RILEY: I mean, I was talking about that as a technical thing. It's hard to use the right words to say what you're after, because it isn't really pitches within itself, it's feeling. Because the pitches are like the shells of the cases, the containers for these emotions.

RITA KNOX: They are not strict relationships?

TERRY RILEY: Right! And although in those are things that you can hear, right? You can hear the pitch relationship and everything, but when the same pitch relationships are played by two different people, it can be entirely different things. Or even by the same person. What we're going after is some kind of feeling within ourselves all the time, that's what's leading us on. When we say what we want, what we're trying to get to make us feel that way, to fulfill those feelings, sometimes we say "pitch and rhythm," and it doesn't mean that really. That's not why I'm going to India, because pitch and

rhythm exist in San Francisco, but there's another thing in India, that exists there, which is that soul. In the soul of the music itself, which is health and pitch and rhythm. I think it's the essence, the essence of music, you know. And that essence of the kind of music I'm interested in seems to have more people working in it in India than any place else right now. There's more of that kind of music there that I've heard, like the music we were playing this morning I liked very much, but that didn't have some of the qualities I'm looking for. [Turkish recording of a "Dervish" ceremony]

KEITH KNOX: The music that we heard this morning was a very much above-ground, almost a tourist attraction. I'm sure there are much more fundamental things happening in those areas.

TERRY RILEY: Yes, I'm sure there could be there too. I mean, you never really know until you go and live in an area what those things are going to be, until you've been there a while. But North Indian artists especially right now seem to have many things. Although I'm not sure that it's going to be possible for me, or that I even want to become a singer of North Indian raga or a player of tabla. I've already got half of this world's existence, at least, behind me. And that experience, you know, if I were a new babe coming into that experience, I could do it, but having this whole thing, I won't be able to do all that. I might be able to do it, but it seems to me it's going to be something else, that won't be in a pure form. But maybe the soul of it, the essence, will be pure.

KEITH KNOX: Maybe this will become clearer. You can't expect to know.

TERRY RILEY: I can't know, that's it! I really can't. I think we do a lot of things like that today, that's what intuition must be. You know that there's something there that you need or that you want, and there's no intellectual way of approaching that knowledge. You have to go do it. There's no intellectual way of knowing how this knowledge is going to be applied, but it's like having a vitamin deficiency, you'll often pick up just the right food which you need during that time, if you're living in touch with your sensibilities.

KEITH KNOX: This business about the signposts being intuitive is a thing that has hung the West up very much for a long, long time. Because intuition is not something that is conventionally trusted very much in the West.

TERRY RILEY: Because intellect rules in the West. It's very hard to accept anything that can't be proved, although I think that's changing, you know. They certainly couldn't find everything out in space science through intellect. The more I see of it, the more I learn about relativical space-technology, it's become so that it means that the people who are really making big advances are using those types of intelligence, which are means to be aware of. I'm sure that computers, electrical, chemical, whatever they are, there are all kinds of intelligence within our own system.

KEITH KNOX: I find that very groovy, I mean the fact that the West gets pushed into this position at some point I think is very nice.

RITA KNOX: Well maybe it's only because we're just beginning to catch up, even on the technological level, with what has been known, but possibly forgotten and obliterated, often through wars and things like that, in the East all along.

KEITH KNOX: In the West I think it's a measure of how destructive we've been.

TERRY RILEY: Oh the East has had a lot of wars too, of course, through the ages.

RITA KNOX: Exactly. I mean it was lost there, this is our time.

TERRY RILEY: This is our period. Probably you know, if we really could have seen the history of the East, maybe a lot of this beautiful knowledge and everything that has grown out from their horrible conflicts, that they had the name that rose to power, and maybe our knowledge will come out of some kind of cataclysm.

RITA KNOX: That's a very optimistic way of looking at it, that's nice.

TERRY RILEY: Right or not, you can look at the past. You might see it's just a necessary kind of birth, death and birth cycle, that things have to go through, cultures have to go through and people have to go through. But Pran Nath talks about, he never sings for people. When you're playing, he says, you should only sing to God. And in his language it's clear that he's not trying to entertain anyone, or make anyone ever really feel the way he does. But he's trying to improve his encaence [*sic*] by invoking a higher power to give him the strength to get higher, to sing higher. So he doesn't start with the assumption that "I've got it now, I'm going to give it to you," he starts with the assumption, "How can I get it?" and he starts invoking the gods to get it, every time. And it's the kind of humility which maybe we have to be defeated and beaten down to get, or have been through some very horrible suffering to get. That's either as a person or as a whole society, or whole hemisphere, or whole world, crying. But that idea has really stuck with me now, out of all the things he says all the time, because once you do that you do lose track of yourself and the instruments and everything. You're only trying to get in touch with a very high energy and, while you're doing that, because you're not conscious of how you're turning everybody else on, if you are, you're just in touch with this energy, and that's why I say it's a spiritual thing. It's like the highest form, putting you in touch with the highest energy. Then the people, the reason for concerts is the people, the people nearby get the effect because they're able to tune into that energy also. Which eventually means that the whole audience, if they come and be with that musical master, that spiritual master often enough, they're going to get the side effects and in their turn be able to get in touch with that, produce that sound themselves, without him. Because that's the idea of the guru/disciple relationship. So you just keep trying to tune into that energy and that goes beyond pedagogy and everything else that's in music. Because if you can do that, all the other things will happen. Well that's the idea, that's the Eastern concept, at least as Pran Nath is practicing it. I'm not sure if it's totally done by all the musicians in India, because a lot of them are into making money and being famous, and entertaining to a certain degree.

THREE THINGS ---

EGO, LAND AND WOMAN,

EGO AND LAND GIVE RISE TO WAR,

EGO AND WOMAN GIVE RISE TO JEALOUSY.

PANDIT PRAN NATH

KEITH KNOX: But I think you'll recognize where it's in existence.

TERRY RILEY: Yes, it can exist anywhere, you might run into people that have it in any place, I think. But that's what you really feel when this person turns you on, is that he's in touch with this energy.

RITA KNOX: This is the kind of reasoning, in fact why you have a body, at least this is the way I feel about it. That it's like a lens with a focusing process, or if you like, a resonating process. But if you look at lenses, which is on one wavelength which we call visible light, but there's a whole continuum of this energy and you can consider it in many of the mechanical or electromechanical analogues that exist. You can also consider it as a resonator, because to be able to transmit, something must resonate and be part of the waves of the material of which it's made, plus the actual vibration which is at least closely coupled and of the same frequency. So you have this lens concept and all these are exercises in correcting the surface, so that it is more and more accurate. So that it has a greater and greater bandwidth, which lets a wider and wider part of the spectrum through. The finer accuracies and the finer tuning considerations are the finer surface structure, which corresponds to many of the scientific analogies of allowing higher and higher frequencies through.

KEITH KNOX: So first of all you see a chair, then you see a mountain, and then you see God, is that right? That's the Chinese cycle of fifths, that's the theory of the atom.

RITA KNOX: No, I take it down the other way. I think it goes through the whole molecular scene and right down to the very borderline of our knowledge there. Because this business that it's not just a performance to please somebody, but it's part of a continuous thing which you're using to get in touch with this energy and that your whole life must be tuned with it — you must sleep right, eat right, and all the very fundamental things that even babies are born to, and immediately start learning. Which indicates a very basic chemical, physical nature for the process, that is right down to your very molecular, atomic structure.

TERRY RILEY: You could as a child I think. If you could keep your innocence by being in this environment, say a child who had the potential, prana, to be very pure and then he lived in a very pure environment and was turned on by it immediately. You could see that that's how, maybe, the great messiahs and prophets have been. I mean, they've been a very pure energy coming into the world and then, by not getting too attached to the world, by not ever wanting, they are able to show people in a very strong way how clean that kind of life was as compared with what they were doing, worried about the taxes and that kind of thing. Pran Nath says that a raga is a shape, that's where he becomes like this. The one overall word would be a raga is a shape, if you tried to put it into intellectual terms, if you tried to talk about it. But even what we're doing now it seems to me, is so typical of Western people, to try to define what music is. Because these words don't do it. It's like trying to drink coffee with ink, it's just not the same substance. It's also the fact that you just, instead of trying to explain everything in a completely new way each time you confront it, you have a set of references that you punch into and out comes one or another answer. The I Ching, you can put any question into it but only a certain module will come back at you, and it's these permutations which have all knowledge in them. But in the West we never have relied on that, we're always on a continuum where each time has to be, each moment has to be redefined. I guess that's what our intellectualism is.

KEITH KNOX: The almost repetitive nature of things is something the Chinese did understand.

RITA KNOX: And it seems that if you can't have a historical or preexisting card for it, that we're very suspicious of that, anything that you can't relate to the past.

KEITH KNOX: But mostly it's the singers I think.

TERRY RILEY: Because they're saying the words, to help remind them still.

KEITH KNOX: I think it's more direct, the voice is very close.

TERRY RILEY: Almost all those things are prayers, I mean they invariably are prayers. And if you're singing those you know, there are so many invocations to it, you've got to concentrate on it and it reminds you of what you're doing. Whereas if you're playing the sitar you can suddenly turn into a banjo player or something, it's very easy to do. You lose sight of the fact that the sound is still only a vehicle, although there are instrumentalists who are very awake.

I love these stories about the problems that confronted different cultures in their musical systems, in going from the fifth to the octave and things like that. Can you imagine? I mean, today people don't even think really about it and it's too bad, because it's a major issue, it still is. And yet somehow people pass by it, they're starting somewhere else, you know.

KEITH KNOX: Still, I think that with the freak-out inspiration of music, it's getting back to figuring out the fifth, it's more intuitive at least. It gets away from flattened minor ninths and weird things.

RITA KNOX: Oh I think what is happening is that people find much greater freedom in what they're doing if they get properly in tune and that is really coming in I feel. Because to really be able to play what you want, you've got to really be in tune with all the people who are playing. Put it this way, the pop thing is very much into loud music, loud music is very wearying to the ears if it's out of tune, whereas if it's in tune you can listen to it forever. And the loudness is not really a kind of primary function, apart from eliminating other sounds, not that it even does that, because it sharpens your hearing. This is loud music, which might be necessary for today's listening, because of all the other sounds you have around you. I mean to say, there's the Indian and tanpura sound, where it's a gather-round-and-really-listen, but that's not the kind of way we live in the West.

TERRY RILEY: Yes, you can't hear it unless you're living out in the woods. We tried to tune our tanpura in San Francisco, it was incredible, we could get up at six in the morning and it was still so noisy you couldn't hear the strings.

RITA KNOX: Well there you go! So OK, you're into loud music, but what I found with Christer's thing [Catherine Christer Hennix, see Tailpiece] was that because of the very loudness I became aware of things that didn't really dawn on me, with the full kind of physical force, the sheer physicality of it all. It was first of all I found this part of my toe had a vibration and then I felt, by adjusting the position of this piece with relation to the rest of it, that bit could get vibrating. And then I found all the bits could get vibrating and I could move my position on the floor and my center of gravity and that to get it all vibrating in this harmonic sound, I was sitting in the most comfortable position in the world. And I felt — ah yes, that's probably where it's at. It no longer became tiring and wearisome. I no longer looked for the novelty of a new movement, because I couldn't find a better one right there and then, with the steadiness of this single drone going continuously, steadily, all the time. OK, so it's not steady drone music in pop music, but still, if you've got a kind of in-tuneness so that no matter what someone else is playing, at least it's harmonically related in a natural fashion, it starts getting somewhere. And the better pop bands, or what I consider, you know, when people say, "Oh that's a really groovy band," it might not be an articulated sensibility to this, but if you start listening you'll find that it's a much more in tune band, I think anyway. Because those people also can play kind of the freest, freakiest things too.

KEITH KNOX: The trouble is that I really can't see how you can get very loud music in tune. I mean, there are so many physical hang-ups that are far beyond the state of the art in audio engineering and it gets very difficult. I guess the thing to do is to go to the woods and play tanpura, it's better that way.

TERRY RILEY: Well it's safer on your ears, loud sounds can make you pretty deaf after a while. We're losing hearing every day anyway, supposedly, even if you're in a quiet environment you're losing hearing off the top, you know.

La Monte [Young] has written a lot of articles on states of hearing and what it does with loud music and I think it's much easier to stand, and to tolerate, a rational tuning

frequency relationship than sort of a complex, white noise type of sound. No one should be hearing with their nervous system because the hearing doesn't matter so much, but what happens to the firing of all the different neurons is very important. I mean, when they start firing randomly, your system goes on the alert. All those highs, that's what really is freaky. I had a real fascination for that a while back, a few years ago. I was listening to really loud high frequencies that I don't think was a very good thing to do and I'd never recommend it. It's very exciting, it's tremendously exciting to listen to very loud white noise, because it really spaces you out, you.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Tailpiece: Catherine Christer Hennix and Hans Isgren produced a continuous periodic composite sound waveform environment under the title Hilbert's Hotel at Stockholm's Moderna Museet on June 27, 1970. Hilbert's Hotel is the name of a mathematical proposition for a hotel with a finite number of rooms, but with an infinite number of paths leading to the rooms.

..... E N D .....

D E A R L Y B E L O V E D

by JOHN ESAM

DEARLY BELOVED, WE ARE
GATHERED HERE TODAY OUT
OF OUR MINDS TO WITNESS
THE JOINING TOGETHER OF THIS
MAN AND THIS WOMAN AND AND
THIS MAN AND THAT WOMAN
AND THOSE MEN AND THIS WOMAN
AND THAT MAN AND THAT MAN
HAD BETTER WATCH WHAT HE
IS DOING OR THE ENTIRE BUSINESS
IS GOING TO END UP ON THE
ROCKS.

PANDIT PRAN NATH

THE SAYINGS OF GURGI

by KEITH and RITA KNOX

An Indian friend at Moderna Museet said how much he had enjoyed the concert by Ram Narayan but, he went on, Pran Nath doesn't have the greatest voice in the world and his singing is music from two thousand years ago.

Pran Nath has three daughters and that is the main reason for him giving concerts. For seven years he lived as a naked sadhu, devoting his life wholly to singing. The naked sadhus are thrice-born who live by begging on the outskirts of certain villages, high in the Himalayan foothills. They are supported by the villagers because of the good karma they produce with their singing, benefitting thereby the karma of the village. At the age of thirty-three, Pran Nath was commanded by his guru to take a wife, raise a family, and go out into the world to teach.

He is careful in his manner when he enters people's homes. He likes to be familiar with what he eats, observing the effect on others around him before he partakes. He is a singer of mantras really, sacred sounds which operate on the nerve-centers of the body and get you high. Everything he does is to get you high. Children are very high, fruit is very high. Gurgi says it makes you high to learn Sanskrit and Hindi. Babies speak Sanskrit before they speak any other language — all children speak the mother tongue. Sanskrit is the mother of all languages and Hindi is very close. This gives Indian music a more than exotic interest since the Sanskrit language is wedded to musical sound. Much has been lost and much remains in our modern languages, but originally Sanskrit presented a picture of the sound of the human body and proposed what appears to be a complete world picture.

We talk of a "note of courage," the phrase exists in all languages. To have hope needs courage and courage is a sound, a note. Gurgi says that all his music is very sad. Where does courage fit in with the will of God? Pine trees in India grow only at a height of six thousand feet and Gurgi marvels to be at such high latitudes, marvelling at the Nordic winter

as it offers the promise of spring. He watches the snow and rejoices — God has willed it.

Melody and rhythm, freedom of melody, intervals, space in time — you can squeeze a melody, a phrase doesn't have to begin from here. He would do this kind of thing with five-note mantras, manipulating them until he found a resonance which fitted you. Then he would work on making these resonances more effective. At concerts he would do the same thing, reaching out to individuals and tuning in to people in the audience. Perception of being tuned is obviously a subjective matter and quite impossible to describe in words that communicate the extent and nature of the experience, but it could leave a strange feeling of deep surprise.

Gurgi was very happy living at Sköndal and radiated this all around. The March weather was too cold for him to be out and about, so that he spent an unaccustomed amount of time indoors. In New Delhi he would run around town six hours a day, making short visits to different people, but in Sköndal he would sit by the window, saying mantras and encouraging anything that was groovy. When he was very hungry and food was being prepared, he would go to the kitchen and tell the cook what good work they were doing.

Terry Riley told us about Pran Nath last summer and later wrote from New Delhi, but he was working twelve hours a day during that time and his letters were all about music. The thing he did write about though was peacefulness, this peace. When Pran Nath and the party arrived in Stockholm, peace took on a very active meaning. Peace is a really active force in the universe and one which Gurgi could illuminate with the sound, both light and dark. Music would be flowing in and out, carrying you up in peace. Doing is good karma and that is very active.

What is karma? Gurgi held out his hands and moved them around, showing the hands of a workman, with fantastic determined lines across the palms and with beautiful movements flowing from deep beyond the wrist. Karma means "hands" in Sanskrit and hands do work. It is this constant work that really counts and it is through work that one expresses feeling, through action, sincerity, honesty, and devotion. Gurgi's whole life has been devoted to the sound of God and to perfecting this. A raga is an act of devotion, because man alone cannot do anything. It depends on the will of God and

all that you can do is work. When Gurgi utters these divine sounds he is reflecting forty-seven years of work devoted to perfecting his body to become a worthy instrument of God. The special characteristic of such music is the performer's transparency, which can be recognized in musics other than raga. Any music that is really in tune is Gurgi's music and the more in tune the singer is, the more he becomes transparent. It becomes immediately clear on hearing a singer tune against a drone note to control a convolution to perfect held tuning. These long, sustained pitches act on the brain and each note is tuned in this way until a raga is complete. Each note is tuned to a different part of the body. There are three octaves, AUM, one in the solar plexus, one in the chest, and the upper one in the brain, Brahma.

BRAHMA IS THE BRAIN

Gurgi says that if he could tune exactly he would disappear and the tanpura would disappear if it was tuned perfectly. It is necessary for a degree of tuning imperfection for the instrument and the singer to be recognizable as such.

A tanpura is made by man while a man is made by God. In order that a man may sing with a tanpura it is first necessary to tune the tanpura to the man. Hold the left hand so that the exhalation from the nostrils impinges on the knuckle. The ground tone produced is Sa and the tanpura should be tuned to this. The left nostril represents the sun and the right nostril represents the moon, the brain is at the top of the spine — which represents the octave. The pitches of the raga vibrate specific parts of the body, the chakras. Sa is in AUM, Ri (as in "river") is in the solar plexus, Ga (articulated with the roof of the mouth) is in the left breast, Ma (articulated in the throat) is in the right breast, Pa is in the chest, Dha is in the throat, Ni is in the head.

AUM ANANTA HARI NARAYANA

First there is the awakening of the Kundalini and a picture of a yogi, a man awakened, who can respond to vibration with an accuracy born of courage. This mantra exercises the chakras in sequence.

Sa is in everything, Sa is in the tips of your toes. SHIVA shshshshshshshshssh.....let it flow deeply and vibrate shshshshshshshsh.....this feeling flowing outwards shshshshshsh.....feel it in the bottom of your chest. It vibrates through you and awakens shivers which you can feel, it has actuality. Brahma is the table, Brahma is you, Brahma is me, Brahma is everything. AUM is the sound that is the vibration of this world. That is all there is, this vibration.

Feeling is at home in the body, it is not an abstract thing. Without feeling there is nothing and feeling is aroused by resonating specific locations in the body. This is the work of God. Feeling lies in between the notes and is the movement of the notes. Nothing exists alone, these are the shrutis. By correct, accurate, precise manipulation of the shrutis, feeling can be communicated. Singing is a precise science. Listen to the different ways of going from Sa to Ri and the difference in feeling between sunrise and sunset. Every interval has this absolute quality. Listen to the Raag Bhupali and hear all the infinite shades of feeling expressed by moving between five notes, precise incantations that will resonate these centers of feeling, the uplifting of feelings through the spine, rising to the top of the head, Brahma.

A Raga is a picture drawn by sound, with specific emotions sketching in the details. These are the curves, the departures from one point in pitch to another point in pitch. There are the twelve notes and there are the shrutis which lie between. The messages are between the notes; the Answara and the Swara, Komal and Tivra, the flattening and sharpening of the notes, these are opposite reflections, the good and the evil. Everything lies in getting the balance in between. Every act is a direct expression of feeling, which is an act of devotion. Sa is in everything.

Every time Gurgi sings, the occasion demands total attention from everybody present, insisting on total devotion to the sound. His body reacts to every flicker of attention, tension or relaxation. The basic nature of the music is classic and it is necessary only to actively witness the teaching methods to be convinced of the accuracy in transmission of the knowledge which has come down the centuries. The precision sought for is absolute, both in pitching the Raga notes and in the convolution contours between.

High music exists in many places and conditions and can be recognized always by the tuning. Specific convolutions of contours are familiar from their use in improvised music of all kinds. Gurgi's music differs only in rigor of application over the whole gamut of emotion, which raises it beyond a matter of opinion.

Early morning ragas are essentially more effective than ragas of the evening, since they are a newborn summoning of devotion. The sun has recently risen and things are not so disturbed. The singer is more pure and the atmosphere is different. There are some things that can only be received at that time.

SABTAK = Octave

Do	Sa	SHARAJ	Soul, Brahma
Re	Ri	RISHIB	Water
Ni	Ga	GANDHAR	Earth
Fa	Ma	MADHYAM	Space, Sky, Night, Day, Moon
So	Pa	PANCHIM	Sun
La	Dha	DHAYVAT	Wind
Ti	Ni	NISHAD	Fire
Do	Sa	SHARAJ	

Natural = SUDAH Flat = KOMAL
SWARA = in tune, good Sharp = TIVRA (only Ma)
ANSWARA = out of tune, evil
Lower octave = MANDIR
Middle octave = MADHYA
Upper octave = TAR

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THE FOREST UNIVERSITY

A brief survey by BENGT AF KLINTBERG

During these last years, an increasing interest has arisen in the activities of the Forest University. The statements to be heard are often strange and contradictory and no official information seems to exist about the university. In this short survey, I shall try to put together such facts as have so far come to my knowledge.

The Forest University seems not to have any stationary address or regular terms and no statistics are available about the numbers of students or teachers. I've been told that no real difference exists between the former and the latter: no one who enters the Forest University ever stops being a student and anyone who wishes to teach is free to do so.

The Forest University deals with all aspects having connection with forests, even the slightest. The topics may be historical, biological, economic, or artistic. The name of the University, however, needs some further explanation. The most important thing about it is that all lectures and other activities take place in forests. This is an irremissible demand and is the only requirement for becoming a student. Certain forests outside Stockholm have been much used, but teaching has been given within the widespread forest regions of northern Sweden and also in budding beech woods of south Sweden and Denmark. The place is seldom the same from one occasion to another. When a lecture is to be held, all students of the University receive a message by mail. Sometimes a mere description of the location is insufficient so that it becomes necessary for the lecturer to enclose a map of the forest, with a cross to mark the place of the lecture. It has happened that students have searched the woods for hours before finding the place, so that their calls could be heard throughout the lecture. Sometimes no one catches sight of the lecturer: a shy speaker once held a lecture on the flying technique of crows while sitting in a treetop. Nobody ever found him, though several persons passed the tree. Most lessons, though, have taken place in sunny forest openings, with those present seated in a wide circle on the ground.

The variety of subjects is endless. In April last year a lecture series dealt with Scandinavian trees in prehistoric times. Of the species still in existence, the birch and some other leafy deciduous trees are the oldest, whereas the big conifers are considerably younger. One now well-known tree, the lilac, was imported as late as the eighteenth century by Swedish soldiers returning from imprisonment in Russia. Another lecturer analyzed the influence of classical nature poetry in China and Japan upon modern nature poetry in the Nordic countries. The deepest reason for the strength of this influence is that the four seasons have a similar character in both these parts of the world. An excellent lecture, which I attended one rainy summer morning, dealt with edible berries, mushrooms, and other herbs, such as are to be found in the forest. Guerilla tactics in forest environments are yet another topic which has been covered. Lectures which examine the present situation of the woods of Sweden are often characterized by a deep desperation. Reaction against the damage caused by chemical fertilizers, distributed by means of helicopters, is merely one example. One lecturer wishes them to be replaced by immense, specially constructed aircraft for cows, from which dung would fall across the forest. His drawings of such flying cowsheds have been archived.

There has been some tendency for the lectures to develop into discussions, picnics, or improvised concerts. But there are also instances where lectures have inspired students to immediate further research. At this moment there is a research group investigating the musicality of trees. They have observed that the budding and flowering of trees in the springtime always coincides with the period when birdsong becomes common. This has been combined with research results from scientists in India demonstrating that cornfields grow more rapidly when music is played through loudspeakers around the fields. A series of experiments have been carried out in which headphones wired to tape recorders have been mounted on tree trunks. The trees were then filmed during the period that the music was being played. Microscopic changes were observed on the buds of a birch at the end of March, when Vivaldi’s “Primavera” was performed.

The same research group has also recorded the soughing and singing of leaves vibrating in the wind and they have now started analysis of the musical language patterns hidden there. Other activities which should be mentioned in this

connection are those made by a small but very active group of constructors who, with a primitive arrangement of mirrors and electric torches, have built an immense signal system in a forest situated in central Sweden. This signal system has been used in the middle of the night with amazing results. The group has also built a fairly wide network of narrow roads and bridges among the branches, making it possible to walk around in the upper part of the forest very quickly. Another group has built some large string instruments by attaching strings of various lengths and thicknesses between the trees. An increasing interest is to be noted in what might be called forest ritual. This comprises rules for entering and leaving a forest and formulae to be uttered when passing especially big spruces and oaks.

As this is being written, the plans for starting a Bulletin of the Forest University are taking shape. Those interested in subscribing should send their names and addresses to the following temporary address of the university: Skogsuniversitetet, Poste restante, 770 15 Blötberget, Sweden.

..... E N D .....

A UNIVERSAL MANTRAM from MICHAEL J. LINDFIELD

(A mantram is a combination of sounds, of words and of phrases that through the virtue of certain rhythmic effects, achieve results that would not be possible apart from them.....)

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let Light stream forth into the minds of men
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let Love stream forth into the hearts of men
May Christ return to Earth.

From the center where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the center which we call the race of man
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

This Universal Mantram, or the Great Invocation, has been given to mankind for his daily use in the New Age.

Doing is the child of being and has become the rebel son constantly leading attacks upon its parent. Being is the state which is natural to the embryo in the womb. From the moment of birth, the necessity to do something intrudes to an ever-increasing extent upon the state of being. The argument against the idea of eternal life is, "But what would one do?"

At the present time one sees plainly the conflict in society between being and doing. The new generation is split between those who want revolution, a fever of doing, and those who want meditation, the state of being. In some cases the conflict takes place in the individual mind as well. This is perhaps one of the main causes of the popularity of hashish and other drugs. An induced state is not being but suspension, a condition of perpetual abeyance. One often hears about the tragic extensions that the use of these things can lead to but it is also a serious matter that it can lead, undramatically, to a careless, "come day, go day" state of nothing at all; not the Nothing of the Eastern mystics but inactivity in both areas.

If the new generation senses that man is going to evolve still further and that the evolution of the species is not at an end, if they sense that telepathy and teleportation are the communication and transport means of the future, that the day of protoplast is drawing to a close, that the body is going to become literally more ethereal, that planets and planes will be reached with comparative ease, that telepathy between mind and mind will take away such troubles as the fear of loss through death and the war between groups of people over sex, race, class, and religion, then this would explain why it values the state of being. However, some seek to induce it artificially from impatience and so actually delay the processes by which it may come to pass. In an age where distant places can be reached in a matter of hours and things desired may be obtained on easy payments to be made later, the shortcut is preferred as a matter of course but shortcuts cannot be used in attaining a true state of being because the journey develops the person's fitness to use the goal.

Eternity, the true state of being, is endless because it does not move in a locomotional sense; vibration is a

far higher development than locomotion. The artist Olle Baertling has produced some deceptively simple-looking works in metal which are so constructed that they have a continual tremor. They could, perhaps, be regarded as diagrams of the eternal condition. Being exudes electromagnetic power; it is indivisible from the first cause of existence; within it is all that is made or was made. It is Om, the Logos, the Breath of the Holy Spirit, and all concepts of cosmic creativity. From it proceeds, in complete consciousness and perfect harmony, all purposeful and productive doing.

..... E N D .....

THE MUSIC MAKER AND HIS MASTER

by IRIS R. ORTON

The height that fed
honestly the grazing flocks
says! “See the mountain
rising from the mist,
I am a foothill!”

And in the mind is lodged
song of humility,
undiminished song.

THE BOMBAY FREE SCHOOL

STEVE RONEY TALKS

an interview transcribed by RITA KNOX

JOHN ESAM: I was only thinking about it today, I want to interview you about the Bombay Free School. I've even got the title, "The Bombay Free School Goes West" or "Roney Rides Again." Steve, where did this idea first hit you? Do you remember where and when?

STEVE RONEY: Well it was like this. This cat leaped at me.....

JOHN ESAM: I see!

STEVE RONEY: I was thinking about writing some notes down about all the things I've said about the Bombay Free School, to see if I can get an idea of what it actually is.

JOHN ESAM: In Stockholm there are people going around frowning quietly to themselves. When you ask them, they say, what is the Bombay Free School?

STEVE RONEY: Well you see, the Bombay Free School, nobody will ever know it until it actually starts.

JOHN ESAM: Has it started?

STEVE RONEY: In reality it hasn't started.

JOHN ESAM: Well where does this reality begin?

STEVE RONEY: In Bombay.

JOHN ESAM: Because outside your head, it's started.

STEVE RONEY: Yeah! Yeah!

JOHN ESAM: The Bombay Free School is away in Stockholm for certain.

KEITH KNOX: It has a public image.

STEVE RONEY: Yeah yeah, people know this is a Bombay Free School thing. So people know it has started.

JOHN ESAM: Police have opened a new file on the Bombay Free School.

KEITH KNOX: I think Ludvig Rasmusson in Dagens Nyheter established the Bombay Free School in his review. He's written about it in print as much as I've seen anywhere.

JOHN ESAM: I keep remembering remarks of yours. Now, these two hundred Indian families.....

STEVE RONEY: It's fifty. I've worked it out, it's enough for the first go. It's going to be fifty families, not the kids. No hold your horses, I mean to say, it's not just the kids. It's the whole family because it would be stupid in India. I know Indian people and if you suddenly taught a kid something and he went home at night time and started talking to his parents about it, they would say he was crazy and they would try to kill me or something, putting strange ideas into their heads. So the idea is to get the whole family learning together.

KEITH KNOX: That makes sense.

JOHN ESAM: You're going to bring fifty Indian families to Stockholm?

STEVE RONEY: No! No! No! There's going to be a big house in Bombay.

JOHN ESAM: The thing they ask is, "Are you teachers in the Bombay Free School?"

STEVE RONEY: There's been a lot of people, like even Don Cherry's very interested. There's lots of people I've talked to, I mean the people who have taken part in things, and people who could have taken part in things, who are interested in coming. They're not going to stay there for the rest of

their lives, but they'd like to come for six months and be able to do something there. I've got friends there already, waiting and interested. An English guy who's in with a lot of big people all over the place, and a lot of theater people and poets, Indian people, and filmmakers, man! The thing is there's so many untouched resources in India, they've got the second biggest film industry in the world. So there are plenty of cameras around, and films. They make epic films in fifteen days. They make these gigantic two-and-a-half-hour films, I've watched 'em. A couple of wrestlers, friends of mine, "Son of Kong" and "King Kong," Canadians actually, they made an Indian version of Samson & Delilah. Son of Kong was Samson because he had a beard and was big, you know. He just staggered around for about three days and he was in the whole film in fact. You saw these boats and these Roman soldiers man, on these galleons and you heard the fucking motor going chug! chug! and saw the fucking rubber tires on the side of the boat, man! You saw cars going over the hills in the background, guys looking at their watches. Guys that, you know, when you had the big slaughter scene with the fights and the bows and arrows and all this, you see guys walking across in front of the fucking camera with half harpoons through their heads, arrows stuck in up here! Oh crazy films, so they've got plenty of equipment.

They've got a record industry there, so we're going to get a lot of records coming out with Indian and European musicians together. Because Ravi Shankar's got a school of music where lots of things are happening, that's in Bombay. Lots of dance things and theater things and musical things are going on there. It's a sort of school of music, Ravi Shankar's School of Music. And I mean, he loves Europeans to come and join in. So, there's a good chance musically, apart from just cooperating between the two cultures, it's just getting unknown Indian musicians down. There's gypsies man, that you've never heard, they're as good as Ravi Shankar or anybody, and with fucking soul in it too, you know, not just technique. I've seen them sitting on the street corners just for ten crowns, fantastic. So, I mean there's that side of it.

Printing presses! India's, well every other step they're printing something, there's lots of printing going on there. So I mean there's no problem about getting hold of a printing press to publish books, posters, everything. And I mean of course, people will be going there, live around for a while

and develop a sort of Euro-Indian poster culture or something. The thing is that people are going to be influenced by their surroundings. That's why I want it in Bombay, not in Stockholm or London. Because one just gets caught up with the electrical thing, or the mechanical thing, but in Bombay they'll have got all that in their head, the electrical and mechanical side of it. And then they'll see the natural side of it too. And then they'll start combining the two and create, just colors. People don't know what colors are until they've actually been to India. Because of the strength of the sun, and the variety of colors of the saris, man! Nobody wears the same sari, except certain groups of tribes, and theirs are either purple, just every one of them, thousands on the roads, all the people who build the roads have these — no it's not purple, it's violet. They wear these violet things, even the men. The men and the women and the kids all along the roads in India.

One tribe, I don't know what they are, sit there all day and instead of having a machine to crush, every one of them's got a hammer, even the kids, and they just smash the rocks up. They each have ten yards of road a day to fill in, each family. And they get about a crown for it. Yeah it's true man and I mean, listen, the fucking mother, she's in her ninth month, she's fucking banging away, banging away and suddenly there's AAAAAAAH! Somebody throws out a knife, I swear to God somebody throws out a knife and fucking gloop gloop and wipes her cunt, washes the baby, ties the thing, drops it into the fucking sari around her neck and carries on banging the stones. That's the fucking truth, I've seen it! I mean this was in the space of half an hour. I was trying to sort of cut it down but ... she didn't even move from the spot, didn't move from the spot. I mean, if she would have stopped and disappeared she would have lost one crown.

RITA KNOX: She probably didn't have anywhere to go anyway.

STEVE RONEY: She didn't have a house but that's beside the point. The fact she continued working straight afterwards, it means living or dying.

..... E N D .....

“ D I V I N G ” by SIDSEL PAASKE

Grasshopper tears flow
as the stars move together.
The weight of the will
is pulling the eye-nerves into the flower-buds,
all the clouds look at me
and fall into my head.
I roll down a long hill
with the birds flying after me,
ox-blood dripping from their beaks.
And the Sun is bigger than everything —
bigger than the pupil
in the eye of the orchid.
We are sliding into the blue cave of emptiness,
while the jungle is crying
that there is no place for the green.
Later, all is green
and there is plenty of space all over the place.

We light up fires in our brain
and glows hit me.
Time goes by and everything is changed.
The rain is pouring no longer down
but wavers around the trees of the glow-worms,
and light is cutting through the blue-black.

I hear the sounds of submarines
loaded with nakedness
getting closer
and out of the snow
scatter pillars of warm seed,
accompanied by flutes
played by silent hands of silk.
Blood is flowing inside the jungle of emptiness;
new orchids come out,
red orchids singing in the night.
Birds are flying between trees of disquiet,
wrapping red sound around them
and a seagull is diving into the depths of the Milky Way
making the full Moon look like
a white glass pearl

melted down at 900°C
and WE ARE NOW.

The weight of the sound that makes
the feathers on my head laugh,
has a frequency of 60,000 volts —
burns out a few wires
which were out of function anyway
and the train rolls up to the platform
whirling everything up
spreading
and QUIET.

The crows are crying
and the room is filled with a whistling sound.
The finest tones are lying at the bottom of the bass
crying,
the well is empty 'til the rain comes
and the Great Plains allow the Sun
to roll over itself
like an orange in Kalahari,
and the rowboats slide slowly along my breasts,
the oars resting.....
IT IS GOOD.

A W O R D

by KEITH KNOX

A Brownian movement of man's choice
is the energy on which the law is built,
painfully, page by page on precedent,
with redress allowed,
to dissipate the sudden energy of outrage.

The medium which promotes the law is language.
Being an alpha-rhythmic thing
tied loosely to our earthly magnet.
The moon has no magnetic field
and there flies lunacy free and pure.

But on our earth each tiny energy
constitutes in sum,
a total which surges slowly
above the fast flicker
of each man's vision.

Language is challenged by a vision.
The law is challenged
and outrage is in the air.
The artist gathers energy where he can
to fuel his vision.

Today I heard a word
but I cannot tell you where
or what it signifies.
I know only that a vision flashed
for me to feel the energy,

inside and everywhere.

DON CHERRY AT DARTMOUTH

a teaching report and interview by KEITH KNOX

The material which follows was taped in July 1970, shortly after Don Cherry had completed his term as artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. This is a report covering the methods and principles employed by Cherry to teach intuitive control in music.

Since leaving Dartmouth, Cherry has established a permanent base for his teaching activities at Tågarp School in the south of Sweden, together with artist-designer Moqui Carlsson. Interested musicians and artists may obtain more information by writing to them.

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After we left Turkey, we went to teach at Dartmouth, and the first day we started there, all the black students were on one side of the room and all the white students on the other side of the room. That's part of the separation that's happening in America, but that's where this pollution brings everybody together. We did certain things within the winter term where everyone had a sensitivity of touch, becoming close to each other.

The first lecturer we had at the school was Dollar Brand and he recited and he played and then he taught us certain songs, which were basics for anyone starting on an instrument. Because he had the concept of how, in the West, everyone has an instrument and then they learn notes and they feel their notes are music. But there's the other concept in the East or in Africa, people make their own instruments and then from it being that much a part of them, and then automatically trying to make music, from making the instrument. And then later on, they learn about notes, you know, if they cared to or not.

I'm interested in, we use the word "primitive" instruments, with textures of gut strings, where it had life once before so that the soul of it is still there. Or bamboo, where the heart has been taken out of it. South American cuíca are of the texture of wood and even of steel.

But in Dartmouth College it was sort of like a revolution in us attempting to create a new type of gathering, which you wouldn't really call a class. But it was a gathering and, meeting with it, the time became very sacred to everyone. And we would have to go into the environment to rearrange the room every time we would have class, and that was a good part of the unity of us working together as a group too, taking all the chairs and stacking them up, having incense, which I believe is sacred fragrances that the angels brought down with them from heaven. We had a tree, which would be put in the middle, and we had plants, you know, because of us growing as plants, as it was a self-realization type thing where I was sharing the things that I had learned, the songs and the records. And it was different. Each meeting would be a section of listening or performing; there were two sections, the section of impression/expression, which they called the layman's section, to which in the winter term we had at least 150 or so. In the other classes, the orchestra would explore the mysticism of sound and improvise music. To improvise, there were at least thirty musicians that had instruments, sometimes more. It became so that some of the people from the layman's class would come to the other class and also people from the community would come who were not from the university, which had sponsored the class.

The material that we were using was like compositions of Ornette Coleman, of Dollar Brand, of Pharoah Sanders, Leon Thomas, and Alice Coltrane, some of her songs and some of my own songs. But at first everyone couldn't feel the freedom so that they could improvise collectively together.

The Dagar Brothers, you know the two Indian singers, I played this record for them and it got to the point where they could see how it's possible for someone to be singing lead and other people could follow that closely, being sensitive and conscious enough of what's happening. It got so that I could start or create a new melody and they could follow me with the melody.

Then I came to this way of spontaneous conducting, this system, this conception you can call it. But the student that was hardest in the class, one of the first students to start improvising, was from the high school in town, but I didn't know that until the end of the term, when he told me, and he was fantastic when he led the high school band, I went to see a performance that they had at the school and he was

the trombone player. But in this spontaneous conducting is a system that I tried first with the children up north here, in Bollnäs. It worked out fine because it leaves the freedom for the musicians to use their own individual self-expression collectively. And it still creates a completeness in form.

KEITH KNOX: I'm not really clear what you did at Bollnäs with the kids, Don.

DON CHERRY: I wouldn't like to really reveal it to you, because I like to just do it. And also now I'm to write a composition for the Jazz Composer's Orchestra. At Dartmouth University they had a conference on electronics and new music, which ended up being graphics, where different new ways of notating music were discussed and it's a strange thing about notated music, you know, it sounds notated. But you can still create that same concentration by spontaneous conducting. A really good example of how we used this is that we had a film director at Dartmouth named Joseph Losey, who I became very good friends with and worked with. He's really an artist in his own right in filmmaking, The Servant [1963], Modesty Blaise [1966], and his latest film, which is called Figures in a Landscape [1970]. We combined his film class of sixty students or so and both of my sections, which came to two hundred students. There was a film he made called Eve [1962] with Jeanne Moreau and we spontaneously created a soundtrack to the film on the spot. I picked three reels and had the form of the film in my mind so I could look at it while the students watched me, conducting all the time. We recorded it and then played it back and it was surprising how complete it was. I mean, it was an experiment but it came out automatically with a sort of completeness. That's an example of spontaneous composing, it's open for surprises, which I think is very important for the musicians as well as for the audience.

In the term we had a rhythm section which lived there, I was artist-in-residence and I had the rhythm section to come. This was bass player Johnny Dyani, who lives in London but is from South Africa, and we had Okay Temiz from Ankara in Turkey. They came for the second half of the winter term; from midterm on out they stayed, and within the term we had the privilege of visiting Windsor Prison in Vermont. This was really an experience for the students and myself and

for the prisoners. I mean the reaction, you know this sound from Brazil which goes into the samba, CU DI CU DI cudy CU CU ... we explored that in the class too, we finished the performance with this and as the prisoners were leaving they were all leaving with CU DI CU DI cudy CU CU ... and that was a wonderful reaction. Even the guards could feel, they could forget what they were doing, about their job, their position, their uniform. It's a strange thing about these uniforms you know, I feel that if the police had different uniforms maybe they would feel a little different toward harmonizing with the people.

At the end of the term, we were working toward a performance which we gave in the auditorium and in the last month of the term we had classes in the auditorium, to become more familiar with the environment, so that it felt like home and relaxed, you know. We were learning songs from different jazz musicians and I was turning them on with records of Albert Ayler with people that they'd never heard before, Cecil [Taylor], Ornette [Coleman], [John] Coltrane, and Pharoah [Sanders], Terry Riley and different people. We would also study different chants, you know I was back in Watts in California where I was reared for seven or eight years; when I finally went back home last Christmas, 1969, I was lucky enough to arrive the same time as this Buddhist chanter from Japan. He was chanting the week of Christmas, starting Monday night for one hour and extending by an hour so that by the end of the week, on Saturday, it was an all-night affair. It was really a revelation for me, with hundreds of people coming, meditating, and they had these seashells which they shake and they make this sound ANG GANGY GINGY DINNY GANGY DINNY GANGY GANGY DINNY GANGY AUM ... for hours, and it was meditation and the chant. We also explored this in the class. And we had the gong, where at the beginning we had to really have respect for silence. That's something which the gong automatically can do. The gong was the main source of each class and we found out that whoever would play the gong had to be the most conscious, aware person, which was good for everyone to strive toward.

And then we had these instruments, we had an African finger piano, there's a western version called "kalimba" which they sell at Creative Playthings. We had ten of these as a kalimba choir, which we used to walk through the school just making a sound.

The performance we had at the end of the term was like a living opera. I have been close with the Living Theatre and I think they began a revolutionary movement during the sixties which is fantastic in Europe, but which I don't feel has been really seen or understood in America. We've been trying to try all types, not to be limited, and that's a way of exposing these outlets to different channels. I mean to the students, who would regularly never get a chance to be exposed to this because it won't be on the radio. Moqui, the artist-designer that we've been working with, worked hard on the performance and within the last month, every weekend, we'd have an open-house for the students to come, so we would get to know them. Moqui was making costumes and it was a whole family affair. We did this performance and it was fantastic because of the students that were involved in the program, they wanted to see it. We had worked on these things and I had planned in my mind how the form would evolve, so I was backstage changing, and we had a lighted stage and different things that happened. The faculty was there and it was a turn on for them, but I must say there were a few very groovy faculty members. But it's this gap between the students and the faculty that I could find, you know. They have a center, Hopkins Center, which was built for the community, and this is where we were working. I had a studio there which was decorated in the feeling of, when you would enter the studio it was to play music. There was a feeling of a temple, where you take your shoes off. Kids from the neighborhood would come, because I'd try to leave it open as much as possible. Very few things would happen at the Center which were for the students and the things that were happening were either for the faculty or for the community, which was good, but we had to learn about balance because that's the swing, you know. So the performance at the end of the term was surprising for me and for everyone. We did it and it worked out successfully.

At the end of term a lot of the students went to Washington, but in this time I made trips to New York to continue my studies with Ornette [Coleman] and play in his group with Charlie Hayden, Dewey Redman, and the only times I would play out was when Pharoah [Sanders] or Leon [Thomas] were playing. I'd go and sit in with them, which was a thing I really enjoyed.

The students wanted me to stay over for the spring term, you know the spring is a university within itself and in

Vermont the spring came very fast, so all the forces went to the outside. In the winter it was good because everyone comes in the cave, to the inside, but in the spring term we started having most of the classes outside. Also, the University had a radio station, an AM radio station, which was not covering most of the activities in the school. We started having a program once a week and out of each class we would have one radio taping, and at the end of the week we would play a tape for the radio, so the community could be informed too. So we didn't work on having a performance, we just worked on doing these radio shows, which worked out fine.

There was a professor in physics who gave a lecture, because now in America they're trying to look into what's happening in the school system. There are certain things the students want to learn, I mean there are certain programs that they would like to have changed from where they are now. So there was a period, especially when Nixon did this Cambodian thing, when there were discussions between the faculty and the students. One professor, Professor Harris of the physics department, spoke of a new university where when you came close to the university, you would hear this song and this sound. He related it to my class and that was like what we were developing into. Then this Cambodian thing happened in mid-term which was a big surprise and, especially for the students, there was disappointment with what happened with Nixon's decision over Cambodia. Because no one wants to go to war, no one's looking forward to killing or being killed. When the Cambodian thing came up most of the universities went on strike. I didn't put the class on strike because I felt this plant that was growing and if we could continue that, that was a strike of the students within itself. This was something that was for them and I was there to start it in the class, you know. It was like the vibrations for them which would cause what would happen and the flow of things.

In America now there are many, many programs. One of the joyful things that happened is in Newark, where many people had worked to have a black mayor, and it worked out.[1] And that's a way, you know, I mean that's one way. Then there are many people working, both black and white, to expose the injustice that is happening to the Black Panthers. Even

1 Kenneth Allen Gibson (1932–2019), mayor of Newark, New Jersey, from 1970 to 1986.

myself, I have done things, worked on it. But that's this thing of problems, problems come from the mind. It's like politics, politics has to be problems because politics is all from the mind. You don't feel in politics, you just have to think about, the action is from the mind. But to contradict politics is spiritualism, you know, and that's the balance, they're both essential. I say that in regard to the black movement in America, I think it is very essential. I'm really involved in music and I feel that music should be free of politics, because it's a direction which I say is contradictory, so it should automatically be free of politics and also free of culture. Culture is culture-for-sale.

Elijah Muhammad believes that Islam is the nature of the black people and Islam is a beautiful way of life for use in the home. It starts in the home; if there's anything that's going to happen in society, it must start in the home. Once it starts in the home, it then vibrates and radiates out. There was a beautiful thing when one of the students had written a poem about a black man and a white woman and it was a beautiful poem because it was really clear in that part of the balance. We'll say that was right or left but it was part of the balance, it was one of the sides. But this made me feel how important it is for a man to have the privilege of closing his door and having what happens in his house to be his, himself, you know. And that is the whole society in which there are no police, no outsider can speak about it, he can't contradict you or anything, because it belongs to the man of the house, you dig. And it's not the thing of having a white wife, it's a thing of having a good wife. I'm speaking in regard to some of the barbaric laws and I'm speaking of America, you know, like of internal possession or being able to knock your door down and come in. Because you see that's like war, when a man comes to knock your door down, you know, that's like protection. See, that's why America has created, I mean, this violence. Laws like that really can make the choice of whether it dies or lies there. Violence is propaganda there, it's like the pacifier action that television has with children. I think so much of children because I've been working a lot with children of all ages, and that's when I really feel the gratification of fulfilling my human path, being and working with children, you know.

I want to always be open enough to learn, because what I really want to do is to travel. I must first have a base,

where I would like to have a school in the summer. But I would like to travel and share songs, teach songs to people and learn songs from people. I also say this is how related I feel music is to people who know about their lives. I've really been lucky to be with people like Ornette [Coleman] and Sonny Rollins and [John] Coltrane and Cecil [Taylor] and Maffy Falay and Dollar Brand, to be with them and actually study.

I think very much of participating with people. For me, traveling and seeing rituals and seeing people participating, I really enjoy doing that. And I have the instruments which I have collected, turtle shells that make sounds, earthquake drums (which are made in California from wood, like African log drums), ringing bells and sounds of bamboo.

There's a mental radio that everyone is connected with. One thing I really enjoy about Dollar Brand, who I think is a very important person because he has stayed free of commercialism. It's this commercialism which stops the creative instinct of a person, it's commercialism when you accept something and just stick with that, you know, you stop exploring. There are certain musicians who have become free of that and most of the musicians of the avant-garde that I have been connected with have become free of that. Then we also have the spirit, there's a big difference in the lives of musicians from how it used to be, with alcohol and drugs. Now it's more or less a meditation thing and temples. And then there's John Coltrane, who opened a whole consciousness of this, and I think that's the right path. Being with Dollar Brand, I mean he's a real guru in music and also in his life, because he's disciplined himself, he meditates and he studies karate. I really feel that he's in tune. These songs that he's written have a feeling that they're the same type of songs they built the pyramids with. Very old and typical African-Chinese, from the Mongolian. He can make you really aware of this timelessness. He's planned a school in Swaziland, and Swaziland is where some of the oldest stones have been recovered, you know, and he's been a very deep influence on me.

Charles Olson, this man has a certain humor where he can make different words and reading words that can bring you in or bring you out. And there's certain words that have a certain wisdom of humor. That's the only way I can put it, for me that's what it means, the wisdom of humor. Which is

very important because once you lose that humor, humor is of the birds, like this joyfulness. That's the strange thing. Everyone feels that God is real, sad, and serene — and he's joyful, very joyful! The unhappiness comes from the mental, the mind of problems, but the joyfulness comes from the soul of really being happy, of dancing. That's a joyfulness that is important. Ornette has a lot of joyfulness in his playing, Thelonius has a lot of joyfulness, these are people who have been close to me in my life. And Thelonius has this infant happiness that only, the only other person I've ever met in my life that has this quality of infant happiness like Thelonius Monk is Eagle-Eye. I'm not saying this as a person that relates things, because I don't think you should relate things. When you see this sort of something, you say, "Oh yes that reminds me. Oh that's just like this, it's just like that!" And it's a certain quality of what they call art, A-R-T, that has this familiarity. Maybe it's a painting or a song or a poem, but it has this familiarity that you've seen it before or heard it before and you can flow with it because of this familiarity. Brahma is very important, because I mean, Brahma walks with you and you walk with Brahma.

And then Buddha, all children look like Buddha when they're born and it seems like we're going round in a circle of getting back there. It's like my daughter Neneh, she can make a lotus. We're both trying but I can't make a lotus, I'm working on it but I can't make a lotus, and I once could. We all once could and so it's like making that circle back. I mean that's why I always use this in the titles of my songs. My publishing company is called "Infant Happiness, Infant Energy!"[2] Because once we come into this grown-up thing of not really realizing what is there from the beginning, that's really ours. And it's not really "ours" because we're getting into that "mine" and then there's also this "mine" of "mine." But we're actually trying to realize this universal awareness of himself. I feel like the revolution is inside — revolution, revolution — because that's the journey, the most dangerous journey. The hardest journey is the journey inside. It's strange me saying that, being a traveler like I am, but the revolution is really inside.

Note: Eagle-Eye is Don's small son.

..... E N D .....

2 There is no record of this project having materialized.

G R E A T E S T S E N S A T I O N O F A L L T I M E S T O P
Y O U N G A N A R C H I S T S C R E A T E A N A L T E R N A T I V E
S O C I E T Y S T O P T H I S C O U L D B E T H E
B E G I N N I N G O F S O M E T H I N G E L S E S T O P

Report by ÅKE HOLMQUIST

The message was confirmed today at a “Liberate South London” meeting at the local pub, “The World Upside Down.” Well-known BBC “Line-Up” producer Allan Spengler agreed and nodded toward the headlines, “Yes, it seems these people have really got something. They’ll surely be on the air for quite a long time, the underground will take over. An agreement has been made that I’ll stay in for my bread as well. BBC cameramen will be less corrupt. I’ll be able to play golf four times as much as before, who am I to complain?” A gentle atmosphere of relief and understanding sparkles through the minds of media laborers. “An airplane loaded with TV equipment will lift off from London Airport this autumn. Productions made in all parts of the world will be sold to stations and young-lovers wherever they are, and we won’t really come down at all,” a media-freak tells us as he disappears into the miserable atmosphere of London town. The question comes up: Are these media-freaks really going to govern us? Are they really in for the governmental business? Some say they are. Some are, they say, or who else is? Snapping popping peace man. They wanta go but can they blow? I feel sort of disturbed at this moment as a bunch of trippers just jumped off from the “Pop Prom” event at the Roundhouse. Really funny cigarettes, these. And they say they rolled them themselves. Yes I’ll stay in for ten minutes. Otherwise I am not real. Otherwise I cannot hear the sounds of marching feet: “Hallo Piccadilly,” “Hallo Leicester Square.” It’s the fifteen thousand unfortunate fellows walking home from Bogsidefront. Bernadette Devlin will be the Queen. She will be on the aircraft too, probably winding up backlash from videotapes. They say she is good on cooking, cooking up wild messages and blasting them into the Houses of Parliament. I fall into listening to the conversation going around, “So you are Lo, aren’t you? Were you in the front or the back?” “No, my name is Susan.” What are they talking about, these people? Imagine what they will do with all the beautiful music. “I play guitar,” one says. “I prefer to play

an open D." He might as well play without a guitar. Blue Cheer comes down from the electric mountain with Hell's Angels. No more workman's collapsed tables. No more creepy crashpads. Thousands of people from Notting Hill Gate will sleep in peace for seven years and then drop in. Yeah; great things are happening, baby. And you might dig it too.

..... E N D .....

by GEORGE TROLIN

You may touch my skin

but you can only feel my life, my love.

You can see my beauty, my face and hands,

but you can only feel my soul and energy.

Beauty is an outward form,

deceptive from the very start.

It is but a feeble reflection of the soul

of which it is a tiny part.

BABS GONZALES

THE MAN WHO'S PAID HIS DUES

by KEITH KNOX

Babs Gonzales is a fiercely independent spirit who was much involved in the bebop scene in the mid-forties. For fifteen years or more, nothing much was heard of him or his singing until, quite suddenly, times began to get better.

A girl came up to the stage of a dinky club where Babs was singing in New York toward the end of 1968 and declared, "I dig you, Babs Gonzales."

After they had been married for a couple of years she said, "Babs you've got so many weird friends, you should write a book." So it was that Babs wrote I Paid My Dues: Good Times ... No Bread and, with a $10,000 advance from the mafia, it was published by Expubidence Publishing Corporation, an outfit owned fifty-fifty by Babs and his wife. Expubidence also started into the record business with The Expubident World of Babs "Speedy" Gonzales [1968], featuring a mass of jazz talent including Clark Terry, Johnny Griffin, Horace Parlan, and Roy Haynes. The album received a charitable review from DownBeat (April 3rd, 1969) and sold twenty-one thousand copies in two months. The book sold sixty thousand copies in eight months, all essentially by Gonzales's own efforts. Everywhere he goes, Babs sells his book and his record and makes friends.

We spent an eventful evening together in Stockholm with many changes of direction during a flying visit. As we whisked through the traffic machine at Slussen, Babs said, "Write anything you like about this evening because we're not going to be able to sit down quietly and talk. Write exactly the way you feel."

We motored through suburbia, passing by numerous modern apartment blocks, when Babs cried out, "Who lives there, working people?"

"Yes"

"This is where I want to live, it doesn't exist like this anywhere, New York, Milan, London, or Paris. If only I can get a whisky licence I'll get a place like that."

Babs had been in Sweden half a dozen times before but the last time was in 1961, when Simon Brehm was alive and Stockholm was one of the jazz centers of the world.

"Stockholm doesn't have that fire anymore, Copenhagen's got it now. But the Swedish people like fire so maybe things can be changed."

We drove south across town to my place and walked in with twenty minutes to spare for dinner. The apartment was impossibly full of dense smoke from a black pot of burnt brown rice. We opened all the windows, fixed a drink, and decided to eat out. Roy Parker called from the Culture Circle Music Shop to say he'd sold twenty books and twenty records in four hours and where could he order another lot. Babs gave him the address of his wholesaler in Holland.

"You've heard Melba Liston, she works with me in New York, I'd like to bring her over. Look at Quincy Jones, he no longer has the fire, he's out of touch with the people. He needs to go back to his teacher, Melba Liston."

We were listening to a couple of Melba Liston themes, scored by her for Randy Weston's Little Niles album [1959] and one couldn't but agree.

"Nat 'King' Cole was in touch with the people. You know, between his high priced shows he would do a hundred dollar appearances so that the poor people could come. Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis don't do this and they get out of touch. Try to say hello to Sammy Davis and there's a line of about ten people before you get to him, all doing their best to get rid of you. It's all a question of money, not too much and not too little. Too little is no good and too much cuts you off, makes you lonely, and that way you lose your fire. And I don't want to lose my fire."

"It's all a question of who is owned and who owns who. Me, I'm on my own. Norman Granz is a waiter and a dog, he fetches me a drink when I tell him. I made up a song about Norman Granz and he won't be able to stop that record even if he has got ten million dollars, everyone will be able to hear it. I cracked him over the kneecaps once, broke both his kneecaps with Kenny Clarke's drum kit when I was working at Birdland because he wouldn't give me my money."

"We've made this company of ours on a fifty-fifty basis because I appreciate my wife. A lot of musicians forget about their woman when they make it. They drink more and shoot more and get lonelier and more out of touch with the people.

There's only four of us left now from the bebop days, Dizzy, Monk, Miles, and me. You need a good woman, one with brains that really count. My wife's got a fantastic brain, she works on the Women's Wear Daily, which has a circulation of around 800,000 a day. She used to get $125 a week and now she is the first colored editor, getting $250 a week. She used to talk to people and find work for me and she looked after me for a couple of years when I was only working eight or ten weeks a year because I was blacklisted by the Granz and ABC Agencies, which are the two biggest."

We made it out to Gröna Lund Amusement Park more or less on time for Babs's appointment with the manager. There was a hassle at the entrance but Babs spied Ove Lind through the gate and Ove had us let in. The manager was at the edge of a crowd waiting around for the Hollies to begin their show and it was cold and windy. It was arranged that we meet in the coffee house in twenty minutes, after the Hollies were through.

We were all cold and hungry and after thirty minutes Babs decided to split, the man would have to come and look for him instead. As we walked out the manager walked in.....

"You kept me waiting thirty minutes, I'm hungry and my friends are hungry," roared Babs. This was countered with smooth Swedish diplomacy and the two men sat at a table and talked. Eventually all was fixed and Babs slapped the manager heartily on the back, handing him a book and a record. We left, passing a squealing gaggle of teenies outside the Hollies' dressing room.

As we parked outside Grand Hôtel, Babs spoke of last night's experience. "There's a lot of Americans live here, rich gents from the Deep South. Some of them called me over to their table, very nicely, and they told me, "YOU'RE A GREAT ARTIST, WE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING LIKE THAT BEFORE, WE COME FROM THE MISSISSIPPI!"

Babs really digs the neutrality of Sweden, where he can go to Grand Hôtel to eat and the manager is a dog. "There's a millionaire nightclub owner with six clubs who wants me to work a month at the Grand, but I want to split it, two weeks at the Grand and two weeks at Gröna Lund. At Gröna Lund I can sing to five thousand people in the open air and they're the people who will bring me back next year. Also, I can bring in Joe Newman, Johnny Griffin, and my rhythm

section from Paris for the Gröna Lund job. I like to find work for the musicians in Europe because they're hungry and they need work. You've got to travel, if you stay in Europe you get local European rates and that's no good. That's why I came to Stockholm instead of staying in Paris, before I see my Josephine, la! la!"

His major concern was not just getting a job for himself, because he had work lined up in Copenhagen, for a summer season with Josephine Baker at the Tivoli Gardens. Babs enjoyed coming to Stockholm and, as he said, "If I can get a whisky licence for a club, I'd like to come back." He had already set up a job for Ben Webster at Stampen in Stockholm, because Ben needed work. All over Europe Babs had been setting up venues for the Sun Ra Arkestra to tour, because he'd promised faithfully that he would find Sun Ra work in Europe. Babs has his own group in a club in New York, "right opposite Carnegie Hall," where he works with pianist Walter Davis, among others, and is happy that many great musicians drop in pretty well every evening to jam, including Clark Terry, Dizzy, and Errol Garner, to name a few. He would like to open another club either in Copenhagen or, if he can get a whisky licence, in Stockholm. That way he could work a three-month season in both venues without stretching himself out and give work to a number of musicians that he likes working with, many of whom are hungry.

These days he is enjoying his success and likes singing to lots of people, selling his book and records in the process and fixing the business himself. This takes a lot of energy and he doesn't have any plans for getting hustled. Babs has a sharp appraisal for everyone he meets, just like that, BANG "Does it come from the heart and does it have fire! Living is an art in itself and you don't have to be a musician to be an artist."

Before we settled down to Chateaubriand and goose liver truffles at the Grand, Babs located the upstairs band boy and organized liquor at forty cents a shot. I asked him where the "Speedy" had come from on his Expubident record. "You know the cartoon — Speedy Gonzales — I found that if I put 'Speedy' there I would sell a lot more records!"

Babs began to reminisce, he was on a package tour in 1951 with Frank Sinatra and in Italy they booed Sinatra off the stage. "Sinatra hates me for that 'cos I was there. We opened and warmed the place up with a little bebop, they liked that.

Then Sinatra came on and sang a couple of numbers. There was a stony silence and then one man got up and said, “MR. SINATRA, WE HAVE BETTER SINGERS ON OUR GONDOLAS. I RECKON YOUR SHOW IS WORTH FIFTY CENTS BUT NOT THE TWO DOLLARS TICKET MONEY WE PAID TO GET IN.” Sinatra took no notice and continued singing. There was a great outbreak of booing, the crowd wanted their money back — the show was worth fifty cents and that was all they meant to pay for it. If Sinatra brought Ava Gardner onstage they would make it a dollar.”

Rolf Ericson’s Big Band was playing for dancing at the Grand that evening, Ernie Wilkins scores and the like. This is a swinging band of professionals and they produce some good sounds. In response to a request, Babs appeared onstage and sang a couple of numbers, “You’ve Changed” and, as a tribute to Coleman Hawkins, whose death had been reported earlier that day, “Body and Soul.”

The last I saw of Babs was when I dropped him at Club Stampen to meet the manager. Putte Wickman was blowing clarinet with a quartet and the place was swinging. I had to run so I didn’t hear Babs sing but I could see that he was among friends and everything was fine, la! la!

A SHORT SECTION OF HIMALAYA by ALAN HALKYARD

Arrived in Beirut with
the feeling of trespassing
The dock area was deserted
Life in Texas bar
big unfriendly looking
guy in doorway
Walked on in silent streets
five Arabs squatted
Who's right?
Syria, revolution,
many people killed
my compassion!
When do you think
the borders will be open?
Bloody fools

Nepal is in front of me
Kathmandu is a black circle
with red veins of travel
I am there somewhere,
I wonder how small
I'd be represented in scale
Geoff is somewhere in India
Life goes on in Israel
Girls flit around in my
consciousness
Moira's working in the restaurant
I'm not part of anything
Today I'm very scared of the world
How many things are happening now?
So President Kennedy's been killed
And I've just seen a picture of his wife
She looked very sad. It's
made me sad too

TOMORROW WE ARE LEAVING CYPRUS

Joan I'm sat on a throne
Chee or what?
Tea, Ah!
Chee not tea
Who me!
Him Ah!
Nilly?
Don't be silly
Why are you leaving Nilly?
It's silly to say who, what or why?
When it's all been said laying in bed

I AM VERY GLAD CYPRUS IS FOR OTHER PEOPLE

The open insincerity
of this type of Indian
You are invited in
Him: What relation are you?
Me: She's my wife
Him: Oh I See, whisky sir?
Me: Yes please.....

It's just these days that pass
suddenly in an uproar
Bursting into stars
of a million unconsciousnesses
Each one sticking in

It's all yellow and blue today
not much to do today
But to stay and stray
With longing wishing wondering,
if it's at all a real way

Round about
our faces flow
the happiness of
our memories

It's here we washed
I swam
I washed your back
It's here I loved
you, amongst the willows
that caress
the water that runs
under the roman bridge
forever

A small hotel room
in Teheran, Persia's
miserable capital
Only 600 miles from
the Afghanistan border
We got caught up in
the revolution
In Damascus
I never will forget
the look of people
running from
machine-gun fire
That evening I wrote
a play
sat on the hotel roof
watching the Nasser planes
dive and machine-gun the street
7.15
He was carrying flowers
He was stopped by the police
Questioned!?
I saw the beginning of a beating
Spilled flowers
I went inside

Me: Do you ever feel tired
or do you just go to bed?
Him: Just go to bed
Me: Do you think you could
fix that guy?
Him: Not mainline ...
Me: What do you think a
junkie is?
Him: I should have come
to a conclusion
by now ...

Joan darling
at the moment
I don't see any
prospect of me
returning to England
within the next couple
of years
I have no present address
but I no longer need
your letters
we are in love
ALAN

I am living in a cave on Cyprus
preparing for the second part
of my journey
I'm reading a lot, thinking too
much, eating sometimes
I'm very happy ...

I was lost for a moment
trapped in awareness
Trying to grasp what
seeing this was affecting
me ...

It is
these days
that are
smoothly
joyful
each one

It's these days that twist around you
With things popping, making funny
exploding feelings next to your heart
Each one sticking in ...

Somersaulting back to
how many months to no
Was it?
That the true story of someone's
love was learned by listening
Let me tell you now
my love was more than my lies
Let me tell you now
I loved you then
I love you now
I love you always

Him: And by the way Man I mean
Where've you been then?
Me: I've been away in the woods
talking to trees,
to ask what it felt like to sway in the breeze

EVERY SO OFTEN I FALL IN LOVE

DO YOU?

Him: And what did they tell you
man I mean?
Me: They said climb up and sit
on our limbs,
I guess it's like waking
and stretching
morning
and yawning

Write some more man!
I can't, I'm all used up
OH! man I'm high, high

Picking his teeth
staring in space
Look at that!
A whole steak left
Clomp, slurp
is that sauerkraut good?
Folding his hands
Together still staring in space

A: Let's go on the roof
and watch the butchers
G: (Sips tea, groans, and lies
back on the bed)
(Revolution news comes over the radio
Arabic but unmistakable)
G: The man
he came for that letter,
the letter that was here
when we came
A: No, I don't remember ...
(Both continue writing)

I think
I couldn't
make you believe it
Not yet ...

AH! AH! I larfed
as I looked out at the thermometer
up ten degrees

AH! AH! I larfed
as I looked out at sunshine
on the snow

AH! AH! I larfed
as I looked out and thought of Einar's
opened suitcase

AH! AH! I larfed
as Caliento brought in this
morning spring

AH! AH! I'm sick I said!

South Indian spring

LAWRENCE KUMPF is the founder and Artistic Director of Blank Forms. He has curated exhibitions such as "Henning Christiansen: Freedom is Around the Corner" (2018) at 55 Walker Street, New York; "Catherine Christer Hennix: Traversée du Fantasme" (2018) at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; and "Open Plan: Cecil Taylor" (with Jay Sanders) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016). He is the editor of the Blank Forms journal and of *Catherine Christer Hennix: Poësy Matters and Other Matters* (Blank Forms Editions, 2019).

NAIMA KARLSSON is an artist and musician from London. Her practice incorporates photography, drawing, text, and music composition–led by interests in abstraction, repetition, improvisation, and the history of jazz. Karlsson is an archivist for the art and music of her grandparents, Moki and Don Cherry, and an administrator for their estate.

MAGNUS NYGREN is a Stockholm-based music journalist and writer. He is currently at work on an extensive biography of Don Cherry. Nygren is the editor of the Swedish magazine *JAZZ* (formerly *OrkesterJournalen*) and was previously the editor of the online publication Sound of Music.

CHRISTER BOTHÉN is a Swedish visual artist, composer, improviser, and multi-instrumentalist from Gothenburg. He has played as a member of Spjärnsvallet, Bitter Funeral Beer Band, Archimedes Badkar, Bolon Bata, and Fire! Orchestra, in addition to leading his own ensembles.

NENEH CHERRY is a musician based in London. She is a cofounder of the post-punk band Rip Rig + Panic and the trip-hop group CirKus, and she has released five records under her own name, including *Raw Like Sushi* (Virgin, 1989) and, with the Thing, *The Cherry Thing* (Smalltown Supersound, 2012). Cherry is the daughter of Don and Moki Cherry. Her most recent album is *Broken Politics* (Smalltown Supersound, 2018).

RUBA KATRIB is Curator at MoMA PS1 in New York, where she recently curated the exhibition "Theater of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991–2011," with Peter Eleey, and a retrospective of Simone Fattal (both 2019). Katrib regularly writes for periodicals including *Art in America*, *Artforum*, *Cura.*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Parkett*, and *Mousse*.

KEITH KNOX is a physicist and jazz critic from England. In addition to conducting important early interviews with Don Cherry and authoring major articles on him, Knox helped Cherry to assemble his resume and write grants in the 1970s.

RITA KNOX is a British photographer and chemist. Throughout the 1970s, she documented the avant-garde in Sweden through her photographs, audio

recordings, writing, and interviews with key figures including Terry Riley, Pandit Pran Nath, and Catherine Christer Hennix.

FUMI OKIJI is an assistant professor in rhetoric at University of California Berkeley. She works across black study, critical theory, and sound and music studies. Okiji is author of *Jazz as Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (Stanford University Press, 2018).

BEN YOUNG is an independent researcher, archivist, and historian. His work as producer and annotator has been heard on the radio stations WKCR in New York and WICN in Massachusetts, and can be found on the record labels Verve, BMG, Savoy, Mosaic, Inky Dot Media, Cosmic Myth, Survival, Revenant, and Triple Point Records, which he founded in 2009. Young is the author of *Dixonia: A Bio Discography of Bill Dixon* (Greenwood Press, 1998) and the exhaustive biography *A New Energy: Cause and Effect in the Musical Career of Cecil Taylor*, forthcoming this year.

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