

Experimental Oriental: New Music and Other Others

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In this essay I will seek to explicate some aspects of the underlying paradigm that frames and makes sensible the use of non-Western elements in Western art music of recent vintage. Specifically, we should wonder: How does Orientalism function in the experimental tradition? And what different forms does it take within that compositional world? Though we should not avoid the fact that there can, indeed, be a sinister side to the practice, it seems relevant to try to fully think through these issues before lumping all such borrowings together, bundling them up and tossing them overboard. Even if such dismissal or dressing-down *were* desirable, on the overdetermined cruise ship that transnational culture has now become, utopian separatism just is not feasible. Indeed, as we shall see, certain of the Orientalist appropriations have long ago been reappropriated by non-Western agents and put back to use in varied ways. The move to disentangle “authentic” ethnic music from its hybridized new-music forms can be seen as a reassertion of the peculiar Western power to define (and preserve) “pure” expressions of cultural ethnicity as opposed to their “tainted” counterparts. Better, it seems, to describe the underlying epistemic framework which provides a context for American and European classical music’s overwhelming turn to the music of “other” cultures.

To elaborate the Orientalist tradition in new music in any comprehensive way would require a book of its own. What I aim to do here is simply lay out some overarching ideas and a sampling of pivotal figures and their work, primarily—though not exclusively—through the lens of the American experimental tradition and its polyglot offspring.

I. EXPERIMENT (OCCIDENT)

Though its exact genealogy is open to debate, American experimental composition first acquired escape velocity from the dominant European model

in the work of Charles Ives. A widespread syncretic historical phenomenon stretching from coast to coast, post-Ivesian American experimental composition has, in its eighty-year history, incorporated people from vastly divergent backgrounds—its ranks typically swell to include Carl Ruggles, Edgard Varèse, Charles Seeger, Henry Cowell, Harry Partch, Ruth Crawford, Henry Brant, Conlon Nancarrow, Lou Harrison, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, and Christian Wolff. Later branches include the minimalists (Steve Reich, La Monte Young, Philip Glass, Terry Riley, Tony Conrad); electronic, tape and computer conceptualists like Alvin Lucier, Gordon Mumma, and David Behrman; and text-based performance artists like Charles Amirkhania, Laurie Anderson and Robert Ashley.¹ But one composer's name is never left out: John Cage.²

Cage became a spokesman for experimental music, a role preceded (and inspired) by the publication of Cowell's important treatise *New Musical Resources*, written in the teens but unpublished until 1930.³ Starting in the late 1930s, during a period in which Cage was beginning to utilize percussion and electronics as a way of introducing nonmusical elements into his compositions (the work that led to his development and refinement of Cowell's notion of prepared piano), he began to actively theorize his brand of experimentalism. "Centers of experimental music must be established," he insisted in a lecture in 1937. "In these centers, the new materials, oscillators, turntables, generators, means for amplifying small sounds, film phonographs, etc., available for use. Composers at work using twentieth-century means for making music."⁴ Cage's father, it has often been noted, was an inventor.

The many forms that American experimental composition has taken between that time and today have been well chronicled elsewhere.⁵ The point here is to indicate how the notion of experimentation rhetorically carries into the process of musical composition a connotation of science—of laboratory experimentation, as in Cage's proposed "centers"—and to indicate how that rhetorical turn functions to disavow any political or ideological dimension that the work might yield. There have, of course, been notable post-war composers who were both committed experimentalists and politically active, some (like Cornelius Cardew, Frederic Rzewski, and Luigi Nono) explicitly intertwining the two. But even apart from any of its specific incarnations (a few of which we will examine later), the basic association of experimentation with composing potentially configures music-making as a clean slate, without the ideological baggage of European tradition to weigh it down. This break is clearly one of the distinguishing marks of American experimental and avant-garde composition: music is suddenly about looking for new forms, processes, and materials. And it is also about the conducting of experiments without predicting or manipulating the results. Reflecting Cage's well-known desire to rid himself of ego and style, the experiment functions to impart the same ideological blankness, the same un-

partisan pretense, and, ultimately, the same universal scientificity as experimental methodology does in the realm of hard science. Where an older model of scientific inquiry as the apex of control and rationality was the discursive formation in which serialism was elaborated, experimentalism takes the image of science as inquiry and looks forward to new paradigms of fuzzy logics, chaos theory, probability and chance.⁶ In her essay “Chance Operations: Cagean Paradox and Contemporary Science,” N. Katherine Hayles describes this as “the entanglement of causal determinism with an open and unpredictable future.”⁷

It is important to recall the basic assumption behind the idea of experimental method: namely, that the outcome of the experiment is always undetermined. The hypothesis can never assume its results, but must await their appearance; experimental results then help prove or disprove the hypothesis (or, in other cases when they expose design flaws in the experimental framework, they may help redesign the experiment), but they are (at least ideally) inert, open-ended, and potentially subversive of the desired outcome. By definition, experimental data must be able to behave in a way not predicted by the hypothesis. Thus, the experiment is conceived as an excellent setting for exploration and discovery, a perfect opportunity for an encounter with the new, the unforeseen, and the unfamiliar.

II. CONCEPT

In a certain wing of experimental music the concerns of the composer shift from conventional ones of tone, dynamic, rhythm, harmony, form and timbre to more strictly experimental ones, such as process, method, procedure, tools, framework, and even context.

Cage examined the possibilities of musical composition as process very thoroughly, especially in his many aleatory, indeterminate, or chance-procedures pieces, which he began composing in the 1950s. He initially did this work with the help of the ancient Chinese oracle *I Ching* (or *Book of Changes*), to which he was introduced in its first English publication in 1951 by like-minded composer Christian Wolff. Cage later utilized many other devices, from Hans Arp-like random collage methods to the use of computers to aid in the decision-making process of composition. Cage forecast the waning importance of preordained structure in works like his *Sonatas and Interludes* (which he wrote with the compositional device of flipping coins), a presence only felt as a part of the overarching compositional process. “The structure . . . determined the beginning and ending of the compositional process,” he explained at Darmstadt in 1958, discussing *Sonatas and Interludes*. “But this process, had it in the end brought about a division of parts the time-lengths of which were proportional to the original series of numbers, would have been extraordinary. And the presence of the mind as a rul-

ing factor, even by such an extraordinary eventuality, would not have been established. For what happened came about only through the tossing of coins."⁸ By eliminating the governing principle of structure and supplanting taste with process, Cage sought explicitly to divorce composing from "the mind as a ruling factor," and thereby liberate sounds from their social and political connotations.

Subsidiary Trope: Terra Incognita

In close conjunction with the rhetoric of experimentation, we find an associated set of tropes clustered around the idea of exploration and discovery. The experimenter (and much has been made of the fact that Cage's father actually *was* an inventor) is also a rugged cartographer of new lands or navigator of unknown waters, a sonic De Soto or musical Magellan. In this discursive regime, the composer is configured as an explorer looking for terra incognita. This notion of discovery or exploration helps undergird the idea that the composer is engaging in a value-free, experimental endeavor, even as it allows us to suggest the colonialist impulse submerged in its rhetoric. It is assumed that the discoverer-composer, out on the open seas of aural possibility, surely will bring back ideas and practices from distant lands, perhaps ones that can enhance the quality of Western musical life. Musical experimentation becomes metaphorical microcolonialism. To be a cultured mid-to-late-twentieth-century Westerner, then, means to appreciate the spoils of such musical exploration, to be a healthy relativist. As Lou Harrison puts it:

Along with Henry Cowell I deem it necessary to know well at least one musical tradition other than the one into which one is born. This second acquisition ought to be "equivalent." If Haydn is known, then an equivalent court music should be studied and learned: Javanese Gadon for example, or Chinese or Japanese or Korean court or chamber music. It will not do to extend from Beethoven sonatas to Bluegrass banjo; the social and intellectual contents are largely incommensurate.⁹

In Harrison's statement one can detect both the globalizing undertone that informs most contemporary "world music" projects and a peculiar stratification that mandates a transcultural link between musics of similar hierarchical status and social provenance. Listeners should explore, chart new territory, but make sure not to stray from music of the same caste; breaking down cultural barriers may be a good idea, but leave class lines alone.

II. EXPERIMENT (ORIENT)

An interest in non-Western, nonclassical materials was not introduced into American experimental composition through Cage's work with the *I Ching*, however. Indeed, Cowell had written long before of the potential utility of

nondiatonic, microtonal scales: “Successful experiments, and the well-known practice of Oriental music, show that these tones are not beyond the capacity of the human ear. . . . Sliding tones, based on ever-changing values of pitch instead of steady pitches, are sometimes used in music. Such tones are very frequently used in primitive music, and often in Oriental music. . . .”¹⁰ Cowell also suggested that the stiff, unyielding rhythms characteristic of Western music might benefit from the nuances of alien input: “Not only do nearly all Oriental and primitive peoples use such shades of rhythm, but also our own virtuosi, who instead of playing the notes just as written, often add subtle deviations of their own.” The proximity of “primitive” and “Oriental” is telling here. Indeed, it should be noted that Cowell is sometimes grouped with Leo Ornstein and George Antheil, who were arguably the musical equivalents of Picasso in their overt use of primitivism.¹¹ Ornstein (composer of “Danse Sauvage”) and Antheil (composer of “Sonata Sauvage”) both professed interest in what they saw as a rawness and brutality of “primitive” cultures and sought to translate that aspect into a productively shocking effect in the West, just as Picasso had in his works influenced by African masks and sculptures.

Johannes Fabian has unpacked the way that cultural anthropology tends to position its object at a temporal distance from itself, even when the people in question are contemporaneous with the inquirer. Fabian locates this in the context of a capitalist, colonialist-imperialist expansionism in which “*geopolitics* has its ideological foundation in *chronopolitics*”: “Anthropology emerged and established itself as an allochronic discourse; it is a science of other men in another Time. It is a discourse whose referent has been removed from the present of the speaking/writing subject.”¹² Already, right at the outset of the proverbial golden years of American experimentalism, a familiar nineteenth-century form of Orientalism helps guide an overriding interest in non-Western musics: “Oriental” music is linked, at least by persistent proximity, with the “primitive,” and both are looked to for their rejuvenative powers in a period of mounting dissatisfaction with conventional Western musical civilization. The Oriental is first distanced from the West (to suggest its difference), then embraced as a potent import—it is, in Edward Said’s terms, *Orientalized*: “Primitiveness therefore inhered in the Orient, *was* the Orient, an idea to which anyone dealing with or writing about the Orient had to return, as if to a touchstone outlasting time or experience.”¹³ What various “traditional” musics bring to the Western classical scene is a sort of shock of the ancient—they are seen as having values that were lost over the course of European art music history, or perhaps were never there in the first place. It is important, then, that these traditions be configured as old—perhaps primitive—so that they can whisper their secrets in the ear of the Western composer. Of course, this means that those traditional musics must not change, and never have. As Said suggests: “The very

possibility of development, transformation, human movement—in the deepest sense of the word—is denied the Orient and the Oriental. As a known and ultimately an immobilized or unproductive quality, they come to be identified with a bad sort of eternity: hence, when the Orient is being approved, such phrases as ‘the wisdom of the East.’¹⁴ In addition to positioning the Orient as this sort of timeless knowledge, another way Orientalist discourse functions, according to Said, is by empowering the Westerner to typify, generalize, and subsequently represent what is Oriental: “In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the upper hand.”¹⁵ Within Orientalism the Oriental object can never represent itself, but is essentialized and represented as a combined projection of Western desires and anxieties and a reassertion of Western control. American experimentalists have consistently defined the Oriental as a generalized set of potential “new musical resources.” Cowell, for instance, only barely distinguishes *which* Oriental musical practice or practices he is referencing (in *New Musical Resources* his most specific citations are of Javanese and Siamese music, ancient Greek music, and Hawaiian music),¹⁶ and he never specifies whether he means classical or court musics (of which there are many, centuries old, and hardly “primitive”), popular musics, or traditional folk musics. Note the difference from Harrison’s dictate that people should know more than one music culture; though curiously stratified and clearly elitist, Harrison is very specific about which kind of music—art/court, folk/popular—is “equivalent,” hence calling for a more detailed and less blanketlike understanding of other musics and an admission that there are art music traditions other than the Western classical lineage. Like Harrison’s, Cowell’s encounter with non-Western music was facilitated by the fact that he lived on the West Coast, and in San Francisco as a young person he spent much time studying various musical traditions, especially Chinese and Japanese vocal technique, Indonesian gamelan and Indian classical music.¹⁷ By referring to these musics in a generalized way, Cowell retains his positional superiority, defining and then appropriating elements that help him dislocate conventional European harmony and rhythm.

Nevertheless, in comparison with the bald exoticism of Antheil and Ornstein, Cowell’s early work—especially the remarkable body of solo piano music he composed in the 1910s and 1920s—remains particularly interesting and valuable in its oblique use of non-Western musics, the way that it tends to treat them as inspiration and catalyst rather than as exotic, “savage” incendiary devices to be thrown at polite concert conventions. One can, for instance, hear certain aspects of koto music in his celebrated development of clusters and other dense voicings; and it is easy in retrospect to see his instructions to perform directly on the strings of the piano with fingers or foreign implements—abstracting the major icon of Western art music and turn-

ing it into an *objet retrouvé*—as relating to Asian string traditions for instruments performed similarly, such as the chin and kayagum. As pianist Chris Burn, a Cowell specialist, explains: “He often transferred playing techniques from other stringed instruments. These include strumming, plucking, scraping and stopping the strings, the latter to produce muted tones and a wide variety of harmonics.”¹⁸ Cowell’s distance from the primitivist camp is reflected in the titles of these pieces, which all relate to the mythology of the Celtic isles, his father’s ancestry. In these formative and important pieces, rather than reference Asian musics, Cowell develops his own music out of them, developing new instrumental techniques and approaching the piano (and, consequently, certain entrenched aspects of Western harmony) anew. According to this model, non-Western musics provide a mirror that allows Western music to reconsider itself. In his piano repertoire, at least, Cowell resisted the lure of superficial exoticism. Composer, instrument-inventor, and resolute outsider Harry Partch also fits this description. In the arsenal of new musical tools he created—thoroughly theorized in his book *The Genesis of a Music*—Partch too took inspiration from non-Western musics he heard as a young person in California and developed his own music from them, building his own tools where Cowell looked for a new one already waiting in the piano. Further, Partch was profoundly struck by Chinese and Japanese theatrical traditions, and he took pains to discuss his work as ritual and drama, rather than autonomous concert music.

Early on, Cage discussed the inherent possibilities of percussion and improvisation directly in relation to Asian and African American music. In 1937 he wrote: “Methods of writing percussion music have as their goal the rhythmic structure of a composition. As soon as these methods are crystallized into one or several widely accepted methods, the means will exist for group improvisations of unwritten but culturally important music. This has already taken place in Oriental cultures and in hot jazz.”¹⁹ This pair of musical archetypes provides Cage with a springboard for decades of consideration, specifically by embracing certain aspects of the “Oriental” and eventually rejecting the expressive, narrative orientation of jazz.²⁰

While teaching at Cornish School in Seattle, Washington, in the late 1930s, Cage was first introduced to the teachings of Zen Buddhism, and Cage’s budding interest in Zen was further stimulated by his encounter with Zen proselytizer and philosopher Daisetz T. Suzuki at a lecture at Columbia University in 1945. Cage studied with Suzuki and actively read various philosophical texts (not by any means limited to Zen); his noted favorites included the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and Aldous Huxley’s *The Perennial Philosophy*. In his work with words—both written and spoken—and in lectures and explanations of his working methods, Cage consistently referred to the writings of non-Western philosophers; some of his best-known writings on boredom, aesthetics, and politics are as much steeped in Zen and Indian philosophy

as in Thoreau and Duchamp. He attributed his important reconsideration of the role of silence in musical composition to Hindu and Buddhist concepts. "My concern toward the irrational," Cage remarked in 1967, "and my belief that it is important to us in our lives, is akin to the use of the koan in Zen Buddhism. That is to say, we are so accustomed and so safe in the use of our observation of relationships and our rational faculties that in Buddhism it was long known that we needed to leap out of that, and the discipline by which they made that leap take place was by asking a question that could not be answered rationally."²¹

III. CONCEPTUAL ORIENTALISM VS. CONTEMPORARY CHINOISERIE

It would be false to assume that all forms of cultural appropriation are alike. In the case of experimental music, we can trace two basic, very different kinds of work that directly relate to and emanate from the encounter with non-Western cultures. As we have seen, these two lines may well have been closely related in their infancy—Cage's interest in percussion music and Cowell's initial development of techniques for prepared piano were both derived from a sheer delight in the new timbres and textures of various kinds of Asian, Indonesian, and African musics. And some of Cage's early keyboard music clearly exploits the possibilities of turning the piano into a one-man gamelan. But where Cowell later went on to exploit other musics for their exotic appeal, as we shall see, Cage saw the use of non-Western music and philosophy as a potential strategy for the disruption of the Western preoccupation with harmony, structure and intentionality.

Through his increasing use of Zen (rather than simple exotic musical material), Cage developed a substantially altered version of Orientalism, an Orientalism based not on the acquisition of new sonic objects but concerned with posing unanswerable or indefinite musical questions. The image of the musical koan—an unsolvable riddle or paradox used in Buddhism to derail rationality—became Cage's badge of honor, and he himself became, for many new-art followers and makers alike, a pop-Zen icon. He was known for telling Buddhist jokes, parables, and anecdotes, as well as translating into musical composition the ideas of triviality, paradox, contempt for absolute meaning, and respect for sound-as-sound. Indeed, some significant degree of Cage's lasting public image is inextricably bound up in what he referred to (usually in the aggregate, rather than specifically) as "Oriental philosophy," and he was seen by many as being a major figurehead for non-Western thought in America. The way that soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy characterizes late 1950s New York bohemia, for instance, says much about that close link: "Zen was in the air, everybody was reading Cage. . . ." ²² Cage's preoccupation with the irrational led him to conceive of strict systems in which he could produce random events or chance occurrences. But if we have already configured him

as a prime conceptualist in contemporary music, it is necessary to see that move in relation to a persistent Orientalist orientation.

Ryoanji

Cage's conceptual Orientalism does not start by trying to import an alien idea into his work or graft an exotic element onto it, nor does it base itself around a non-Western system or sound. It is not about semblance, not about "sounding" non-Western. Instead, Cage creates the conditions for certain events to happen, the concept for which may be roughly based, for instance, in an Asian source. The resulting music, however, may have little or nothing aesthetically to do with the originary system—indeed, Cage was usually at pains to avoid such stylistic or idiomatic markers. In his 1983 composition *Ryoanji*, for example, he used the visual image of the Japanese stone garden as the starting point for the piece. He prepared paper with two rectangular areas, then in the first traced parts of the perimeter of stones (placed using chance procedures), indicating glissandi in relatively conventional graphic notation (sliding between bottom=low and top=high). This created a series of solos, each followed by a silence of unspecified length. In the other rectangle, Cage composed the accompaniment, guided by the image of the raked sand that sits under stones in a garden; this suggested to him that he should utilize five unison parts distributed randomly (but systematically) on the page.

While referring in its title and working process to Japanese culture, the resulting piece *Ryoanji* (of which Cage made versions for oboe, trombone, flute, voice, and bass-and-voice, all accompanied by percussion) does not resemble anything specifically Japanese at all. The instrumentation is primarily standard-issue Western classical (save the percussion part, which, in dedicatee Michael Pugliese's performances, included a rock, pod rattle, small log, and drum), and the superimposition of the two pieces—each conceived as a solo, but played simultaneously—creates something that is conceptually and processually indebted to a non-Western inspiration. This is an oblique form of Orientalism, not the direct incorporative or syncretic form to which the West is more accustomed. But it is still Orientalist. Cage's use of systems—superimposed sets of rule-based parameters for the construction of works—qualifies him as one of the most genuinely experimental composers of American experimentalism. He designed concepts and executed them without knowing for certain what the outcome would be. (At times, like many scientists, he even admitted to cheating to get the results he desired.) But we have already seen how that cloak of ideological blankness, grounded in the scientific connotation of experimentation, does not evade the underlying value system that produces it. In other words, while Cage's conceptual work may not *seem* Orientalist, in the final analysis the ends never totally escape the means.

Persian Set

If Cage's conceptual Orientalism stirred others into concept-based work—his progeny ranging from Fluxus composers like George Brecht and Nam June Paik to a long laundry list of academic Cageans—another lineage of Orientalist work continued unabated. That more generic type of Orientalism might be best titled “contemporary chinoiserie,”²³ in homage to the decorative tradition it most closely resembles. In this case, it is specifically the exotic sounds, textures, instruments, voices and shapes of non-Western music that are appropriated for use in a new-music context. These can be seen as vibing up the senile classical music scene, adding thrilling new grist to the moribund old elitist mill. But they also continue a tried and true tradition, well established in the nineteenth century, of exotic Orientalist musical decoration.

Consider, for example, Cowell's composition *Persian Set*. Written in 1957, while Cowell and his wife were visiting Tehran, Iran, during a world tour funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, *Persian Set* is a far cry from the systematic experimental work of Cage. Cowell characterized it as “a simple record of musical contagion,”²⁴ and it has the air of an idiomatic study of the basics of Iranian music. Obviously indebted to late romanticism, it also sounds reminiscent of Copland's *Americana* (Cowell, too, was composing *Americana* such as *American Melting Pot* and *Old American Country Set* as early as the late 1930s), and it is not too distant in feel from something like Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* or Ravel's *Bolero*. Like both those widely recorded, popularized pieces, *Persian Set* has an air of pastichery and world-music kitsch about it. It borders more on easy listening music's global exotics—extremely popular in the mid-1950s, along with tiki lounges and widespread chop suey—than on Cowell's earlier promise of an armada of startling new musical resources. (It is interesting to note that a popular easy listening duo of that period, Ferrante & Teicher, specialized in using prepared pianos in many of their explicitly exoticist, pseudo-Polynesian pieces.) In 1958, Cage pointedly wrote: “Cowell's present interests in the various traditions, Oriental and early American, are not experimental but eclectic.”²⁵

Conceptual Orientalism and contemporary chinoiserie—most of the relevant experimental and new-music movements since World War II, when they have explicitly used non-Western elements in their construction, have had their feet planted in one of these two camps. The lineage of composers creating pure chinoiserie is quite strong, and certainly includes Alan Hovhaness, whose work Brian Morton eloquently sums up as combining “semi-mystical ‘Eastern’ hokum with Orthodox and Western church music, and routine ‘classical’ form . . . a hefty warning of the superficiality and bland eclecticism

that lies in wait even for more adventurous experimenters and that seems a particular pitfall of West Coast culture."²⁶ Colin McPhee's compositions, such as his best known 1936 piece "Tabuh-tabuhan," stretch the definition of "influence" by being perilously close to the actual *sound* of Balinese gamelan music. He studied the Indonesian court music very closely and wrote the ethnomusicological classic *Music in Bali* while living there from 1931–39. This raises the problem of the ethical dimension of its authorship.²⁷ Though on paper he may have required more specific knowledge of musical traditions than Cowell, Lou Harrison too created works more notable for the craft of their panglobal exotic referentiality—using Indonesian scales and orchestras consisting of both Western and non-Western instruments in rather forced, lushly arranged East-West cultural grafts—than for their intellectual innovation. Unlike Cowell, Partch, and Cage, who were stimulated by non-Western musics to come up with something conceptually and/or sonically original, Hovhaness, McPhee, and Harrison tended to pay homage with the sincerest form of flattery—cheap imitation. The political blank slate of experimentality gave them license to imitate at will, to continue the venerable tradition of, in Said's words, "domestications of the exotic."²⁸

To be sure, some composers have used a combination of conceptual and decorative Orientalism. The minimalists, for instance, adopted both sounds *and* ideas from extraneous sources, allowing them to both resemble classical Indian (in the case of drones and modalism) or West African music (in the case of cyclical polymeter) and, at the same time, to use sounds and systems derived from those traditions as tools with which to interrogate and dislocate conventional Western musical reality.

IV. STRUCTURALIST MINIMALIST

*I am not interested in improvisation or in sounding exotic.*²⁹

STEVE REICH, 1969

Fifty years after Cowell had formally suggested the turn to other cultural traditions in experimental music, the impulse was still strongly felt by American composers, particularly those wishing to find a different path from both the European serialist and postserialist line and the Cagean conceptual line. For Steve Reich, Cage's compositional use of chance process had been impossible to detect, and Reich instead wanted a process that was audible as it was being performed or played back. In 1970, after spending five months studying Ewe music with master drummer Gideon Alorworye in Ghana, Reich wrote *Drumming*, his landmark piece. Though he'd already been exploring phase-relation pieces in which a musical process of changing rhythmic relations between repeating figures clearly occurs, this work launched his career and cemented his reputation as one of the foremost minimalist

figures. Two years later, he spent a summer studying Balinese gamelan with I Nyoman Sumandhi. Fellow minimalist Philip Glass was similarly influenced by North Indian classical music through studies with tabla player Alla Rakha in the late 1960s, and Terry Riley had even earlier been using looping and phasing rhythms. Their music, too, attempted to use complexities of cyclical time to undermine composerly practice and moreover to rethink the conventions of Western musical *structure*. Outspoken in his desire not to sound like the musics he was learning about, Reich posed the problem of absorbing influences: “What can a composer do with this knowledge?” His answer was specifically to suggest that a Western composer should study non-Western structures, allowing them to influence rather than seeking to imitate them. “This brings about the interesting situation of the non-Western influence being there in the thinking, but not in the sound,” he concluded.³⁰ Thus, while he initially thought of writing *Drumming* for African instruments, he decided against this so as not to be too literal. While he was clearly inspired by his transcriptions of African music and study of Indonesian musics, Reich attempted to utilize what he learned as a way of challenging the formal and structural components of Western classical music, particularly its moribund sense of how to deal with pulsed time. “What was it about Steve Reich’s ‘Drumming’ that brought the audience to its feet at the Museum of Modern Art on December 3?” asked composer/writer Tom Johnson in an early column for the *Village Voice* in 1971. “Was it the pleasure of seeing African and European elements so thoroughly fused—almost as though we really did live in one world?”³¹ Utopian syncretism is probably not what Reich had in mind, but the opacity of the process and the reliance on rhythmic structures kept *Drumming* and subsequent phase-pieces from being distant enough from their source inspirations to obscure the connection.

V. MATERIALIST MINIMALIST

Reich was equally vocal in his disdain for the other wing of minimalism, which he characterized as “this search for acoustic effect today where one repeats say piano tones over and over again until one can hear the third, fifth, seventh, ninth or a higher partial.”³² Various performers working collaboratively in New York in the early 1960s, including La Monte Young, Marian Zazeela, Angus MacLise, John Cale, and Tony Conrad, began examining not the underlying structure of non-Western music but the very stuff of its being, its acoustical material in physical sound. “Our music is, like Indian music, droningly monotonal,” wrote Conrad in 1966, “not even being built on a scale at all but out of a single chord or cluster of more or less tonically related partials.”³³ Again, this music was not so much imitative of as inspired by non-Western music; it was, indeed, much more bare and single-minded than any

Indian classical music. But the other source of inspiration was domestic: Conrad reports that he and many others were profoundly troubled by Cage's revelation that sounds could be considered music, and he suggests that this caused a serious crisis in composition.

Of course the modernist interpretation was that Cage was shifting the emphasis in composition toward the strategies rather than the materials of the traditional music composer. But for us, for me, I chose to take the more radical lesson to heart, which was boiled down into a one-word composition by Dennis Johnson: "LISTEN!" Listening as an active way of entering into the sound was an answer to the challenge of being a composer and being invested in music. The way in which musical listening comes apart into rhythm and into melody and into pitch and timbre is something that we wanted to reduce to one instant, and indeed, then, listening at that instant produced the interaction among pitches and rhythms and timbres and melodies, all within the inner fabric of the sound which we could understand by knowing more and more about harmonic structures and exploring different harmonic structures and seeing the kinds of things that happen. So we began to develop different relationships between notes than anyone had worked with before.³⁴

Deeply reflecting on the possibilities of single tones played on violins and violas (amplified to allow greater access to upper partials), picking the static sounds apart in the mind's ear—the influence was in the thinking, but not in the sound. Like Cowell, Conrad and company used non-Western music as a catalyst to develop and discover new musical materials from their existing instrumental means.

VI. "FAKE TRIBES": FIRST WORLD + THIRD WORLD = FOURTH WORLD

In 1980, after Glass and Reich had already solidified their international reputations as the leading minimalist composers, trumpeter Jon Hassell released a record in conjunction with Brian Eno called *Fourth World Vol. 1: Possible Musics*. Hassell, who had performed drone-based pieces with La Monte Young's reformed mid-1970s Theater of Eternal Music and had also played on an influential version of Riley's seminal *In C*, had already issued *Earthquake Island* and *Vernal Equinox* on the Tomato label (which had also released important records by Cage and was the fortunate home of Glass's popular breakthrough *Einstein on the Beach*). These records anticipated much of the world-jazz fusion of the ensuing period, with bubbling electric bass (obviously influenced by the electric period of Miles Davis) and exotic percussion, but the "possible musics" Hassell was aiming at were somewhat more complex, at least in theory. They dealt with a fantasy of new hybrid transculturation, an imaginary musical universe in which existing social and political boundaries—individuals, nations, and what Hassell specifically calls

“tribes”—are overlaid with “a new, non-physical communications-derived geography—tribes of like-minded thinkers.”³⁵ The Fourth World.

Hassell’s verbal theorization, taken both from materials issued at that time and retrospective comments, defines the Fourth World as a sort of phantom topography of alternative possibilities, a distinctly utopian interzone where all cultures mingle freely and without anxiety over authenticity or propriety. In this definition, the fourth world might refer to something beyond the contemporary “three,” just as one speaks of a sixth sense.

Of course, this concept tends to veil any power politics inherent in such a program, to bury the intricate hegemonic relations between dominant Western musical ideology and local music cultures worldwide. The notion that such fantasy blendings are desirable is taken as a given, and while Hassell insists that the message of the Fourth World is “that things shouldn’t be diluted” and that the “balance between the native identity and the global identity via various electronic extensions is not one that can be dictated or necessarily predicted,” his proposed merge-world of latent possibilities clearly points in the other direction to a place where new Western technologies and the wisdom of “other cultures, small cultures” are fused. In this respect, Hassell’s music continues to be fusion; taking bits of non-Western music, particularly in the form of Indian and African percussion, and grafting them onto Western structures. On Hassell’s *Dream Theory in Malaya* (“Fourth World Vol. 2”) and Eno and David Byrne’s *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, both from 1981, the producers go so far as to sample their non-Western elements; the material is less integrated than it is literally quoted. All these projects use an exotic-sounding, echoey mix, a long standing trope of sonic Orientalism, usually linked to a “mysteries of the East” mentality. Reverb is also the trademark of Hassell’s electronically treated trumpet, as heard on “Houses in Motion” on Talking Heads’ *Remain in Light*, for example. Exotic new-age primitivist funk fusion: Hassell performs a little addition—the music on *Possible Musics* and *Dream Theory in Malaya* is, figuratively, the simple sum of First and Third World musics. And while it is unquestionably seductive music, at least from a Western perspective, it relies on a familiar Orientalist form of seduction, preferring the slinky, superficial, exotic, ethereal artifacts of various non-Western musics over their deeper structural implications and different, clunkier, less overdeterminedly otherworldly-sounding aspects. The distinct spirit of Fourth World lives on in many of the more recent transcultural productions undertaken by Bill Laswell, among others.

What seems especially suggestive in Hassell’s Fourth World musical concept is the overt idea of fantasizing, of creating what he calls a “faux tribe.”³⁶ In one of the “swollen appendices” to his book *A Year with Swollen Appendices*, Eno takes this one step further, documenting a role-playing game he’d come up with in which musicians were given a new identity with instructions for musical behavior; the specific futuristic identities he created included mu-

sic played in “the Afro-Chinese ghetto in Osaka,” in a (presumably Brooklyn-based) “Neo-M-Base improvising collective,” by “a Soul-Arab band in a North-African role-sex club,” by a “New Afrotech” band in a suburb of Lagos, by “NAFTA’s leading Force Funk band,” and by “a leading recordist at Ground Zero studios in Hiroshima, the largest studio in the Matsui media empire.” Eno describes a related game, “Notes on the Vernacular Music of the Acrux Region,” as “an attempt to imagine a new musical culture, and to invent roles for musicians within it.”³⁷

Recall that one of the primary sites in Said’s initial analysis of Orientalism is the Western *imagination*,³⁸ and that one of the main activities of academic Orientalists was to invent a consistent image of the Orient. Furthermore, Said explains that the sheer number of Orientalists grew after the end of the eighteenth century “because by then the reaches of imaginative and actual geography had shrunk, because the Oriental-European relationship was determined by an unstoppable European expansion in search of markets, resources, and colonies, and finally, because Orientalism had accomplished its self-metamorphosis from a scholarly discourse to an imperial institution.”³⁹ To what degree is the Fourth World a mere extension of this imperialist mapping of a fantasy space of otherness into the electronic telecommunications era? The Orient was, for Orientalists, in part invented to explain and facilitate exchange—albeit exchange with no pretense of parity—between colonial powers and their distant territories. How then does Hassell’s fantasy of a new geography differ from this paradigm? In truth, very little.

Writer and musician David Toop’s book *Ocean of Sound* turns to Hassell’s Fourth World frequently in its exploration of the history and nature of ambient and related musics. Over the course of his “personal nomadic drift,” Toop takes one pass at Said, but instead of grappling with *Orientalism*’s critical edge, he dismisses the work as “a comprehensive demolition job on the West’s obsessive appropriation of the East,” and performs a quick sleight-of-hand with a quotation by putting a positive spin on the idea of “unsettling influences” offered by non-Western music, citing Debussy’s always-mentioned ur-encounter with Vietnamese and Javanese music as a “catalyst for his break from the powerful influence of Wagner.”⁴⁰ But Toop’s sentiments lie much more with the new ethnography of James Clifford and George Marcus, the performance studies fieldwork of Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, and the legacy of surreal anthropology—all of them overwhelmingly optimistic about the politics of cross-cultural inquiry—than with the post-Foucauldian institutional discourse critique of someone like Said. One can see why, quite plainly: where the latter seeks to understand the power dynamic in Orientalism, it seems to me that Toop prefers to uncritically experience and enjoy the effects of that power dynamic. If that were not the case, the ramifications of Said’s “demolition job” for the study (and championing) of ambient and

Fourth World productions would clearly need to be spelled out and dealt with. Like Hassell and Eno's *Possible Musics*, *Ocean of Sound* is historically and aesthetically seductive, but its politics remain deeply impacted.

VII. OCCIDENTALISM OR ASIAN NEO-ORIENTALISM?

We are in a very subtle artistic world where there can be no direct relationships, no Western rationality, no look-what-I-made. Only coincidence.

TOM JOHNSON, DESCRIBING A 1979 PERFORMANCE
BY TAKEHISA KOSUGI AND AKIO SUZUKI

Starting in the 1950s, initially through the work of Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu, Western classical music was faced with a refracted version of the Oriental-experimental tradition. Into the 1960s, Takemitsu wrote pieces that utilized Japanese classical court instruments—biwa, shakuhachi, and, in the case of *In an Autumn Garden*, an entire gagaku ensemble—as well as composing a large number of works using the conventional Western orchestral instrumentarium.⁴¹ Though Takemitsu was the best known, a wave of new-music composers soon hit the scene from various Asian points of origin, all of them studying and most settling in the West. The godfather of Japanese composition, Toshiro Mayuzumi (born in 1929, one year before Takemitsu) composed his rather Western-sounding “Mandala Symphony” (1960) as a “Japanese Buddhist view of the omnipotent universe,” while Somei Satoh, a composer nearly twenty years younger than Mayuzumi, also uses romantic and late-romantic Western elements, as well as material closely verging on chinoiserie. Other noteworthy figures from three generations of Asian composers working in the European and American vanguard include Kazuo Fukushima, Akio Yashifo, Toshi Ichianagi, Yuji Takahashi from Japan, Franco-Vietnamese composer Nguyen-Thien Dao, and Chou Wen-Chung from China.⁴² Like Takemitsu, young Chinese composer Ge Gan-ru has composed orchestral scores that include parts for instruments from China and, more tellingly, for Japanese koto—hence, a trans-Asian string aesthetic allows for cultural borrowing not only *from* but *between* these traditions.

What is particularly interesting about many of these composers is that when their work considers “the Oriental,” it tends to do so as it is found in Cage and his lineage (or, alternately, using a European vanguard vocabulary) as much as it does in Asian traditions closer to home. Paul Griffiths succinctly nails Takemitsu’s Asian neo-Orientalism when he writes: “If Takemitsu’s delight in evanescent, apparently unwilling sonorities seems on the surface to be a Japanese trait, on further reflection it may be found to link him at least as much with Feldman, while his orchestral writing draws much more from Debussy and Boulez than from indigenous traditions.”⁴³ Several Korean composers are important exceptions. Isang Yun, who settled in Germany in 1971

after decades of political persecution, integrates Asian elements drawn from his experience of listening to Korean court, particularly flute, music (hear, for instance, the extraordinary clarinet pieces “Piri” and “Riul”) while reportedly remaining “suspicious of Cage’s ‘oriental’ indeterminacy.”⁴⁴ Nam June Paik was born in Seoul and educated in Japan, and became a key member of the Fluxus (non)movement in the 1960s. An active composer who later stopped composing music, Paik took the Cage line in a much more extreme direction, writing Fluxus-oriented conceptual works. A younger figure, Younghy Pagh-Paan was also born in Seoul; she studied in Germany and now divides her time between Germany and Italy. In her extremely rich, modernist music, Pagh-Paan seems to put Western instrumentation and aspects of postserialist techniques into direct contact with a distinctly Korean aesthetic, without resorting to pastiche or cultural grafting.

Chinese-born composer Tan Dun, since 1986 a resident of New York City, is an excellent contemporary example of the new wave of Asian neo-Orientalist. Take, for example, his 1992 composition *Circle with Four Trios, Conductor and Audience*: in an overtly Cagean move, he scored the piece with a part for the audience to participate by means of improvised “twittering, gossiping, and shouting.” And accompanying the recorded version, the liner booklet includes the following statement from Cage himself: “What is very little heard in European or Western music is the presence of sound as the voice of nature. So that we are led to hear in our music human beings talking only to themselves. It is clear in the music of Tan Dun that sounds are central to the nature in which we live but to which we have too long not listened. Tan Dun’s music is one we need as the east and the west come together as our one home.”⁴⁵ Positioned by Cage as a champion of “the presence of sound as the voice of nature,” Tan Dun’s work is made to fit snugly into the “wisdom of the East” variety of Orientalist discourse. Thus, it is interesting to consider how his work (as well as the work of other Asian, Asian-American, and Asian-European composers) is used to confirm and uphold contemporary forms of Orientalism, legitimizing the prevalent “East meets West” mentality. A stronger form of Orientalism is perhaps permitted by means of identity politics: the work is placed beyond analysis or critique by being created by a genuine Oriental composer. What otherwise inaccessible truth is Tan Dun’s neo-Orientalist vision offering the Western listener? As Gayatri Spivak puts it: “When the cardcarrying listeners, the hegemonic people, the dominant people, talk about listening to someone ‘speaking as’ something or other, I think *there* one encounters a problem. When *they* want to hear an Indian speaking as an Indian, a Third World woman speaking as a Third World woman, they cover over the fact of the ignorance that they are allowed to possess, into a kind of homogenization.”⁴⁶ Where the notion of an Oriental “voice of nature” might seem an overstated Western stereotype,

when articulated through the work of a one-time Chinese farmworker “raised in a rural area filled with magic, ritual and shamanism,”⁴⁷ it is suddenly endowed with the irrefutable aura of ethnic authenticity. And as such it no doubt speaks more forcefully to card-carrying, hegemonic, dominant folks.

Tan Dun scored his 1994 composition *Ghost Opera* for string quartet and pipa, with water, stones, paper and metal—the later elements comprised of bowed gongs and stones, water bowls, metal cymbals, a paper whistle, and a large paper installation. The piece interweaves a Chinese folk song and a Bach prelude, as well as text and live sound-effects created on the objects and instruments. “When *Ghost Opera* debuted in Beijing,” Tan Dun reported, “there were more than 1500 people. They knew the folk song and they recognized the ancient tradition, but they did not know that a string quartet could play stones along with Bach, and play paper, gongs, water and voice.”⁴⁸ Here, the neo-Orientalist composer turns the usual paradigm on its head, taking Cage-like nature sounds “back” to China, where they’re greeted as exotic items much the way the pipa and folk melody function in a Western setting.

This anecdote points out the dominance of Western classical norms—“proper” materials for a string quartet to use, namely their violins, viola and cello—in the art-music of Revolutionary China (where the avant-garde and experimentalism were roundly denounced as decadent) at the same time as it slyly mocks the supposed Asianness of Tan Dun’s elemental objects: returned to their (mythic) cultural point of origin, the stones, paper, and metal are not even recognized as musical. The deep complexity of neo-Orientalist strategies is revealed: an Asian composer in the West uses techniques devised by a Western composer inspired by Asian philosophy—the work is played for an Asian audience which hears it as an artifact of the bizarre West. Orientalism is reflected back-and-forth like a musicultural *mise-en-abyme*.

Fragments of imperialist (exporting Western musical values through conservatory education) and colonialist (importing non-Western musical materials for use in Western art-music settings) ideologies are both found here, but the music of the Asian neo-Orientalists, at its best and most provocative, manages to subtly subvert them both.⁴⁹

VIII. THE CLASSIC GUIDE TO STRATEGY: ORIENTALISM AND IMPROVISED MUSIC

Where the connotation of scientific method in experimental composition, in part, allowed Cage and others to ignore the political consequences of their Orientalism, various modes of music-making in the experimental diaspora have had to grapple with similar ideological and pragmatic dilemmas.⁵⁰ For example, we find the perpetuation of some of the same Orientalist tropes—exploration, discovery, terra incognita, Eastern wisdom—within the world of freely improvised music and its associated compositional fields. Guitarist

Derek Bailey frames the issue in terms of disposition toward the instrument, and he finds what might be termed a naïve or *art brut* attitude among players with what he calls an “anti-instrumental” strategy:

Instruments very much in favour with this school are, naturally enough, those which are ethnic in origin or, at least, in appearance. These meet the requirement that the instrument should have a fixed, very limited capability and that very little instrumental skill is needed to play it. The idea is, I think, that because of limited opportunities for technical virtuosity, a more direct expressiveness is possible. Some of these players have shown a great interest in the practices and rituals of ethnic music and particularly what is taken to be primitive uses of the voice. So, in performance, grunts, howls, screams, groans, Tibetan humming, Tunisian chanting, Maori chirping and Mozambique stuttering are combined with the African thumb piano, Chinese temple blocks, Ghanaian soft trumpet, Trinidadian steel drum, Scottish soft bagpipe, Australian bull-roarer, Ukrainian stone flute and the Canton one-legged monster to provide an aural event about as far removed from the directness and dignity of ethnic music as a thermo-nuclear explosion is from a fart.⁵¹

At the time that Bailey originally composed this unforgiving and incisive paragraph, he was implicitly engaging in a polemic with other British improvisers like David Toop⁵² and Paul Burwell, both of whom (separately and together in their group Rain on the Face) used a huge array of “ethnic” instruments and techniques; Burwell created performances called “whirled music” out of multiple players whipping drones on bull-roarers. Clive Bell is perhaps the epitome of this intercultural lineage, performing on a host of different, usually non-Western instruments including Thai flute, shakuhachi, and Laotian mouth organ (khene). The difference with Bell is that, contrary to Bailey’s statement, his interest in these (quite difficult) instruments does not seem to come from a desire to skirt instrumental virtuosity; Bell is, indeed, a virtuoso shakuhachi player.

While some of the eclectic exoticism of that era is perhaps gone from improvised and other forms of creative music today, there is undoubtedly a persistent strain of Orientalism bubbling under in certain places. John Zorn, for instance, has consistently returned to Asian music (reportedly fascinated by Japan since childhood, he first visited in 1985 and now spends some portion of the year living there) both as a supporter of indigenous Asian creative musics—releasing records by, performing together with and otherwise promoting the work of different composers, sound-artists and improvisers—and at the same time incorporating fragments of different kinds of Asian music and speech into pastiche pieces such as “Forbidden Fruit” and “Godard.”⁵³ Zorn’s deployment of Asian women’s voices in these two collages suggests a complex sense of irony. At once, the whispery, exoticized voice can serve the traditional eroticizing-othering function in which gender doubles the intensity of a given non-Western voice’s exoticism; on the other hand, Zorn arguably

pushes that stereotype past itself, mocking it, revealing it as a constructed image and reveling in the kitschiness of such antiquated Orientalism. Of course, such ironic instances have the advantage of both embodying and disavowing the stereotype they seem to poke fun at, hence allowing both the pleasure of highly eroticized/exoticized Asian women's voices—in the case of “Forbidden Fruit,” which is expressly *about* a Japanese woman's voice (that of Ohta Hiromi), an explicitly passionate embrace, replete with sighs and coos—and providing the safety of simultaneous ironic distanciation.

Zorn's relationship to Japan is multifaceted, as is evident from a statement that was included in the liner notes to his important 1987 record *Spillane*:

The Japanese often borrow and mirror other people's cultures, that's what's so great about the place. They make a crazy mix out of it all. Of course, as a foreigner one can have a very strong sense of being outside their world—there's a certain kind of understanding that I'll never quite get. But then again, I was always an outsider here in America. I mean, when I was growing up in Queens, with long hair, wearing weird clothes, looking like a hippie, people called me all kinds of bizarre names. . . . I perform with Japanese musicians when I'm there. I write a lot, wander around, searching for rare Japanese pop singles, go to the movies, old book and poster stores, eat incredible food, and look at girls—the same stuff I do here. . . . It's a stimulating change in perspective, not only with regard to the music scene, but also with regard to who I am as a person, how I fit into American culture, what I am in Japanese culture.

One of the major struggles that the “new ethnographers” of anthropology in the post-poststructuralist period like Steve Tyler, James Clifford, and George Marcus have had to face is the way that looking at other cultures has traditionally been a process of the West examining itself in the mirror. That same dilemma—going to Japan to learn about one's own personality and identity—is epitomized in Zorn's statement, his identification with the omnivorous eclecticism of contemporary Japanese culture and the perspective that being there provides him on himself. Perhaps that introspection is part of what has led him to pursue the investigation of his own Jewish heritage so assiduously in recent years. Some of the complexity of Zorn's relationship with Asian culture was foregrounded a few years ago when Zorn was taken to task by some Asian-American organizations for his use of images of violence against Asian women on record covers on his label, Avant. Zorn officially apologized for hurting anyone's feelings, though in fact the images in question were almost exclusively made *by* Asian artists, which further complicates the equation.⁵⁴

There is unquestionably an ongoing presence of Orientalist discourse in contemporary music, and as a problematic it remains complex, recursive, and impacted, as one can see in Zorn's example. Consider the following line, a parenthetical (but telling) remark lifted from a press-release for Japanese bassist Kato Hideki's 1996 record of improvisations *Hope & Despair*: “Japan-

ese musicians are justifiably acclaimed for their ability to see music from a very different perspective.⁵⁵ The exact angles and lines of sight (or hearing) of that “different perspective” (the same terms Zorn used to describe his love of Japan) continue to be left as an undefined, reductive, and implicit stereotype, and at the same time the overarching idea of difference continues to be romanticized, essentialized, and implemented in the attempt to enliven Western musics, be they classical, experimental, creative, or improvised. Meanwhile, the political dimension of that implied difference continues to go largely unexamined.

If such a forced reading, taken from the casual pen of a PR writer, seems just *too* forced, too tenuous, then think about the following explanation of the name of New Albion Records, a California-based company with a strong connection to the minimalist tradition: “As Sir Francis Drake, noted explorer and pirate, discovered California for the Elizabethan world, New Albion discovers new musical territories for the modern world. Then as now there are savages, pagans, exotic flora and fauna.”⁵⁶ Perhaps the context for such Orientalizing rhetoric has changed, but the rhetoric itself stays remarkably consistent: exoticism and savagery, exploration and discovery, the conquest of fresh aural geography. In the ears of new Western musics, the other continues to be effectively other.

NOTES

1. This chapter deals primarily with the American experimental tradition, to the exclusion of the contemporaneous European avant-garde tradition, though an analysis of the way that non-Western music is represented and instrumentalized in the work of Olivier Messiaen, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Mauricio Kagel, and Pierre Boulez is a necessary complement to this work.

2. Many well-known American composers, such as Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Samuel Barber, Virgil Thomson, and Roger Sessions, are normally categorized outside the experimental camp, for various reasons—Carter, for instance, comes more directly out of a European avant-garde lineage, while Copland is perhaps best thought of as an American neoromantic. Wilfrid Mellers argues vigorously for the inclusion of the more obscure composer Charles Griffes among his experimentalists; see Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land: Themes and Developments in the History of American Music* (1965; reprint, London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 145–48.

3. Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources* (1930; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Cage studied with Cowell at the New School for Social Research in New York in 1934, and he cited *New Musical Resources* and Mexican composer Carlos Chavez’s *Toward a New Music* as especially influential to him.

4. Cage, “The Future of Music: Credo,” in *Silence* (1973; reprint, Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 6.

5. David Nicholls, *American Experimental Music 1890–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Alan Rich, *American Pioneers: Ives to Cage and Beyond* (London: Phaidon, 1995); Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music: The Avant-Garde Since 1945*

(New York: George Braziller, 1981); Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (New York: Schirmer, 1974); Thomas B. Holmes, *Electronic and Experimental Music: History, Instruments, Technique, Performers, Recordings* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985).

6. Fruitful comparison between Iannis Xenakis's stochastic (probability-based) compositions, based on calculation, and Cage's chance-operations, based on some degree of lack of calculation, provides an interesting insight into the status of science in European and American experimental traditions.

7. N. Katherine Hayles, "Chance Operations: Cagean Paradox and Contemporary Science," in *John Cage: Composed in America*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Charles Junkerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 240.

8. Cage, "Composition as Process," in *Silence*, 21–22.

9. Lou Harrison, "Cloverleaf: A Little Narrative with Several 'Off-Ramps,'" in *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought*, vol. 1, ed. John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Orton, and Peter Seymour (London: Routledge, 1992), 255.

10. Cowell, *New Musical Resources*, 18–19. Note Cowell's use of an explicitly scientific notion of "successful experiments."

11. Hear Antheil's "Sonata Sauvage" and Ornstein's "Wild Men's Dance" performed by pianist Steffen Schleiermacher on *The Bad Boys!* (hat ART CD 6144, 1994).

12. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 144, 143. See also Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), and Patricia Leighton, "The White Peril and *L'Art nègre*: Picasso, Primitivism, and Anticolonialism," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 4 (December 1990): 609–30.

13. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 231.

14. *Ibid.*, 208.

15. *Ibid.*, 6–9.

16. See pages xiv, 12, and 21, respectively.

17. Rich, *American Pioneers*, 113–16. The "Pacific Rim" influence on American experimentalism via Cowell, Partch, and Harrison, as well as other West Coasters like Cage (born and raised in Los Angeles) and Terry Riley, is often discussed in historical accounts. See Nicholls, *American Experimental Music*, 220.

18. Chris Burn, liner notes to *A Henry Cowell Concert* (Acta 7, 1993).

19. Cage, "The Future of Music: Credo," in *Silence*, 5.

20. See George E. Lewis, "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives," *Black Music Research Journal* 16, no. 1 (1996): 91–107. Cage did compose "Jazz Study" in 1942, a piece that went unperformed until 1992; however, his opinion changed drastically later, and in 1982 he said: "When I listen to jazz, I don't find it as interesting as people tell me it is." (Quoted in *Conversing With Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz [New York: Limelight Editions, 1988], 225.)

21. *Conversing with Cage*, 267.

22. Personal interview with Steve Lacy, Berlin, October 1996.

23. Steve Reich suggests the term "chinoiserie" in "Writings about Music," in *Breaking the Sound Barrier*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981), 163.

24. Quoted by Dana Paul Perna in liner text to Henry Cowell, *Persian Set* (Koch International Classics 3-7220-2 H1, 1993).

25. Cage, "History of Experimental Music in the United States," in *Silence*, 72.

26. Brian Morton, *The Blackwell Guide to Recorded Contemporary Music* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 163.
27. For a much more rewarding example of the encounter between American music and gamelan, seek out the work of pianist and composer Anthony Davis, particularly his record *Episteme* (Gramavision, 1981).
28. Said, *Orientalism*, 60.
29. Steve Reich, "Writings about Music," 153.
30. *Ibid.*, 163.
31. Tom Johnson, *The Voice of New Music* (Eindhoven, Netherlands: Het Apollohuis, 1989), 26.
32. Quoted in Edward Strickland, *Minimalism Origins* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 189.
33. Reprinted in the liner text to Tony Conrad, *Outside the Dream Syndicate* (Table of the Elements 3, 1993).
34. Personal interview with Tony Conrad, 1995.
35. Quoted in David Toop, *Ocean of Sound* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1995), 168.
36. *Ibid.*, 123.
37. Brian Eno, *A Year with Swollen Appendices* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 382–89.
38. Said, *Orientalism*, 4.
39. *Ibid.*, 95.
40. Toop, *Ocean of Sound*, 21.
41. Brian Morton astutely notes of Takemitsu's best-known composition, *November Steps*, which uses both *shakuhachi* and *satsumabiwa*, "There is no doubt that the popularity of *November Steps* is due in part to a taste for musical exotica." Morton, *The Blackwell Guide*, 194.
42. In 1958, the American CRI label produced the first LP of compositions by Chou Wen-Chung. Hear also two recent CDs on CRI, one featuring work by Chinese composer Chen Yi (now living in the States), *Sparkle* (CRI, 1999); and a collection of Chinese and Chinese-American composers including Ge Gan-Ru, Kawai Shiu, Luo Jing Jing, James Fei, Jason Kao Hwang, Byron Au Yong, Fred Ho, Chen Yuanlin, Ying Zhang and Jin Xiang, *China Exchange* (CRI, 1999).
43. Griffiths, *Modern Music*, 198.
44. Morton, *The Blackwell Guide*, 318.
45. Epigram in liner text to Tan Dun, *Snow in June* (CRI CD 655, 1993).
46. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 60.
47. Mary Lou Humphrey, liner text to *Snow in June*.
48. Tan Dun, in liner notes to *Ghost Opera* (Nonesuch 79445, 1997).
49. It falls outside the scope of this chapter, but the work of a new generation of Asian-American jazz musicians offers a very interesting, aesthetically and ideologically complex version of the neo-Orientalist approach, one that is deeply critical of stereotypes but doesn't avoid the problem by shying away from using traditional musical elements but instead incorporates them into the context of jazz and improvised music. See Corbett, "Form Follows Faction? Ethnicity and Creative Music," in *New Histories*, Lia Gangitano and Steven Nelson, eds. (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1996), 46–51. The important development of the kind of post-industrial music

known globally as “Japanese noise” also deserves mention in this context; Japan has the reputation, among fans of aggressive, overdriven sound, of producing such music’s most extreme and violent practitioners, including Hanatarash, Masonna, Merzbow and numerous others. These were presaged, in Europe, by the so-called “kamakazi jazz” musicians clustered around the Yosuke Yamashita Trio, as well as guitarist Yosuke “Jojo” Takayanagi. An investigation of the valences of such violence—both within Japanese listening contexts and in the various Western contexts in which such images are most actively promulgated—is long overdue.

50. The heading for this section is taken from John Zorn’s two volumes of solo reed music, which in turn take their title from Miyamoto Musashi’s *A Book of Five Rings*.

51. Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music* (New York: Da Capo, 1992), 102.

52. This is the same David Toop who authored *Ocean of Sound*; he still makes records, but no longer specifically identifies himself as a free improviser.

53. “Forbidden Fruit” on John Zorn, *Spillane* (Elektra/Nonesuch 9 791 72, 1987); “Godard” on The Godard Fans, *Godard: Ça Vous Chante?* (Nato 634, 1985).

54. As well as being an extremely active advocate for Asian musicians, Zorn has strongly supported Japanese visual artists, frequently using their work on record covers. Japanese-born drummer Ikue Mori designs releases for Zorn’s Tzadik label.

55. Roger Richards, director of Extreme Records, press release for Kato Hideki, *Hope & Despair* (Extreme XCD 036, 1996).

56. From a promotional survey postcard distributed in New Albion CDs in 1998.