Jeremy Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 99–113.

Divergent Dreams

Despite working closely together for several years during the 1960s, the core members of The Theatre of Eternal Music seem to have disagreed in certain fundamental ways about the nature of their collaboration and the significance of just intonation. Young and Zazeela saw their work as deeply, if eclectically, spiritual and even religious in nature and considered just intonation a kind of esoteric, acoustical alchemy with an ultimately cosmic purpose. They also asserted that the group's improvisations comprised realizations of *compositions,* to which Young alone could claim authorship and ownership. Conrad and Cale found that Young's neo-Pythagorean mythologization of number (as embodied in sound by just intonation), combined with what they saw as a tendency toward authoritarianism, turned what was supposed to have been a communal activity into a cultish one. They felt that Young's assertion of musical authorship over the group's work, and the spiritual authority implied by that assertion, challenged Young's supposed reputation as a radical, and, more important, directly contradicted the ideals of equality and resistance to authority (musical and religious alike) that the countercultural movement ostensibly embodied. This fundamental disagreement even manifested itself in the names by which the two camps preferred identifying the ensemble. As Tony Conrad later wrote,

> At the time, the numerical frequency ratios we used for the microtonal intervals . . . appeared so intimate with ancient Pythagorean numerology that it was easy for us to be seduced into fantasizing that our system of pitch relationships was "eternal;' as in La Monte Young's preferred designation, "The Theatre of Eternal Music:' For my part, I preferred "Dream Music;' which was less redolent of a socially regressive agenda . . .

The nascent idealism of the early 60s made it easy to fall for Pythagorean number mysticism without having a clear perception of the anti-democratic legacy which Pythagoreanism brings with it.[38] This terminological disagreement, and the ideological divide it reflected, fueled a bitter war of words that continued for decades. In 1987 Young tried to interest record labels (including Gramavision, with which he had an established relationship) in releasing some of The Theatre of Eternal Music's recordings from the early and mid-1960s, but Conrad and Cale, insisting on the collectivity of the group's work and asserting rights of ownership as coauthors, foiled Young's proposals by threatening a lawsuit. Conrad also even publicly voiced his grievances to concertgoers arriving for Young's appearance at

the 1990 North American New Music Festival in Buffalo, New York, by passing out leaflets outside the venue stating that "Composer La Monte Young does not understand 'his' work:'[39]

In 1995, with the release of *Slapping Pythagoras,* a drone-based recording for amplified strings, guitars, bass clarinet, accordion, and various found sounds, Conrad offered his most vitriolic, if indirect, critique of Young. The liner notes to the recording offer a lengthy diatribe ostensibly against Pythagoras's ancient number mysticism and the cultural elitism that it fostered among his followers. "How was it;' Conrad asks in the notes, "that the esoteric religious knowledge of the Egyptian and Babylonian priests was transformed into an antidemocratic force which achieved a hegemonic role in Western thought?" [40]

The two movements that comprise Conrad's piece take their titles from folkloric legends surrounding Pythagoras's death, supposedly at the hands of an angry mob who resented his esotericism: (1) Pythagoras, Refusing To Cross The Bean Field At His Back, Is Dispatched By The Democrats; (2) The Heterophony Of The Avenging Democrats, Outside, Cheers Of The Incarceration Of The Pythagorean Elite, Whose Shrill Harmonic Agonies Merge And Shimmer Inside Their Torched Meeting House.

Conrad's liner note commentary alternates between an expository voice, directed to the reader, and a first-person voice, directed toward Pythagoras himself. In the former, he gives summaries of various aspects of Pythagorean thought; in the latter, he fantasizes himself as one of the democrats confronting Pythagoras near the bean field. As Conrad castigates Pythagoras for his misdeeds- sometimes using derisive nicknames such as "Pythie" and "Python''-it becomes clear to those familiar with his career that his attack on the ancient thinker serves as a thinly disguised tirade against Young. Pythagoras's elitism, his taking credit for mathematical innovations borrowed from the Orient or contributed by his own students, his mystification of number, simply serve as stand- ins for the charges Conrad himself had leveled against Young: that he had abandoned countercultural communality for hegemonic ritual, that he had asserted unwarranted authority over and authorship of the activities of The Theatre of Eternal Music, and that he had cosmologized just intonation in order to deify himself. Pythagoras reads as Young, the cult of *mathematik oi* that studied with the ancient master reads as The Theatre of Eternal Music, and, in the following passage, *philosophy* might read as "minimalism'' and/or "just intonation'':

> Pythagoras, Pythagoras ! You've been so destructive-you and all your ideals of Perfection! . . . What could you possibly have been trying to do but walk all over democracy? No- it's much worse than that. It was you, Pythaggie, it was you-who showed how to use "philosophy" to fight democracy!

> You invented the word "philosophy;' for shit's sake! And why? Why? Because you could use it to justify your own personal sect, your cult of personality, where everything is credited to you. Everything is run by you. Talk about "elite" and "exclusive:' Sure, your cult is open-armed to anyone!-Anyone who will take your shit for five years without singing out!

Near the end of his lengthy essay, Conrad becomes somewhat more explicit about the real subject of his anger. Stepping outside the narrative for an aside to the reader, he writes,

> The number-juggling, system-building, arithmetical mumbo-jumbo, and technical precision in which [some modern] microtonalists may be found to indulge has inclined them toward cultural absolutism. They feel that they can use their Western abstract (arithmetical) tools to grasp and encompass non-Western microtonal traditions (in India, Cambodia, "Persia;' etc.), much as Western ethnomusicologists tried to colonize these traditions with European notational efforts.

Having located his target in the twentieth century, Conrad then jumps back into his ancient fantasy for its final, eponymous conclusion:

> This slap is to crack apart the voices that you forced to blend as *"One:'* And this slap is to smack down the imperial dominion of Number. ... And here's a slap, too, for stealing the names of all your sect members, and taking credit for their works . . .
>
> "Pythein-agora'': Filth market. The assembly of rot.

As strident as the timbre of the argument between Young and Conrad had become by this point, its audience remained small and obscure. In 2000, however, the dispute found its way into a feature article in the *New York Times* after Young threatened to sue Table of the Elements, the label responsible for *Slapping Pythagoras,* for releasing *Insid e the Dream Syndicate Volume I: Day of Niagara,* a bootleg recording of a version of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* from 1965.[41] This recording continued an effort on the part of Conrad and Cale to write their version of the history of The Theatre of Eternal Music, including the application of the name "The Dream Syndicate"-a name that Conrad had coined in 1966, but which had not actually been used by the ensemble. Conrad and Cale followed this with other drone-based recordings of their own works from the time.[42] One of Conrad's projects with Table of The Elements took a particularly brash revisionist stance: a three-disc set bearing the title *Early M inimalism Vol. 1* and containing one piece, *Four Violins,* from 1964-and several other pieces "in

the style of " the '60s drone pieces, but actually composed in the 1990s.[43]

In addition to filing a lawsuit over the release of *Day of Niagara,* Young released statements on his website condemning the Table of Elements recording on artistic grounds. Not only was the recording unauthorized, Young complained, it also was remastered, poorly, from a low-quality dub.[44] The statement further asserted his authorship over The Theatre of Eternal Music's recordings and chided Conrad's complaints as so much revisionist sour grapes:

> Since Conrad believes there was no underlying musical composition, there is nothing for him to have a co-copyright in, since the ©-copyright in a sound recording applies to the underlying musical composition. Conversely, since I recognize the structure of the underlying musical composition, it is obviously my composition . . ..
>
> If Conrad and Cale were so deep into music composition during this period, why didn't they record more themselves without the encumbrance of Big Brother watching over them? What did they need me hanging around for? The answers appear to be simple. Without the work I had done then and continued to do over the next thirty-seven years to make it famous, without my name to continue to publicize it (even via a controversy), they would not be able to sell it. And without my guidance, they must have been able to only produce comparatively weak free improvisations without the controlled structure and unprecedented level of compositional sophistication that drove *The Tortoise* at its own slow but steady pace into music history.[45]

In his response to Conrad, Young also solicited the opinions of other artists and musicians who had known or worked with the members of The Theatre of Eternal Music in the 1960s. Their responses reaffirm Young's position of authority within the group; that is, they recognize precisely the kind of authoritarianism that so bothered Conrad and Cale, but insist that anyone working with Young should have recognized the hierarchical nature of the collaboration. As Dennis Johnson, Young's former classmate, observed,

> I have never seen it fail in any arrangement that La Monte had with anyone who entered into a collaborative creative venture with him, that it was never collaborative in terms of the conception; it was always La Monte's conception in the first place. He always consistently guided the others so that the project would never get too far away from his conception. ... One virtually had to see oneself as a student.[46]

The poet Diane Wakoski, Young's former girlfriend, gave an even more blunt assessment:

> The thought that anyone, including such talented men as Cale and Conrad, could ever be collaborators or co-composers in any La Monte Young project seems laughable to me. It simply wouldn't happen. It may be dear to John Cale's personal vision of himself, or his aesthetic, that he was part of a democratic collaboration with La Monte, but no one who has spent any time around La Monte could ever perceive him as a collaborator. ... Everyone who knows La Monte is aware of the fact that you either play his game, or he doesn't play with you.[47]

The extraordinarily strident argument over the work of The Theatre of Eternal Music transcends the bickering over a tinny secondhand drone recording and symbolizes a much broader argument about the ideological underpinnings of early minimalism and just intonationism. Conrad and Cale insisted that the rejection of traditional notation and tuning went hand in hand with the rejection of the traditional concept of the composer and the work. For Young, these developments in compositional practice reinforced the conviction that music came from a higher source and thus lent even *more* authority to the composer: the acoustical purity of just intonation created a site of interface between the physical, psychological, and spiritual realms, and endowed the composer with the solemn responsibility of traversing those realms.

Discovery of **a Guru**

These differing efforts to ideologize just intonation and drone music reflect something of a paradox within '60s countercultu re as well, for in the circles in which Young, Zazeela, Cale, and Conrad moved, a resistance to traditional authority paradigms coexisted alongside a fascination with Indian classical music- a tradition with deeply etched hierarchies of its own. Conrad, along with countless others of his generation, had first become interested in Indian music after hearing Ali Akbar Khan's famous recording, with narration by Yehudi Menuhin, that appeared on Angel Records in 1955.[48] However, although Conrad "found in Indian music a vindication of [his] predilection for drone-like performing;' he rejected the particulars of the Indian classical tradition itself, wondering instead "what other new musics might spring from a drone, set within a less authoritarian and tradition-ridden performance idiom:'[49] Young traced his interest in Indian music to the same 1955 recording, and during the ensuing years he maintained something of a cultivated exoticist attitude toward Indian music.[50] Young's interest in Indian music eventually progressed far beyond Western stylizations, however, and, as he undertook a serious and prolonged study of Indian music, he found a model of musical composition and musically oriented spirituality that coincided closely with his own.

Psychedelic writer Ralph Metzner, as it turned out, played an inadvertent but crucial role in Young's immersion in Indian music. In 1967 Metzner took Young and Zazeela to a concert featuring the famous *shehnai* player, Bismillah Khan. At the concert Metzner introduced Young and Zazeela to Shyam Bhatnagar, an Indian musician and spiritual practitioner. Upon making their acquaintance, Bhatnagar played them tapes of an Indian musician, still living in India, and still virtually unknown in the West, named Pandit Pran Nath.[51]

Nath was born in 1918 into a prominent family in Lahore in present-day Pakistan, and had shown great musical promise as a young man. His family did not approve of his musical aspirations, so at the age of thirteen he left home and set out on his own. Nath eventually became one of only a handful of students of Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan, cousin of the founder of the Kirana *gharana,* Abdul Karim Khan. As was the tradition among *gurus* and their *shishyas,* Nath served in the household of Abdul Wahid Khan in exchange for instruction; his duties included cleaning, running errands, making tea for his master in the early morning, and, occasionally, sitting before his master with a tambura for a lesson. After several years of study Nath adopted the lifestyle of a hermit; he sang only at the temple in the Tapkeshwar Caves, his naked body covered with ash, the current of the nearby stream substituting for the drone of the tambura.[52]

After five years of ascetic isolation, Nath's guru told him to reenter public life, marry, start a family, and take his musical gift beyond the walls of the Tapkeshwar Temple; as expected, he obeyed.[503] He developed a distinctive style and a vast repertoire of ragas, to the point that better- known musicians would visit him to study the nuances of a particular raga. Eventually he became an instructor in Hindustani vocal music at Delhi University. Nath remained something of an obscure specialist, however- a "musician's musician;' as Young put it, increasingly at odds with the stylistic trends and institutional politics of the Indian music scene. In fact, David Claman, questioning Young's "myopic" fascination with Nath, points out that in several collections and listings of musicians of the Kirana *gharana* Nath's name and work are conspicuously absent.[54] *Ihe Oxford Encyclopedia of the Music of India* does have a short entry on Nath, but mentions only that he was a student of Abdul Wahid Khan and that "he migrated to the U.S. [...] where he earned a name as a performer and teacher:' In other words, it posits that his most notable work occurred after his departure from India.[55] Claman also recognizes Nath's "musician's musician" status, however, and quotes the recollections of Sheila Dhar, who studied with Nath in Delhi in the 1960s: "It was true that [Nath] had not received the recognition he deserved in his own country;' Dhar writes, "except from a handful of erratic connoisseurs:'[56] Dhar also recalls from her lessons with Nath the same emphases that initially attracted Young to Nath's style:

> Though [Nath] was fanatical about the purity of a raga, he was unbelievably unorthodox and impractical as a performer. His entire concentration was on the spiritual and emotive intention of music. He could spend hours exploring and elaborating on the tonal nuances of the melodic phrase of a raga, but had only a fleeting interest in rhythmic accompaniment. As a result, his concept of presentation was considered wayward by all but research-minded connoisseurs.[57]

Not only did the uniqueness of Nath's style set it apart from the other Indian music making its way to the West from India in the 1960s (indeed, Nath's relative obscurity may have made him all the more intriguing to Young), but the particulars of that style, with its intonational precision and relative de-emphasis of regular, patterned rhythm, resonated directly with the compositional style Young had developed during the 1960s. After hearing the tapes of Nath provided by Shyam Bhatnagar, Young and Zazeela contacted Nath and eventually arranged for him to travel to the United States. Nath eagerly accepted the opportunity; he had three daughters who needed wedding dowries, and he recognized the financial advantages of taking on students in the United States. A few weeks after his arrival on January 11, 1970, Nath officially accepted Young and Zazeela as disciples by tying red threads around their wrists in a traditional *guru-shishya* ceremony.[58]

Young and Zazeela studied with Nath for the remaining quarter-century of his life. Nath took on several additional American students as well, including Terry Riley, experimental trumpeter Jon Hassell, jazz musicians Don Cherry and Lee Konitz, and a number of other musicians and artists from among Young's New York milieu. For several years Nath split his time between New York and the Bay Area, where he taught at Mills College; during his stays in New York, Young and Zazeela hosted Nath in their home, waiting on him in a manner reminiscent of Nath's own discipleship with Abdul Wahid Khan. (Photos 5 and 6 show Pran Nath and Young in performance together in 1977.)

In addition to the sonic affinities that drew Young and Zazeela to Pran Nath, certain broader aesthetic ideas spoke to them as well. Nath's subtle approach to developing a raga's *rasa-its* "flavor;' or its particular emotional state-was not unlike the indelible particularity of feeling that Young associated with sustained, complex just-tuned harmonies. This acute attention to emotional state compelled Pran Nath to perpetuate and refine a part of the Hindustani vocal tradition that many other musicians, in the face of a modernizing world and music industry, had neglected: the performance of a particular raga at the particular time of day deemed most appropriate to its character. He instructed his American disciples in this practice as well. *Midnight I Raga Malkauns,* recorded in 1971 and 1976, features two late-night performances sung by Pran Nath, with Riley, Young, and Zazeela among the

supporting performers.[59] For a performance series at Paris's Palace Theatre in 1972, Nath, accompanied by Young, Zazeela, and Riley, sang a cycle of time-appropriate ragas on a Friday night, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning.[60]

The interpersonal dynamic of Young's relationship to Pran Nath arguably shaped his artistic development and self-perception as profoundly as did the stylistic resonance between the two musicians. Alexander Keefe discerns a symbiosis in Nath's initial encounters with Western musicians, Young in particular:

> It must have come as a relief to [Nath] when a new type of student started trickling into Delhi in the mid-1960s, seekers without the usual baggage, looking for someone to revere. These Westerners found a stubborn middle-aged man with a limited but oracular command of English, a voice of astonishing power, and an otherworldly mien. Pandit Pran Nath became *gurujee,* and then a few years later he was gone, leaving behind an Indian cultural scene increasingly hostile to a performer of such suspect religious leanings-he was a devotee of the Chishti Sufi saints, as well as a Nada yogi and mystic-not to mention such stubbornly contrarian tastes.[61]

Was Young, in fact, looking for someone to revere? His career to that point had been characterized by cycles of idolatry turning to rivalry: his serial works tried to transcend Webern, his indeterminate works tried to transcend Cage, his jazz improvisations sought to transcend so eminent an authority as the twelve-bar blues itself. He was still a student when his correspondence with his mentor Leonard Stein took on the precocious tone of counselor rather than pupil. He had already assumed a "guru" persona of his own.[62] Yet when Pran Nath arrived in New York, Young treated his new *guruji* with utmost reverence, even subservience. Perhaps what Young saw in Pran Nath, aside from the intensity of Nath's artistic vision and its resonances with Young's own musical activities, was a model not only for how one should make art but for who an artist should be. Nath's extremity of style as a musician was tied indelibly, like Young's, to the breadth and profu ndity of his cosmic vision.

Just prior to their discovery of Pandit Pran Nath, Young and Zazeela were themselves discovered, by the wealthy and magnanimous arts patron Heiner Friedrich. Friedrich had begun visiting Young's and Zazeela's early experimental electronic sound environments in 1966, and hosted their first public *Dream House* environment at his Munich gallery in 1969. During the subsequent decades he granted them a level of patronage virtually unprecedented among twentieth-century artists. This afforded Young and Zazeela the freedom to pursue their interests without concern for the demands of the marketplace.

Nath became an additional beneficiary of Friedrich's generosity, eventually enjoying a level of adoration likely well beyond his expectations (and in sharp

contrast with his past life as an ascetic). In 1979, thanks to the largesse of Dia Art Foundation, which Friedrich had founded, Young and Zazeela moved operations to the Harrison Street *Dream House.* The spacious building, reportedly purchased for over a million dollars, was also generously appointed and fully staffed. Young lived and worked there under circumstances virtually unrivaled for artistic freedom and creative accommodation; Nath lived there as well during his stays in New York. Visiting Nath in the early 1980s at the Harrison Street *Dream House ,* his former student from Delhi, Sheila Dhar, was taken aback by the elegant circumstances in which she found her teacher. After signing in with the greeter at the door and proceeding past numerous students and staff members shuffling quietly between the building's numerous rooms, she found Nath in one of the *Dream House's* upper studios. "He sat serenely on a divan in an enormous loft with a thick, snow-white wall-to- wall carpet;' she observed. "At the far end, about twenty tanpuras, obviously newly exported from India, lay side by side. The sunlight streamed in through tall glass windows. There was no furniture. ..."[63] Pran Nath used the Harrison Street space as his New York headquarters until April 1985, when Dia Art Foundation underwent an organizational change that resulted in the liquidation of the Harrison Street property and Young's and Zazeela's relocation back to their apartment on Church Street.

Young treated Nath not only as a musical master, but as a seer, with actual premonitional capabilities bordering on the supernatural.[64] Young's devotion was such that, in 1996, when Nath's health deteriorated and his death seemed imminent, he and Zazeela traveled to the home Nath kept in Berkeley to see him one last time. Nath passed before they arrived; along with Nath's wife, they watched over the body for two days *in situ* while waiting for one of Nath's daughters to make the journey from India. They were joined by many of Nath's students, who joined them in singing over the body of the deceased. In fact, the crowd of mourners grew so large that some camped in tents in the yard. On the second day, they brought the body down the stairs for the transport to the crematorium. Young came down the stairs last, carrying Nath's head.[65] They followed the hearse to the crematorium, and joined the others in placing sandalwood paste and holy water from the Ganges River on Nath's forehead before the casket entered the furnace. In the days that followed, they reported receiving several dreams and visions from their guru.[66]

After Nath's death Young and Zazeela continued Nath's work through their stewardship over the Kirana Center for Indian Classical Music, the instruction studio Nath had founded in New York City in 1970, though they did not yet begin giving public raga performances. A few of their students observed some of the traditional protocols of the *guru-shishya* relationship; one insisted on arising to make them tea at 3:00 A.M., as Young and Zazeela had done for Nath, and as Nath had done for his guru.[67] Young continued his other (non-Indian) musical projects, but gradually devoted more and more of his musical efforts to singing raga. In June 2002, Young

was pronounced *Khan Sahib* by Ustad Hafizullah Khan Sahib, the only surviving child of Pandit Pran Nath's teacher, Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan Sahib, and the *Khalifa* of the *Kirana gharana*.[68] This apparent honorific is mentioned in all program notes for Young's subsequent raga concerts.

Arguably, however, the mantle had already been passed from guru to disciple even before Young's attainment of *Khan Sahib* status. A few years before, during a period in which Young had stopped singing raga altogether-first in mourning over Nath's death, and then because of a serious illness that subsequently befell Zazeela-Nath purportedly appeared to Young in a dream and urged him to take up singing again. According to Young, Nath also indicated the great promise of a young artist who had recently asked to be taken on as a student. Jung Hee Choi thus became a disciple of Young and Zazeela in 1999. The three of them became the core, founding members of what would become The Just Alap Raga Ensemble, and gave their first performance together in November 2002; a few months later, Jung Hee Choi became joined to Young and Zazeela in the ceremony of the red thread-the same ceremony that had formalized their discipleship with Pran Nath. The Just Alap concerts eventually became Young's primary mode of musical performance and creativity, and took on a decidedly ritual air; promotional photographs from performances in 2003, 2005, and 2008 all show Young at the center of the performance space, an illuminated circle from Zazeela's light installation hovering above him like a magenta halo, his hand reaching into the air above his head.[69]

Throughout his years of study with Nath, Young had continued his own work with sound environments and also brought to fruition *The Well-Tuned Piano* through a commercial recording and numerous public performances. Young consciously established a separation between his performance of Indian music with Pran Nath and his own compositions, however, and initially maintained that distinction quite clearly. While singing raga, for example, he deviated very little from performance practices as taught to him by Nath: namely, his performances focused overwhelmingly on the *alap* sections of performance, the improvisatory melodic development in which the facets of the raga are unfolded. The tabla players enlisted for his performances might wait over an hour for the *alap* to end and the rhythmic *tala* of the drums to begin.

After Pran Nath's death, perhaps emboldened by the visions of his guru and his attainment of the status of *Khan Sahib,* Young not only began leading public performances of raga but also began to take some license with North Indian performance practice. In the improvisatory *alap* sections of the 2003 performance described at the beginning of this chapter, for example, Young introduced a novel harmonic technique: arriving at a particular note in the raga, Young would signal to one of the accompanying vocalists (his wife, Marian, or his assistant-disciple, Jung Hee Choi) to sustain the note. This created a kind of sustained vocal harmony quite outside traditional raga performance.

Young's boldest deviation from Indian classical practice occurred in March 2009, in a pair of performances with The Just Alap Raga Ensemble given at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Before the beginning of the concert I attended, a prerecorded tambura drone filled the performance space. It was clear from the moment the musicians entered the venue that Young's ensemble had taken further liberties with North Indian tradition. Instrumentation was the most immediately apparent area of experimentation. In addition to the prerecorded tambura drone, the voices of Young and Zazeela, those of their disciple Jung Hee Choi and fellow Pran Nath disciple John Da'ud Constant, and the spare tabla playing of Naren Budhkar, the ensemble also included Young's longtime interpreter Charles Curtis on cello and former Forever Bad Blues Band member Jon Catler on fretless sustained electric guitar. The visual novelty of the cello and guitar were not matched by any stark musical incongruity, however; both instruments followed the same subtle melodic contours and sustained tones that had characterized the Just Alap performances I had heard on earlier occasions. Soon after starting the performance Young initiated the series of sustained tones emphasizing certain notes in the raga, sometimes passing the responsibility around to different members of the ensemble with a nod or simple gesture. During some improvisational passages Young exploited the timbral diversity of the group by engaging in call- and-response with members of the ensemble; Zazeela and Choi featured prominently in this regard. The concert consisted of the premiere performance of a single piece, Young's own *Raga Sundara,* a work in twelve-beat ektal and in the raga known as Yaman Kalyan or simply Yaman. Young's two stanzas of Sanskrit text offered up praise- first to raga itself, then to Young's guru, for their ability to manifest divine, cosmic harmony through sound.

Yaman is a very well-known raga within the North Indian tradition- it is one of the first a student learns from his or her guru-but it has distinctive features that stand out to the Western ear. For convenience, I will describe these features as if Yaman were rendered above a Western C tonic (or, in Hindustani solfege, "sa''). Above the tambura drone notes, C and G, the notes of the raga proceed as if in a Lydian mode, with a raised fourth scale degree, or F sharp. However, the ascending scale starts on the seventh-scale degree, B, and while the C and G are present in the drone, they are often absent in the ascending melodic configurations of the raga. The raga tends to emphasize the seventh- and third-scale degrees, B and E; in fact, their distance a perfect fourth apart sometimes suggests a kind of "tonicization" of E, with the F sharp and G suggesting E natural minor. This creates a stunning bifurcated tonal orientation, as the B and E seem to occasionally escape the gravitational pull of the ever-present C-G drone of the tambura.

The ensemble's performance of *Raga Sundara* exploited these features quite ingeniously. In the *alap* section, the unmetered improvisational passage in which the raga is gradually introduced in order to prepare the ear for the composition proper, Young used occasional sustained notes to emphasize the competing tonal

allegiances of raga Yaman, including the perfect fourth dyad between the seventh- and third-scale degrees. At one point, these pitches were actually sustained in four parts across two octaves, combining with the tambura drone to create a rich chord. After the introductory *alap,* the musicians initially presented the text of the composition proper in traditional monophonic fashion against the drone. Later on, however, the ensemble revealed its most striking innovation: in another bold deviation from traditional North Indian monophony, they rendered the composition in two-part harmony. The perfect fourth between the seventh- and third-scale degrees, already emphasized ordinally in raga Yaman and occasionally sustained during the *alap,* suddenly became audible as part of a dynamic harmonic progression. Furthermore, as the various instruments proceeded in this harmonic fashion, they followed lines in conjunct motion separated by sonorous thirds and fourths. In the context of raga performance, this harmonization, combined with the ethereal polytonal quality of raga Yaman, lent the ensemble a breathtakingly lush quality with each return of the refrain.[70]

Young's program notes for the March 2009 concerts suggest that he had begun to see the two previously separate strands of his musical life-experimental ("minimalist") composition and Indian classical singing-as intertwined. Or, as Young would describe it, the two strands revealed themselves to have come from the same divine loom:

> The parallels between the Kirana style . . . and my music with long sustained tones, the focus on one work over long periods of time, and just intonation, are remarkable- a set of shared concerns that seemingly evolved independently but actually derived from a common source of higher inspiration and resulted in a merging of East and West that now continues with informed awareness.

Young then quotes the text of the evening's composition, *Raga Sundara,* which seems to represent a reconciliation of Young's polymusical pursuits: *Anahata Nada. Raga Ahata.* The inaudible vibrations of universal structure become audibly manifest through Raga.

Young provided further evidence of this reconciliation in a series of concerts in 2010, which featured Pandit Pran Nath's arrangement of "Hazrat Turkaman;' a traditional piece in raga Darbari, rendered in the kind of harmony Young had introduced in the 2009 performances of *Raga Sundara.* He also started including these raga-based performances as compositions in his works list.

Still, despite this late-career reconciliation of previously distinguishable pursuits, and despite the earlier commonalities between Young's "Western" and "Eastern" styles (such as a general similarity between his improvisational style in The *Well-Tuned Piano* and the Kirana approach to *alap),* Young's most important

nonraga compositions avoid explicit borrowing from Indian music. The scale for *The Well-Tuned Piano,* for example, finds no remotely similar scalar relatives in the multitude of North Indian ragas. Beneath the surface stasis they share, his *Dream House* sound environments bear little harmonic resemblance to a tambura drone.

The mystical discourse with which Young has surrounded his music, however, has moved freely between the timeless tradition he hopes his music will inaugurate and the established musical genealogy into which he, through Nath, had been grafted. The mystical persona Young had already adopted before his first encounter with the Kirana *gharana* found additional validation in Young's discipleship with Pran Nath: the most devoted *shishya ,* after all, one day takes the place of his guru. The authority granted by just intonation's acoustical positivism, and the concomitant psychophysiological path to transcendence that Young saw as the promise of rational tuning, merged with the mystical and musical lineage brought by Nath from India.

The cynic might call this double identity a case of hedging one's cosmological bets: praying simultaneously to both the rational Western god of number as well as the ethereal author of the Eastern OM (not to mention the disparate deities of counterculture and Mormonism, LSD and LDS). These spiritualities cohabitate comfortably in Young's universe; his religiosity is cumulative. God, Young states,

> . . . [is] like this multifaceted jewel. ... Each facet, of course, is extraordinarily brilliant. If a prophet catches the light of this facet, it's just like enlightenment, indeed. And maybe some prophets catch a few facets. But my feeling is that there are so many facets that it's been difficult for any prophet to get the whole picture, and that's why I think you have these interesting overlaps and these interesting differences between so many different spiritual paths.[71]

At the conclusion of the raga performance I attended in June 2003, the performers were greeted with solemn silence rather than applause. Several minutes passed before Young rose from his position on the floor, and even as the audience got up to leave they moved toward the door slowly and quietly. One woman, a former student of Young's, knelt, touched his feet in a traditional Indian gesture of respect, and presented him a mango as an offering; he paused, thinking, then placed it on the shrine against the wall, in front of the pictures of his raga ancestry.

More recently, Young and Zazeela have sought to exert a guru's control not only over the performance of Young's music, but over the musicological and music-theoretical study of it as well. Just as this book neared production, publicity materials appeared for a ten-day seminar on Young's and Zazeela's

work to be held in the summer of 2011. The workshop is to be led by Charles Curtis (Young and Zazeela no longer travel), and held at Kunst im Regenbogenstadl in Polling, Germany, the longtime site of installations of Young's and Zazeela's work. The slated program features lectures, workshops, screenings, and performances, all featuring or examining Young's and Zazeela's works. Perhaps the most distinctive element of the publicity brochure is this quote from Young, which appears in the second paragraph:

> I am from the school that believes the guru should stand at the top of the hill and throw rocks at the would-be students and disciples as they ascend toward him. In this way, it is assured that only the most strong and serious devotees will reach the top of the hill to learn the tradition and carry it on into the future.[72]

To reiterate: this was not just one of Young's many strident statements about his own importance; it was the text chosen to entice prospective attendees.

The reverence bestowed upon Young by his most devoted listeners and students, the devotion he demands from those who would study his music-and, it must be said, the working relationships with him that have soured-shed a particular light upon final refrain of the "Song to Guruji" from the 2003 performance: *Allah-ji, give Guruji to me.* Given the context of the performance, there, in that space normally devoted to the continual and complex drones of the *Dream House,* Young's words transcended the memorial nature of the song and expressed more than affection for his deceased guru. Having responded to what he considered his own divine mandate, and having founded what he considered a new but nonetheless ageless musical tradition,Young spoke in the words of both a *shishya* and a mystic. As I heard Young paying homage to Pran Nath (and, by extension, to Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan, and Ustad Abdul Karim Khan), and as I likewise observed Young gesture to his own *shishya ,* Jung Hee Choi, I perceived the makings of a ritual ordination, a mantle being bestowed, a musical priesthood being passed on through a lineage of ancient authority. Young had not found the *guruji* he had sought so fervently through song. He had become it.