

**Notes on The Theatre of Eternal Music
and
*The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys***

La Monte Young

I. Regarding The Underlying Musical Composition of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* (1964-present).

The specific rules that governed the performance of my music, including the sections of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* participated in by Tony Conrad and John Cale, create a sound characterized by the predominance of musical intervals whose numerators and denominators in just intonation are factorable by the primes 7, 3, and 2, and selected higher primes, especially 31, and **by the exclusion of intervals whose numerators and denominators are factorable by the prime 5**. If we represent intervals with numerators and denominators factorable by the primes 7, 3, and 2 in conventional music notation and terminology, we obtain intervals that include various sized major and minor sevenths (with emphasis on the septimally derived blues minor seventh in my compositions such as *B^b Dorian Blues*, *Early Tuesday Morning Blues*, *Sunday Morning Blues*, and *The Tortoise*), perfect fifths, octaves, unisons and their inversions, various sized major and minor seconds, and perfect fourths. The blues I was playing on the soprano saxophone, directly preceding the period of *The Tortoise*, emphasized a technique I invented consisting of extremely fast combination-permutations of a limited set of tones to simulate a sustained chord. And the chord I increasingly emphasized consisted of the pitches E^b, B^b, D^b, E^b, (the IV-chord from *B^b Dorian Blues*) extended over the full range of the saxophone. Translated back into just intonation, these pitches are all examples of octave transpositions of the primes 7, 3, and 2.

But even as far back as *Trio for Strings* (1958), I had evolved a musical language composed only of perfect fifths, major seconds, minor seconds and their inversions **and which specifically excluded major thirds**. The *Trio for Strings* was written in equal temperament but it should be noted here that **the major thirds that were excluded in the Trio are the equivalent of the intervals whose numerators and denominators were factorable by the prime 5, which were later excluded by me in *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys***. No one had ever specifically excluded major thirds, the prime 5, in music before I did. By doing so, I created my own unique musical mode. Just as all of European classical music is factorable by the primes 5, 3, and 2, I created a parallel, yet singularly and audibly different, modality by retaining factors of 3 and 2, accepting factors of 7 and selected higher primes, and excluding factors of 5.

In my program notes for *Trio for Strings*, I state the following:

Some of the features that set this work apart are the extended time structure, the long sustained tones and rests, and the independent entries and exits of the tones. Moreover, the interval of a major third is totally avoided. In fact, there is no use of thirds and sixths of any type either as harmony or implied melody throughout the entire work. Rather, I chose to limit myself to perfect fourths, perfect fifths, major seconds, minor seconds, major sevenths, minor sevenths, minor ninths, and a very occasional augmented eleventh. Even though this work was written in equal temperament, and I had not even begun to think about just intonation, I was already beginning to establish what became my own musical mode. That is, a mode in which the number 5 is excluded as a factor in producing the numerators and denominators of the fractions which represent the musical intervals. I found that major thirds and minor thirds factorable by 5 (e.g. 5:4, 6:5) and their tonal inversions (8:5, 5:3), were never able to convey the feeling that I wanted to express in my compositions. The premonitions of this unique musical vocabulary of intervallic and chordal structures had already begun to appear in *for Brass* (1957) and *for Guitar* (1958). But it is first here in the *Trio for Strings* that every chord, triad and interval can be found to comprise one of the "dream chords" or some subset thereof. These "dream chords" were later used as the tonal content of *The Four Dreams of China* (1962) and *The Subsequent Dreams of China* (1980).

The *Trio for Strings* is the first work I composed that is comprised almost entirely of long sustained tones. It is probably my most important early musical statement. This work has been credited by critics, musicologists and art historians with the initiation of a new direction in music and art, since no one had ever before made a work that was composed completely of sustained tones. There was sustenance in Eastern and Western music but it was always a drone, a pedal point, or a sustained tone of a cantus firmus over which melodies were sung or played. It is very difficult to find any other examples of sustenance besides these types of drones in music before they were introduced in the long sustained tones of *for Brass* and *for Guitar* and finally crystallized into the *Trio for Strings*. In the *Trio for Strings*, there was no melody as each tone was separated by silence from its preceding and succeeding tones in the same voice. The texture is contrapuntal in that long sustained tones overlap in time. Melody exists only in the sense that one remembers and identifies events that have taken place over long periods of time. The concept of the expanded time structure comprised of long sustained tones and the unique tonal palette of the work came to me not by theoretical deduction but by totally inspired intuition, and subsequently developed into the creation of continuous sound and light environments presented in collaboration with Marian Zazeela in our Dream Houses, major installations extending over durations of weeks and years.

Thus, the origins of the long sustained tones that came to characterize my style and formed the beginnings of minimalism in music can be traced to *for Brass*, *for Guitar* and the *Trio for Strings*.

As I had done in the *Trio for Strings* and *The Four Dreams of China*, in *The Tortoise*, I determined that the group would use extended duration time structures with independent entries and exits for the overall length, and that we would use long sustained tones, intervals, triads and chords to create the musical texture. Characteristic melodic patterns in various rhythmic permutations, such as augmentation and diminution, evolved organically from imitation of the melodic patterns I had played on the soprano saxophone in *Pre-Tortoise Dream Music*¹ and earlier compositions that the members of The Theatre of Eternal Music had performed.

A written score exists for at least one section of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*^{1 2}. The score is in Marian Zazeela's hand, and has the name La Monte Young at the top, beneath which it says "System of Frequencies used on the day of the antler 15 VIII 65 tape of *The Obsidian Ocelot, The Sawmill, and The Blue Sawtooth High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer Refracting The Legend of The Dream of The Tortoise Traversing The 189/98 Lost Ancestral Lake Region Illuminating Quotients from The Black Tiger Tapestries of The Drone of The Holy Numbers from The Tortoise, His Dreams And Journeys*." This score contains a great deal of information about the frequencies actually played on the tape. It should be noted, however, that the score was written out after the tape was recorded and does not include instructions for performing the work. The score was probably written out by sometime in November 1965, as I submitted it as part of the supporting materials for my Guggenheim application (I got the grant). It is clear that even at this early date, while the music was being created, I considered myself the composer of the work, as the score indicates. A photostat of the score was mounted and hung on the wall at our Church Street studio in plain view for many years.

Further supporting written documentation of my role as composer exists as well. In our (La Monte and Marian's) calendar diary for 1964, on the page for Saturday, February 29, the entry "*first numbered frequency piece notated early AM*" is written. In my file, "Book Notes," which contains theory and writings from c. 1964-65, there are two separate pages with that date, both notated in my hand (with the date and *fifth twelve*, the name of the day according to Angus MacLise's calendar poem "YEAR", inscribed in Zazeela's hand), as well as three related, undated pages.

The first of these two pages, inscribed "*Sat - 29 February 64 - early AM - fifth twelve*," lists the ratios¹, which, with octave displacements, formed the basis of *Pre-Tortoise Dream Music* (recorded on magnetic tape April 2-3, 1964 by The Theatre of Eternal Music [La Monte, soprano saxophone; Terry Jennings, soprano saxophone; Marian Zazeela, voice drone; Tony Conrad, violin; John Cale, viola] at my studio) in a characteristic melodic pattern. I played these notes on the saxophone, and the other members of the group also sustained them.

The second page, inscribed "*fifth twelve early AM*," is a chart which lists and enumerates all of the possible chordal combinations of groups of the tones of the six-tone scale used in the above-mentioned melodic sequence, limited to the range of one octave. Underneath each of the combinations is a series of numbers from 0 to 63, in Tony Conrad's handwriting, which apply a possible sequential order quantifying the combinations and demonstrating that Tony had seen my chart. A typed version of this chart was also placed in the "Book Notes" file at that time.

The handwritten chart includes written notations, also in my handwriting, qualitatively describing some of the chords, such as question marks, arrows, and the words "*special*," "*far out*," "*doubtful*," and most significantly "*Dream*," over the combination 63, 62, 56, 42. This "Dream" is actually a version of my four-note "Dream Chord" from *The Second Dream of The High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer* from *The Four Dreams of China* (1962), this time using 31 as the divisor of the 9:8 interval (63:56) instead of the 12-note equal-tempered divisor used in the Segal's Farm performance, or the 35 which was the divisor of the 36:32 (36, 35, 32) in the performances by the SUNY Buffalo Creative Associates at Carnegie Recital Hall (January 12, 1965) and Asia House (January 27, 1965), or the 17 which was the divisor of the 18:16 ratio making the triad 18, 17, 16, which I specify in the current score.

Several notes, also found in the 1964-65 "Book Notes" file though undated, follow the chart of February 29, 1964 compositionally. One, completely in my hand, organizes the chordal

- Duration: the group would use extended duration time structures;
- Rhythm: would consist of long sustained tones, intervals, triads and chords with independent entries and exits;
- Harmony: the harmonic structure would be characterized by the predominance of musical intervals whose numerators and denominators in just intonation are factorable by the primes 7, 3, and 2, and selected higher primes, especially 31, and by the exclusion of intervals whose numerators and denominators are factorable by the prime 5;
- Melody: although subtle, to the degree that it existed melody would be in part the consequence of harmony, and, that characteristic melodic patterns in various rhythmic permutations, such as augmentation and diminution, would evolve from the melodic patterns I had played on the sopranino saxophone in *Pre-Tortoise Dream Music*¹ and other compositions that the members of The Theatre of Eternal Music had performed

¹ These systems of frequencies have been published and analyzed in Kyle Gann's essay, "The Outer Edge of Consonance," in *Sound and Light: La Monte Young / Marian Zazeela* (Bucknell Review Vol. XL, No. 1, 1996).

² The score of "day of the antler 15 VIII 65" in Zazeela's calligraphy, is published, also with analysis, in *Four Musical Minimalists* by Keith Potter (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

II. History of My Groups

Although I played saxophone in orchestras and bands from the second grade on, and was a music major in high school, where I took five or six semesters of harmony with Arnold Schoenberg's student, Clyde Sorenson, my entry into the field of serious music composition included a many years playing jazz. As a young saxophone player growing up in Los Angeles, I played sessions at local clubs and formed groups with musicians I met through these encounters. Since the saxophone is a lead instrument, I was usually the leader of these groups.

One such group during the period 1955-56 included Billy Higgins, drums, Dennis Budimir (or sometimes Tiger Echols or Buddy Matlock), guitar, and Hal Hollingshead, bass. This group mainly played standards and jazz tunes.

Later, after I was emphasizing composition in college and moving away from jazz, I developed my own rhythmic, chordal, drone style of piano playing. I put together a group that included Terry Jennings, alto saxophone, Mike Lara, tenor saxophone, and Dennis Johnson, hichiriki. I created a style of modal blues in which the chord progressions I, IV, I, V, IV, I, were sometimes retained as a sequence but the duration of time to be spent on each chord was improvised by the musicians, in this case primarily myself, since as the leader and pianist, I controlled when the chords changed. The concept was to spend long periods of time on each chord change to emphasize the modal drone aspects of the music. I encouraged the performers to improvise lines contrapuntally as well, influenced by the method of contrapuntal improvisation presented by Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz, Warne Marsh, et al, on recordings such as *Intuition*. This kind of contrapuntal improvisation goes back even as far as Dixieland jazz. The primary tune that was played with this group eventually came to be called *Young's Blues in B-Flat*. Later, in the summer of 1961, I recorded this work as a duet with myself on piano and Terry Jennings on saxophone, and at the same session, we recorded Jennings' composition, *Tune in E* (c. 1961). I can be heard on this tape, still improvising my own piano style with Jennings still the featured soloist, yet it was perfectly clear to each of us that *Tune in E* was Terry's composition, and *Young's Blues in B-Flat* was my composition. For more information about the history of *Young's Blues*, see the liner notes for the Gramavision 2-CD release, *Just Stompin'*.

Another example of this type of inter-relationship between composer and performer was demonstrated with Dennis Johnson's *109 Bar Tune* (c. 1960-61). This was a set of completely notated chord changes, as compared to *Young's Blues in B-Flat* and Jennings' *Tune in E*, in which the chord changes, if written, would have been with chord symbols. Sometimes I was the pianist, sometimes Terry and sometimes Dennis, and each of us played the rhythmic element of the changes in our own distinctive style. Improvised solos were played over these changes, frequently by Jennings. A very special relationship existed among the three of us through performances of Dennis' *109 Bar Tune*, yet in spite of the individual rhythmic styles of the pianists and the creative compositional contributions of the soloists, there was never any question raised as to whose tune it was. An extremely interesting point here is that all three of these compositions, *Young's Blues in B-Flat*, Jennings' *Tune in E* and Dennis' *109 Bar Tune*, had no melodic line; they all consisted entirely of chord changes! I had been developing the concept of a harmonically oriented music, as demonstrated in the phrase, "The Disappearance of Melody," from my first essay on *The Tortoise* (see P. 12 below), and in one of the projected titles for my encompassing theory work, *Vertical Hearing or Hearing in the Present Tense*, and here already we see this concept blossoming into a tradition through Jennings and Johnson. *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*, as with most of my music, was based primarily on the concept of extended time durations, long sustained tones and harmonic content, and had only subtle underlying melodic content.

During my college and graduate school years, I organized and participated in many performances of my compositions and those of others, in which instructions to performers were sometimes merely notated as dots and graphs on a page. Performers were often given virtually free rein to interpret the composer's instructions as they wished. Yet, a "composer" was clearly identified for each piece, no matter how creatively or individually a particular performer's role was played out. This freedom to the performer had roots both in jazz improvisations such as those created by Lennie Tristano, where performers improvised contrapuntally, and in John Cage's compositions such as *Music Walk* and *Imaginary Landscapes for Radios*, where performers were asked to realize markings and notational gestures that gave them unprecedented freedom. Performers' reputations were then built on their creativity in interpreting these Cage "scores." David Tudor was renowned for his exquisite performances of Cage's piano pieces. I also performed Cage and became known for my own unique contributions to the music of others; the legendary concert at the 92nd Street YMHA (c. 1961), in which I burned a violin on stage was during a performance of a piece by Richard Maxfield. Maxfield created another piece especially for me called *Perspectives for La Monte Young* (1961-2). In this work, I created all of the original sounds for the music on bowed stringed instruments. Maxfield recorded these sounds and ran them through electronic processing to produce a set of tape permutations on the original sounds, which were then played as a background over which I improvised live in concert. Even though I created all of the original sounds, and even though the piece was in many ways a vehicle for my own creativity as an improviser, there was never any question that it was Maxfield's underlying composition. Maxfield was listed as the composer on the program and I was listed as the performer. Maxfield also made similarly constructed works, *Piano Concert for David Tudor* and *Wind* for Terry Jennings. These works were based on the same principle in which the performing artist created the original sound sources and then improvised over their Maxfield-processed permutations in concert. Again, as was the custom with works of this genre, Maxfield was listed as the composer of the work on the program, and Tudor and Jennings were listed as performers.

During the period 1959-60, Terry Riley and I frequently functioned as a performance duo. One instance of highly creative collaboration under my leadership took place when Riley and I were Music Directors of Ann Halprin's Dance Company in 1959-60. Together we experimented with many different ways of producing sounds. One of these experiments became my well-known tape composition *2 sounds* (1960), which was selected by John Cage as the "music" for Merce Cunningham's dance *Winterbranch*, and subsequently performed worldwide. I selected and recorded two sounds: drumstick on gong (which I improvised alone), and cans on windows (which I improvised together with Riley). Yet there has never been any question that *2 sounds* is my composition.

During the same period, 1959-60, Terry Riley and I frequently performed together in Riley's composition, *Concert for Two Pianists and Tape Recorders*. This work consisted of two large pages (one for each pianist). Each page included many strange graphic shapes, calligraphic strokes, some symbols which actually resembled music notation and, occasionally, even some bona fide elements of music notation, including two sometimes more or less complete 5-line music staves, which were highly reminiscent of a real brace from a piano score, running diagonally across the pages! Although the work originally may have included a few instructions regarding interpretation, it was well understood between Riley and myself that this work grew out of the graphic tradition of Cage and Sylvano Bussotti. In actual performance, both of us exercised extreme creativity, which for the most part would correctly be called improvisation, although it was theoretically inspired by the graphics on the pages. When this work of Riley's was printed in *An Anthology*, (edited by me and published in 1963), Terry removed all of the

interpretive instructions except the following specific statement which helps to convey the bond of trust and creativity that existed between composers and performers during that era:

La Monte . . . o / 1 this sign in concert you have not seen before and it means to crawl into the piano and roll around and kick the lid or the sides or less violent things or just lie there or whatever anyway i thought it would be good for you because you are small and can probably easily get in the piano-----one version would be nice if you just crawled in an layed there during the piece i can imagine you would do that very well incidently there is no longer writing on the score so if you cant remember what the things mean (it doesnt make any difference but if you just want to know) ask me and i will write up instructions but i am getting to think instructions take some of the magic out of the piece----- . . . terry

And although I felt my contributions to the performance of the work were creative, improvisational, compositional and an important part of the success of the work, it was always understood that it was Riley's work. There was no need for me to seek credit as a co-composer or to ask for a part of the composer's royalties because this approach to music was all part of a growing tradition that also represented one of the most avant-garde and stimulating ideas of that period.

Out of this tradition of score interpretation begun by Cage, Feldman, Brown, Wolff, Bussotti and others, I created my own tradition of writing scores that were rule-based, such as *Vision* (1959), *Poem for Chairs, Tables, Benches, etc.* (1960), *Compositions 1960* (see *An Anthology*), *Compositions 1961* and *The Four Dreams of China* (1962). Of *The Four Dreams of China*, the first most completely finalized and notated score was *The Second Dream of The High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer*. This work is a model of an algorithmic score. These were all radical pieces, which no one but me would have dared take the credit for at that time. The written verbal instructions and rules in these pieces became the basis for my approach to structuring music with The Theatre of Eternal Music. The difference was, however, that the tradition of this kind of composition was now so well developed that it was no longer necessary to write out all of the rules for the musicians. Since they could learn the rules quickly, the creative process advanced by quantum leaps and this may have eventually contributed to the problem where the performers may not have realized that they were creating music that grew out of my rule-based algorithms.

In fact, Tony Conrad played in the first performance of *The Second Dream of The High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer* as a member of a double quartet of eight bowed stringed instruments that I organized on May 19, 1963 (YAM Festival, George Segal's Farm, New Brunswick, New Jersey), and was, therefore, well aware of my interest in this approach to music. Also, both Tony and John were well informed of my *Compositions 1960*, which are scores consisting of verbal and, in some cases graphic, instructions for the performer. John Cale had performed some of these works in London before he came to the U.S., and Tony had written to me about these works after he heard about them in 1960. Indeed, the first documented appearance of Tony Conrad as a performer in a La Monte Young composition was on May 11-12, 1963, when he played violin along with me, Marian and others, during a 5-hour continuous performance of *Composition 1960 # 7* at the Hardware Poets Theatre, New York City, another event in the month-long YAM Festival. My *Composition 1960 # 7* is a scored work consisting of only the two pitches, B below middle C, and F# above it, with the written instruction, "To be held for a long time." This creates a drone of the interval of the perfect fifth B and F#.

I played with several musicians in the early '60s in New York. I led a group consisting of myself, piano, Walter De Maria, drums, Simone Forti-Morris, voice, Joe Kotzin, flute and Terry Jennings, alto saxophone, which performed at the Village Gate, Maidman Theatre, Douglass College, and rehearsed from time to time at Judson Church.

In New York in 1962, I took up saxophone again, this time soprano, and began to play with the drummer Angus MacLise. The earliest recorded example of my soprano playing was June 11, 1962 with MacLise, drums, and Forti-Morris, voice. After Marian Zazeela and I got together on June 22, Zazeela replaced Forti-Morris in the group to hold the "drone" tone. A series of seven public concerts took place in the summer of '62 at the 10-4 Gallery on Fourth Avenue and 10th Street in New York City. Billy Linich (aka Billy Name) joined on voice for the last two or three concerts and remained in this group until some time in 1963. Tony Conrad, traveling down to New York each week from Cambridge MA, attended many of these concerts as a member of the audience and seemed very impressed with what I was doing. He later (c. 1963) moved to New York City and expressed interest in joining the group. Tony began to rehearse with us, not before sometime in 1963, and is included on a group tape for the first time on a rehearsal tape recorded at my Bank Street apartment on May 12, 1963. This group rehearsed regularly at my apartment and presented a few performances in New York City that summer: on June 14, 1963 at Third Rail Gallery with Tony Conrad, violin, and Billy Linich included. On June 21 and 27, 1963 at Hardware Poets Playhouse, Linich had dropped out and the group was comprised of Marian, Angus, Tony and myself. In July '63, some rehearsal tapes were made at the home of a friend, Bob Adler, with Dennis Johnson also singing (Dennis also performed with us on a concert at the Hardware Poets Playhouse that was, unfortunately, not recorded). Tony often played other stringed instruments: bowed guitar, bowed lute, bowed mandola, as well as violin.

The works played by The Theatre of Eternal Music during this 1963-early 1964 period were all compositions that I had been playing before Tony Conrad joined my group. All of these compositions had specific underlying structures, although they were not all written out, and many of them actually had titles. Among the titles were: *The Fifth/Fourth Piece*, *ABABA*, and *E^bDEAD* (a realization of one of my "dream chord" voicings, which constitutes the entire tonal content of *The First Blossom of Spring* (1962), one of *The Four Dreams of China*). It is important to note here that the structure for blues that I created in *Young's Blues in B-Flat* back in L.A. in the late '50s, that is, the style of modal blues in which the durations of the chords were very long rather than the conventional number of bars, became the basis for all of the blues played by The Theatre of Eternal Music during the period when I played soprano saxophone with the group. For instance, my compositions, *Dorian Blues*, *Sunday Morning Blues* and *Early Tuesday Morning Blues*, were all in this style of playing blues. I taught this concept to the performers in The Theatre of Eternal music and they sustained the chord changes while I improvised extremely fast sets of combination permutations on specific constellations of tones based on the chord changes and often set in a particular mode such as Dorian for *Dorian Blues*.

In August '63, Marian and I moved to our present loft at 275 Church Street. Sometime in late August or September, John Cale got in contact with us and I invited him to a rehearsal at which I asked him to play specific drone pitches on his viola. He had come to the U.S. on a Leonard Bernstein Scholarship to study at Tanglewood, but had not liked the academic atmosphere there. As Tony Conrad stated in *Uptight, The Velvet Underground Story* (Omnibus Press 1983), "John Cale sought out La Monte and engaged himself directly with the group..." John is quoted in the same book as saying, "La Monte was perhaps the best part of my education and my introduction to musical discipline."

The earliest recording in which John Cale is playing viola with us is dated September 29, 1963. This group (Young, Zazeela, MacLise, Conrad, Cale) continued to rehearse very frequently through the end of '63. During this period, many tapes were recorded at our Church Street loft, with different combinations of the players, according to who happened to be at the rehearsal, and when a tape recorder was available. Marian and I are on almost every cut, with one or more of the other performers on some of them. Angus left New York on Tuesday, February 18, 1964 to begin a protracted journey to the East. Although *Early Tuesday Morning Blues* stands as a good example of what my fast soprano saxophone playing was like without Angus, without the excitement of his remarkable drumming technique to play my saxophone rhythms against, I discontinued the rhythmic element. Carrying on the inspiration of my previous work with sustained tones, I began to hold longer sustained tones on saxophone. At around this time, the strings began to try out contact mikes and we discovered the thrill of hearing amplified difference tones. In early '64, a series of tapes was recorded in preparation for and at an audition for Harry Kraut, the Director of the Tanglewood summer program. Marian and I later entitled these tapes *Pre-Tortoise Dream Music*¹ (see references in Section I above).

During Spring '64, I had begun to tune my piano to just intonation and by June '64, I had recorded the first tapes of my composition, *The Well-Tuned Piano*. In Summer '64, I switched from saxophone to voice. The group material increasingly developed in the direction of *The Tortoise*, with the emphasis on sustaining intervals, triads and chords for long durations. We presented public performances during this period at Philadelphia College of Art (October 9, 1964), the Pocket Theatre, NYC (October 30, 31, November 20, 21, 22, December 12, 13, 1964), East End Theatre, NYC (March 4, 1965), the Theatre Upstairs at The Playhouse, Pittsburgh (October 16, 1965) and an invitational performance at the NYC home of Henry Geldzahler (March 7, 1965). John continued playing with us through 1965; his last performances with the group were at the Film-makers Cinematheque in December '65, also the first concerts with Marian's light designs used in projection on the performers. In September '65, Terry Riley had moved to New York and began replacing John at rehearsals. Riley's first performance (voice) with The Theatre of Eternal Music was at the four concerts at Larry Poons' Studio, "The Four Heavens", in February '66. Marian, Tony, Terry and I performed in Amagansett in Midsummer '66, a festival produced by Christophe de Menil. The final concert of this group, though without Riley, was in August '66 at the Sundance Festival in Upper Black Eddy, Pennsylvania. After this I stopped calling rehearsals and devoted myself to developing a major theory work, *The Two Systems of Eleven Categories*, and rehearsing solo voice with sine wave drones, and other drone sources such as natural resonances.

After I stopped working with Conrad (Cale had left the group sometime earlier), I performed solos and duets with Zazeela for a few years. Then, in 1969, I again brought together musicians to perform my music in a continuation of The Theatre of Eternal Music group. This time, having learned some of the legal implications of having a group, I had the musicians sign a contract stating that the piece they would be performing was a composition by La Monte Young, *Map of 49's Dream The Two Systems of Eleven Sets of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Lightyears Tracery*, considered by me to be a sub-section of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*. Among the many musicians who participated in rehearsals and performances of this later group were Tony Conrad and John Cale, both of whom signed this contract. Nonetheless, I worked with these musicians in exactly the same way I had worked with them during the earlier years, verbally setting forth the rules and seeking just the same input from the musicians.

My involvement with *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* was so complete and consuming that I continued performing sub-sections of the work through 1975, and wrote that I fully expected to be performing the piece throughout my lifetime. To the best of my knowledge,

none of the other musicians ever performed *The Tortoise* after they left The Theatre of Eternal Music group until Tony's 30-year late Table of The Elements release of his so-called "Early Minimalism" (seems late to me, since all the reference works on minimalism in music attribute its beginnings to my *Trio for Strings* from 1958), which was not billed as *The Tortoise* but did demonstrate that he can still remember some of his part from when he played in my group. Aside from Tony's attempt to capitalize on my name with an antagonistic and hostile stance, while carrying on the style of music that I originated, I believe that the sustained tone branch of minimalism, also known as "drone music," is a fertile area for exploration. If Tony does go on to create the music that he believes is his, it will be much more convincing to the world than trying to persuade people about what he did in the past.

III. Imagery of The Tortoise and Dreams

The title of the underlying composition, *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*, grew out of a "tortoise culture/aesthetic" created by me with Marian Zazeela, combined with an interest in "dreams" as imagery for music that I composed and called "Dream Music." For example, my scored work, *The Four Dreams of China*, composed in 1962, was the first work in which I combined the use of long sustained tones with rules for improvisation. It is also the first work in which I created the concept of a composition that lasts forever by virtue of including silences of indeterminate length.

In my program notes for *The Four Dreams of China*, I state:

The Four Dreams of China represents yet a further expansion of time structure; developing on the image of timelessness, I determined that individual performances of the work had no beginning or ending. Each performance is woven out of an eternal fabric of silence and sound where the first sound emerges from a long silence and after the last sound the performance does not end but merely evanesces back into silence, unless a group of musicians "picks up" the same set of pitches again or from time to time, emphasizing the audible aspect of the performance.

I also applied this concept of eternal music to *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*. Just as I considered the performances of *The Four Dreams of China* to be "woven out of an eternal fabric of silence and sound," so I considered the periods of time between rehearsals and performances of *The Tortoise*, when taken up at the same primary drone pitch, to be the silences. Because of the extended time durations and the use of rule-based improvisation with long sustained tones, I considered both *The Four Dreams of China* and *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* to be a part of the genre I call Dream Music.

Beginning January 27, 1964 with the gift of a turtle, Marian and I collected and kept turtles in aquariums in our loft at 275 Church Street, where all of the rehearsals took place and recordings were made (except for concert performance recordings).

The early titles such as *Pre-Tortoise Dream Music* (on which I played saxophone) and *Prelude to the Tortoise* (on which I sang) were applied by me retroactively, after the works had been performed.

The first public performances at which "tortoise" titles were used were at the Pocket Theatre in Fall 1964. The program notes began with the phrase, "Welcome to this production of Dream Music." Two three-day weekend concerts (October 30, 31 & November 1 and November 20, 21

& 22) were scheduled under the title *The Tortoise Droning Selected Pitches from The Holy Numbers for The Two Black Tigers, The Green Tiger and The Hermit*. The "two black tigers" represented Marian and myself; Tony was the "green tiger" and John, the "hermit." A third weekend (December 12 & 13) was subsequently added to the series with a more elaborate title: *The Tortoise Recalling The Drone of The Holy Numbers As They Were Revealed in The Dreams of The Whirlwind and The Obsidian Gong and Illuminated by The Sawmill, The Green Sawtooth Ocelot and The High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer*. (This last image also appears in the title of my 1962 composition *The Second Dream of The High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer from The Four Dreams of China*.) I wrote a stream of consciousness essay about "Dream Music" and the analogous image of the long-living tortoise, a creature that had endured many millions of years with little change (from this perspective, tortoises and turtles were 'static' in concept, just as is much of the musical form that interests me). This essay, included below, was part of the program notes for the March 4, 1965 East End Theatre concert, and became a basic source for tortoise imagery.

From program notes 1964, Copyright © La Monte Young 1968

In Dream Music there is a radical departure from European and even much Eastern music in that the basis of musical relationship is entirely harmony. Not European harmony as textbooks have outlined it, but the intervallic proportions and acoustical consequences of the particular ratios which sound concomitantly in the overtone series when any simple fundamental is produced. Melody does not exist at all (The Disappearance of Melody) unless one is forced to hear the movement from group to group of various simultaneously sounded frequencies derived from the overtone series as melodic because of previous musical conditioning. Even before the first man moved successively from one frequency to another (melody if you like) a pattern for this movement, that is the relationship of the second frequency to the first was already predetermined (harmonically) by the overtone structure of the fundamental of the first sound. And in the life of the Tortoise the drone is the first sound. It lasts forever and cannot have begun but is taken up again from time to time until it lasts forever as continuous sound in Dream Houses where many musicians and students will live and execute a musical work. Dream Houses will allow music which, after a year, ten years, a hundred years of constant sound, would not only be a real living organism with a life and tradition of its own, but one with a capacity to propel itself by its own momentum. This music may play without stopping for thousands of years, just as the Tortoise has continued for millions of years past, and perhaps only after the Tortoise has again continued for as many million years as all the tortoises in the past will it be able to sleep and dream of the next order of tortoises to come and of ancient tigers with black fur and omens the 189/98 whirlwind in the Lost Ancestral Lake Region only now that our species has had this much time to hear music that has lasted so long because we have just come out of a long quiet period and we are just remembering how long sounds can last and only now becoming civilized enough again that we want to hear sounds continuously. It will become easier as we move further into this period of sound. We will become more attached to sound. We will be able to have precisely the right sounds in every dreamroom, playroom and workroom, further reinforcing the integral proportions resonating through structure (re: earlier Architectural Music), Dream Houses (shrines, etc.) at which performers, students and listeners may visit even from long distances away or at which they may spend long periods of Dreamtime weaving the ageless quotients of the Tortoise in the tapestry of Eternal Music.

IV. Tonal Center, Primary Drones and Secondary Drones

Primary drones are defined to be those drones that sound continuously during an entire performance. The primary drone usually remained constant (the same pitch) throughout most or all rehearsals, performances and recordings of a particular evolving section of the work. Secondary drones are defined as those drones that are sustained for relatively long periods of time over the primary drone. It is significant that in every case, it was I who determined the frequency of the tonal center or home key, as well as the frequency of the primary drone tones, and for the most part the secondary drone tones, in all of the compositions played by The Theatre of Eternal Music. During the period of my soprano saxophone playing, this primary drone was a concert B \flat , which was determined by my choice of the left hand E soprano saxophone G as the tonal center of the instrument. In c.1965, I selected the 120-cycle hum of the aquarium motor for a drone in order to keep our drone in tune with the frequency of the 60 Hz AC power supplied by Con Edison. 60 Hz is the drone of the city and, in those days, all too frequently showed up as hum in our sound systems. This moved the primary drone up about a quarter-step from the concert B \flat (116.54 Hz) to a scientific B (120 Hz), which is lower than a concert B (123.46 Hz). The group used 80 Hz (4/3 above 60 Hz) as the drone at the Film-maker's Cinematheque concerts, December 1965, and 120 Hz as the drone at the concerts at Larry Poons "The Four Heavens," February 1966. In c.1966, I purchased a Heathkit Sine Wave generator, which I tuned to secondary drones, usually of frequency ratios of 7/4 or 3/2 over the 120-cycle primary drone.

The primary drone on my Original master tape of "April 25, 1965 day of niagra" is 80 Hz, 4/3 above 60 Hz, which is the dominant or the 5th degree. Because the recorder used to make the unauthorized copy that produced the Table of The Elements CD 74 ran at a slightly different speed from the Original, the ToE CD is at a slightly higher in frequency and, therefore, has lost the intended effect of its harmonious relationship of a perfect just fourth to the 60 Hz AC power line drone of the American continents.

V. Composition and Improvisation

Throughout the known history of composition and improvisation there has always been an interplay between that which was more predetermined and "fixed" and that which was to be determined on the spot during performance and thus could be more spontaneous. In some cases, the fixed elements were preserved through memory and handed down by rote, with little or no recourse to notation as in the Ragas and compositions of Indian classical music and early Blues, but in Western classical music, notation achieved its highest degree of precision, detail and clarity. Nonetheless, we find students taking master classes with musicians such as Casals and Heifetz, apparently to learn something that had not been captured in the black dots on the page. Perhaps in part because of the stability that notation provided, Western music has also produced the most radical departures from what has been conventionally understood to be composition. For instance, we have the extreme example of aleatoric music, such as the music of John Cage, in which the composer may instruct the performer to "play **any** sound," yet Cage remains the composer of the sounds performed, albeit not the creator of the sounds! There is no definition of music composition to be found in Grove's or Harvard, and we are still researching to see if we can turn up a clear legal definition of composition. In any case, at the time that *The Tortoise* and the other works were being performed by The Theatre of Eternal Music, a work had to be submitted in written form to be registered with the Copyright Office. Since the Copyright Act revision of 1978, sound recordings can be used as deposit copies when registering music compositions, and I have registered the copyright on the composition

embodied in the Original sound recording of “April 25, 1965 day of niagra” from *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*, aka “day of niagara”.

A. Jazz improvisation over chord changes of a standard tune. When a jazz musician improvises on the chord changes of a standard tune, the composer of the tune is usually, if not always, considered to be the composer of the entire work. My system of chord structures, characterized by the predominance of intervals whose numerators and denominators in just intonation are factorable by the primes 7, 3, and 2, and selected higher primes, and selected higher primes, is analogous to a set of chord changes, and the musicians' improvisations within this system are analogous to the solos of the jazz musicians. Additionally, even if a musician were to occasionally play a pitch factorable by a prime outside of this system, it could be considered similar to the case where a jazz musician adds an extended harmonic interval to the chord change such as an augmented eleventh or a thirteenth, or a flatted thirteenth, etc. The set of chord changes is still by the original composer even though the improvising musician has embellished them.

Regarding the question of who gets composer's credits and will be eligible to collect composer's publishing and mechanical royalties on improvisations on the chord changes of a standard tune there seem to be widely differing opinions:

Jonathan Rose, former president of Gramavision records, said that, in his experience, the composer of the tune always gets the full composer's credit and the full accompanying publishing and mechanical royalties, and that the improviser does not receive composer's credit or royalties, but rather he may receive performer's royalties.

David Guinn, an attorney who worked out of the music business law firm of Harold Orenstein for many years told me that their firm always tried to get their improvising musicians a share of the composer's publishing and mechanical royalties for their creative contributions. When questioned as to “why was it, then, that so many jazz recordings show **one composer and one publishing company**, even though there are several improvisers on a tune,” he responded that sometimes it was done like trading horses: performers would agree to play and improvise on each other's tunes and records in exchange for similar favors and services when each made his own record or recorded his own tune.

Of course, we are all familiar with the cases where jazz musicians have composed their own jazz melody over the chord changes of a standard tune in order to collect the full composer's publishing and mechanical royalties. This technique leaves the burden of proving that the chord changes have been “borrowed” on the original composer of the chord changes and, while we don't really know the legal history, it seems the “borrowers” have been quite successful. Among the many outstanding examples of this technique are Miles Davis' *Dig*, based on the chord changes of *Sweet Georgia Brown* and Charlie Parker's *Donna Lee*, based on the changes of *Back Home in Indiana*.

B. Re: basso continuo (figured bass). The following definition is quoted from Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music:

A method of indicating an accompanying part by providing the bass notes only, together with figures designating the chief intervals and chords to be played above them. This stenographic system was universally used in the baroque period (1600-1750). The chief principles of the fully developed system (c. 1700) are the following:

1. A figure given with a bass note calls for the corresponding interval or its octave

equivalents above this note in the key indicated by the signature. In A major, for example, a 6 written under (or above) a G indicates E^b, and the figures 6/5 indicate D^b and E^b. Pitch classes so indicated may be played in any octave and are intended only to indicate the harmonies on which the keyboard player is to improvise a realization of the bass. ...

In figured bass parts, the performer is given considerable freedom to realize the composer's instructions, including the possibility for the improvisation of ornamentations and even melodic lines. The works of Bach, Handel and other great composers of the Baroque period are performed and recorded every day right here in the Year 2000, but no one has yet heard of a basso continuo performer receiving co-composer's credit. Being awarded a share of composer's publishing and mechanical royalties is probably not a question since the rights to most of these works are in the public domain.

C. Re: Composition and Improvisation in Indian classical music. In Indian classical music, there are pre-composed compositions similar to pre-composed compositions in Western music in that there is a melodic line set to a particular rhythmic cycle, and vocal music includes words, sometimes with meaning and sometimes used for their sonorous content. Improvisation plays a large part in Indian classical music. Improvisation takes place in the alap section of the raga where there is no pre-composed composition but rather a traditional shape of the character of the raga. Improvisation also takes place based on the compositions set in the rhythmic talas. It is characteristic for the master soloist to lead and do most of the improvising, but his accompanists and disciples in many cases also improvise. Customarily, however, the master musician is given all the credit for the music, even to the degree that accompanists' names are often not even listed on programs and record jackets. Although they are improvising, the accompanists do not feel the need for the credit until they have reached the point where they themselves are masters, since they realize that everything they are improvising they have really learned from the master.

In an album we had planned to release on Gramavision Records but could not complete before the company was sold, to have been titled *The Blues According to Pandit Pran Nath, Terry Riley and La Monte Young*, Pandit Pran Nath had a cut singing *Raga Tilang*, accompanied by Young and Zazeela, voices and tamburas, and Anand Patole, tabla. Although Young, Zazeela and Patole improvised on the cut as well as Pandit Pran Nath, Pandit Pran Nath would have been credited as the composer. On the Terry Riley cut, Krishna Bhatt accompanied on sitar and Zakir Hussain Khan accompanied on tabla. Although Krishna Bhatt and Zakir Hussain Khan improvise on this cut as well as Riley, Riley would have been credited as the composer. On the proposed La Monte Young cut, *Early Tuesday Morning Blues*, John Cale accompanied on viola and Marian Zazeela accompanied with voice drone. Cale and Zazeela perform drones only, and in John's case, he only improvises when he changes bow strokes. In Marian's case, she only improvises which harmonics she emphasizes in her voice and the point at which she takes a breath. If we ever release this album, I will be billed as the composer of the underlying composition of my cut.

Zakir Hussain Khan is perhaps the most masterful tabla player in India today, following in the footsteps of his late father, world-renowned Ustad Alla Rakha. When Zakir Hussain Khan asked Riley, "When is the Blues record coming out?" and Riley said, "La Monte's having some trouble with his accompanists," Zakir Hussain Khan said, "You'll never have that kind of problem with me."

VI. Production

I was the producer of all of the recordings and concerts by my group, The Theatre of Eternal Music, in that:

- a. I selected the musicians;
- b. I chose the repertoire to be performed;
- c. I supplied, or arranged for, the recording studio and rehearsal space;
- d. I supplied, or arranged for, the recording tape;
- e. I supplied, or arranged for, most of the recording equipment;
- f. I supplied meals at most of the sessions and rehearsals;
- g. I funded other paid part-time employment for members of the group:
Conrad carpentry; painting
Cale Hoovering, polishing
MacLise archiving, carpentry; repairs;
- h. I provided the contacts for concert engagements and made all the bookings;
- i. I negotiated the fees;
- j. All contracts and sums paid for concert performances and tape sales or leases were in my name and I then disbursed payments to the performers according to agreed percentages. Some documentation of this exists.
- l. In the few contracts that were signed by the group (not including “day of Niagara”), I was listed as the Producer and received an additional Producer’s share.

VII. *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* is a composition by La Monte Young

A. Public Opinion. It is well established from many articles in dictionaries of music, histories of music, musical journals, newspapers and magazines as popularly read as *The Village Voice* and *Vogue*, that the music played by The Theatre of Eternal Music, including *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*, was generally credited to me. This was, in fact, a source of discontent with Conrad and Cale. The issue may have surfaced sometime after the first group concerts in which I did not play saxophone, but rather sang. The problem was difficult to talk about among the group because we were definitely not in agreement; I was taken aback that Tony and John thought they were co-composers but did not want to hurt their feelings, and I did appreciate their collaborative contributions on the levels of performance, philosophy, theory, physics and mathematics. While we continued to disagree over it, the problem was temporarily ameliorated by establishing a method of billing the artists on posters and in advertisements in the following typical layout:

La Monte Young
(instrument)

Tony Conrad [Title] John Cale
(instrument) (instrument)

(instrument)
Marian Zazeela

This did not deal with the problem of who was the composer, but rather avoided coming to an agreement on the issue by simply listing the individuals as performing artists and giving me top billing, Tony and John equal billing to each other, Marian symmetrical billing to me, and each of us equal distance from the title of the work being performed.

However, Conrad's recent contention that the absence of the word "composer" under my name indicated that I thereby abdicated the role is simply incorrect. For one thing, handbills, flyers and advertisements do not always indicate who the composer is. Significantly, as opposed to the way the names are listed on the ToE "Day of Niagara" CD, the names on our flyers were not listed alphabetically, as would be the case if no hierarchy were implied; my name was on top, sometimes in slightly larger type. Flyers and ads for The Grateful Dead do not state that the music is composed by Jerry Garcia or anyone else. The same is true for many other groups and composers. In the case of the flyers and ads for the performances by the group in 1964, '65 and '66, merely having my name on top was sufficient information to bring the audience and critics, who always referred to the music as "Young's music" in their reviews. A column filler news item was even printed by The Village Voice with the headline "Young Concerts" (Nov. 19, 1964). Additionally, although there are a few examples of flyers and posters that may use the phrase "Music of La Monte Young," they are the exception, more than the rule. I have produced numerous posters and program note covers over the years where only my name appears with the title of the work to be performed, not specifying that I am the composer. For example, concerts of The Well-Tuned Piano, later live performances of The Theatre of Eternal music, concerts of The Theatre of Eternal Music Big Band, Dream House installations, The Forever Bad Blues Band, etc. To me, it would look amateurish to stamp the word "composer" next to a composer's name on a poster.

B. The Opinions of Informed Individuals. There are only a few people still living who were familiar enough with myself, Marian and the other members of the group, and the work we created together and separately as individuals before and after the period when Tony and John were in the group, to make a knowledgeable statement about who was the composer of the music performed and recorded by The Theatre of Eternal Music. Terry Jennings, who performed in The Theatre of Eternal Music, knew me since 1953 and would have been my oldest musical colleague, and Angus MacLise, who played in the group since 1962, are unfortunately both deceased. Among those qualified to make a statement regarding the dispute are Dennis Johnson, the mathematician, composer and performer, who has known me since 1957; Diane Wakoski, the widely published poet, who has known me since 1958; Terry Riley, the composer, who has known me since 1958; Bob Adler, electrical engineer and close friend since we met in 1962 (also President of MELA Foundation), who recorded many sessions and performances; and Marian Zazeela, the artist/musician, my partner since 1962. Hetty MacLise is cognizant of Angus's opinion, although she and Angus came to New York together after I disbanded the group. Johnson, Riley and Zazeela all performed in The Theatre of Eternal Music: Johnson for a short time in the earliest period in 1963, and again during the summer of 1964, Riley in 1966 after John Cale left and until I finally disbanded the group after the Sundance Festival concert in August 1966, and Zazeela in every performance from 1962 to the present (see Section II. History of My Groups, above). It cannot be pretended that any of these people are objective parties since they are all longtime believers in my creative contribution to the music of our time.

Dennis Johnson has known my music since 1957, when we were students together at UCLA. Dennis performed with me long before Tony Conrad and John Cale did. Dennis and I met Tony Conrad for the first time in the summer of 1959, shortly before Dennis and I embarked for Darmstadt. Unfortunately, Dennis contracted pneumonia on the way and was forced to remain in New York, where he stayed with Richard Maxfield.

Along with Terry Jennings, Dennis Johnson was one of the first composers to understand my work with long tones, and as a result, Johnson and Jennings, became two of the first minimalist composers. Dennis was very inspired by the direction my work had taken with the *Trio for Strings*, which I composed in Los Angeles during the summer of '58, before I went to Berkeley. He brought together a group of student musicians and produced the earliest tape recording of the *Trio*, which was then premiered on tape as a part of Dennis's *Avalanche #1, A Concert Drama*, at The Chamber Opera Hall, Music Building, at UCLA on February 6, 1960. Ann Halprin also used the tape to accompany three of her Dancers Workshop concerts at the Contemporary Dancers Center, San Francisco, November 29, 30 and October 1, 1960.

Regarding the underlying tonal structure of my work, Dennis commented in a telephone conversation with Marian and I in 1988 that:

La Monte has designed his life around a specific group of intervals. In fact, he was fanatic about using the 7/4 seventh. It was because of Young's interest in that seventh that I got interested in it. It was Young's use of these intervals that constituted the characteristic music of *The Tortoise*.

The following statements by Dennis Johnson were extracted from a taped discussion among Dennis, Marian and myself, held at our 275 Church Street studio October 25, 1988:

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. The only way it would deviate at all was because the other people were basically students (one virtually had to see oneself as a student) and La Monte would permit these deviations only from the point of view of a teacher permitting students to be still learning what was required while he would continue guiding the project in the direction he wanted. It just would not work for anybody who really had a creative desire to veer from this direction. They would just have to go away to do their own thing. All I would have to know about one of La Monte's extended large-scale projects such as *The Tortoise*, which was an ongoing concept of improvisation, was that he started it, to know that throughout its entire lifespan it was inevitably going to be his baby all the time and never deviate from that. If it did deviate then it would be inevitable that La Monte would lose interest. Or, the others would lose interest, if they happened to have a different conception of the way it should go, which is why I think it was inevitable that that group disbanded.

In answer to La Monte's query as to what allowed Tony Conrad and John Cale to develop some sense that they were collaborating on a higher level than he seemed to be willing to give them credit for, I point out that one can always do some kind of response to the teacher's direction, it's not like one is a complete slave, or a robot.

I have never seen La Monte do anything where everybody is "doing their own thing." No, it's just the most distant antipode from that.

Regarding Diane Wakoski's point [see below] that "when they no longer contributed what he wanted he disbanded the group," La Monte considered, "then was there a period in there when they might have been producing what I didn't want?"

That may be a question, but my feeling is, it was La Monte's conception on the most fundamental level the entire time. I know the way he works. People are not permitted to deviate from his fundamental conception very far. I mean certainly nothing so far away as to be called a composer, not even close to that. In *The Tortoise*, even improvisation was extremely restricted. Improvisation, that's not known as composition. Improvisation is considered something else. Improvisation is not in question, but Young was always trying to control their improvisation even. I don't feel that people who were improvising in La Monte's group had anything like the freedom of any sideman in Miles Davis' group. If they took it, if they took that freedom, it was insubordination. It was tolerated insubordination, because of the way La Monte does things, leads people gently back to the fold, kind of a Mormon, a religious thing.

There's a great availability of a type of individual conception in highly rigid cultures. In some way, the rigid structure frees people to do something because it is so well defined and formalized. What the performers did in the context of this well-defined, formalized situation in La Monte's group does not qualify as composition. La Monte's structure was much more rigid than the normal improvisation situation in which people are not given the credit for composition. La Monte was not only controlling the fundamental aspects of the piece, which is presumably what composition means, but also the more individual parts, namely the improvisation. There was always much less freedom in everything that I saw La Monte do in a collaborative way than in any other collaborative situations. The kind of collaborative arrangement that Tony Conrad and John Cale are trying to compare with their relationship to La Monte in order to deprive him of the credit for the compositional aspect of the work did not exist in *The Tortoise*.

In a telephone conversation of April 30, 1988, Diane Wakoski, who knew all of the people involved at the time the group was functioning, expressed the opinion that, "John Cale and Tony Conrad were in no way co-composers. They were simply young musicians who had never done anything of significance before coming into the group, which wouldn't have existed if it were not for La Monte. La Monte wouldn't have used them if they hadn't been able to do what he wanted and, when they no longer contributed what he wanted, he disbanded the group." In a visit to New York on December 4, 1988, Wakoski added the following statement:

There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that La Monte Young's genius as a composer is of the sort that attracts other musicians. Many of them, like the young John Cale and Tony Conrad, sought him out and cultivated the privilege of working with him. I saw this as early as 1959, when I was still an undergraduate at Berkeley and living with La Monte. My impression over these thirty years has always been that when or if a musician who'd come to La Monte initially either felt that he was evolving in a different direction or losing interest in La Monte's work, he would leave. As Cale and Conrad did. Of course Cale and Conrad have original ideas and contributions to make to music, but at the stage when they were performing with La Monte, they were doing so not as collaborators but as disciples. That they went their separate ways soon after *The Tortoise* period indicates that they were longing to assert their own ideas and couldn't really do so performing with La Monte.

There was never any question that when a musician was with La Monte, he was working with La Monte's ideas or compositions. 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, though he has always worked with other musicians. His early experiences as a jazz musician are the model for his distinction between composing a piece of music and improvising creatively in the performance of someone else's composition.

This is a personal statement, of course, but it is given in response to what strikes me as an absurd claim by Conrad and Cale. As a college professor, I've noticed over the years that when someone is a very effective teacher, his students start believing they could always have easily done whatever it was that they actually learned to do so well from their good teacher. In the case of La Monte, since he was never formally Cale's nor Conrad's teacher, the illusion of their independent roles as co-composers in *The Tortoise* is even more profound. But surely if they re-examine the evidence they will have to admit that when they performed with La Monte, they were not composers but very creative performers improvising variations on La Monte's composition. Everyone who knows La Monte is aware of the fact that you either play his game, or he doesn't play with you.

Diane Wakoski's statements from 1988 now take on new relevance when we consider that she was one of the invited guests present at the private concert performance on Sunday, April 25, 1965, during which "25 IV 65 c. 8:15-8:45 PM NYC day of niagra" from *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* was actually recorded.

Terry Riley has stated in 1988 that while he was singing in the group (February - July 1966), he always thought it was my music, and in an email dated July 13, 2000, in reference to the Table of The Elements "day of Niagara" CD he wrote, "In my mind there is no question that the composer, originator of the style, major contributor and driving force behind this group was La Monte Young."

In a further statement he wrote:

I have known and been intimately associated with La Monte Young for about 40 years. Our association goes back to the period when we were students in the graduate department of music at UC Berkeley 1958/60. During this time, we worked together on many projects and I was very happy to help him as a co-performer in several of his pieces and was very positively influenced by the strong ideas he put forth. When we got together again, it was in 1965 and I again helped him as a co-performer in the Theatre of Eternal Music. I joined the group after it had already been going a few years with earlier members Dennis Johnson, Terry Jennings, Tony Conrad, John Cale, Angus MacLise, Marian Zazeela and La Monte.

All of the members of La Monte's group were chosen because of their unusual talents and abilities to absorb, contribute and support the unique aesthetic that informs his compositional forms. La Monte is the most singularly unique composer of his generation in that he has clung tenaciously to certain compositional principals over his entire career. He is also, because of uncompromising negotiations with record companies, the most under-recorded. Although his reputation as a composer is legendary and he himself has written extensively about his music, his output is relatively unknown to the general public. I think this has resulted in the current controversy about the compositional ownership of the Table of The Elements CD release in question and his collaborative works in general, especially with Tony Conrad and John Cale. I know

these two musicians to be highly gifted and original artists in their own right and certainly, they were inspiring collaborators for La Monte as well. However, it was my experience that the music produced in this group during my tenure in 1965/66 was driven by La Monte's compositional ideas and aesthetic and I don't think it possible that this music could have been created by anyone else. It is true that the music reached the heights of greatness because of the great skill and commitment of John Cale and Tony Conrad as well as other members. This is true in any great group in which improvisation is the central way of working and most "sidemen" accept in this situation that their contributions lie in the area of performance. As far as I am aware, when this work was done, there were no contracts drawn and La Monte as a former jazz musician was used to working this way. But being already the most experienced and well known leader and composer of the group, it was always my understanding that it was his group and his music we were performing, even though I was aware of elements that were contributed by Tony Conrad (such as the math for getting around in Just Intonation) and Angus MacLise (incorporating his names of the days as part of the title added to the poetic nature of the titles of the pieces), and most prominently the stunning visual art of Marian Zazeela that always accompanied the performances. We are talking of a very complex issue here and one in which there are many gray areas but I think we must consider above all that La Monte had already established the major framework for the compositions in question and because of his unique approach of building on a composition over a period of many years, these works were already basically thought out by him before the time the collaboration began and are part of a long compositional framework that is still going on in his work today.

Bob Adler is an electrical engineer without whose devotion to (and in-kind patronage of) the music, most of the early tapes would not exist. After our meeting in 1962, he first recorded sessions at his home on 14th Street in 1963, before Marian and I moved to our Church Street studio in August. Bob then frequently brought his tape recorder (he purchased one of the first two Revoxes ever imported to the US) over to our studio and recorded many of the sessions there. He had many talents and contributed his expertise to our performances as photographer and recording engineer, and also as one of Marian's projectionists. He emailed the following statement in response to the current controversy:

During this period of time, I recorded many of the sessions and attended many of the performances. The performers would change from time to time and no one ever questioned that it was La Monte's music that was being performed. Everyone knew that La Monte was keeping the tapes and considered that he was the composer and they were the performers and during this period, I never heard anyone claim otherwise or raise any objections.

Hetty MacLise: Sandy McCroskey states in an open letter to Jeff Hunt, July 13, 2000, "I've heard Angus's widow Hetty declare that Angus always considered what they were doing as La Monte's music...even though his drumming was arguably much more of an independent part than Cale and Conrad's contributions." At a dinner in London after the December 1, 1998 Barbican concert of *The First Blossom of Spring in Dream Light*, in the presence of her son Ossian and many other dinner guests, including Sandy, Hetty scoffed at the idea that John and Tony were composers of the music they played in my group.

Marian Zazeela's statement:

Although I have edited this entire text with La Monte, I feel that it is important that I do not remain silent on this matter so that there will be no question ever raised as to my position. The period of time during which we worked on the material which came to be known as *The Tortoise* was charged with highly spirited creativity among all the participants. Certainly I, and I believe the others, strongly felt we were breaking ground musically and partaking in an important, history-making step. Be that as it may, I always felt that La Monte was the composer, director and designer of this new arena of contemporary musical expression. I was a contributor and participant, much in the same way that Tony and John were contributors. As a performer, I had a part assigned to me by La Monte and improvised by me during the course of any performance. I was also completely responsible for the visual aspects of the presentations, including the costumes, lighting and staging, and usually I created the flyers and announcements as well. The lighting developed into a major projection work of my design, for which I trained various projectionists to perform during concerts, since I could not both sing and project at the same time. With a method that paralleled the construct of the music in which La Monte designed the pitches and rules for *The Tortoise* and instructed the musicians how to perform them, I prepared the designs and colors for the projectionist, who then improvised with them through the course of a given performance. It is interesting to note that none of the projectionists I worked with (many of whom were very creative in their own right and in the way in which they "performed" my projections) ever considered themselves the "lighting co-designer."

C. My Own Opinion. I am extremely interested in arriving at a fair and just solution to the questions John and Tony have raised regarding their participation in my group, The Theatre of Eternal Music. I very much appreciated the hard work, musical dedication and philosophical interchange that took place during those inspiring days that, at one time, we all remembered so fondly. I feel that eventually part of the solution lies in properly defining the credit lines for the members of the group, but at the present time, our positions seem so far apart that we have not been able to work toward a harmonious solution.

In his review of the forthcoming "Day of Niagara" CD in *The Wire* (May 2000), Edwin Pouncey suggested that, "without the playing skills and invention of this extraordinary cast of musicians—with whom they [Young and Zazeela] chose to surround themselves—this incredible piece of music may have simply remained just an idea." I certainly do appreciate the extraordinary musical talent that Tony and John brought to the group, but this must be viewed in the perspective that almost every member of The Theatre of Eternal Music, from inception to the present, has been an extraordinary musical talent, and the sound of the group has always changed as the timbres change. This level of extraordinary musical talent is what I look for and expect from the musicians who work with me. The list of selected members of the group over the years includes renowned world class composers, improvisers and classical concert soloists: Terry Jennings, Dennis Johnson, Terry Riley, Angus MacLise, Marian Zazeela, Tony Conrad, John Cale, Jon Gibson, Jon Hassell, Lee Konitz, Alex Dea, David Rosenboom, Ben Neill, Charles Curtis, Jon Catler, Brad Catler, Hansford Rowe, Michael Harrison, Jim O'Connor, Stephen Burns, Rich Clymer, Tom Varner, Steve Johns, Marcus Rojas, Garrett List, Don Hayward and a host of other equally talented but as yet less well known musicians.

Although I had written a paper on harmonics in my Physics of Sound class at LA City College back in c. 1955, I continue to gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to both John Cale and Tony Conrad, as well as to Harry Partch, Ben Johnston, Lou Harrison, Alain Danielou, Hermann Helmholtz, Pythagoras and the Chinese scholar Ling Lun (attributed to the 27th century B.C.),

all of whom worked with and some of whom actually composed in the system of just intonation. I fully understand that broad "systems of music," such as the 12-tone technique and just intonation are probably not copyrightable in and of themselves. However, a set of rules within the system of just intonation, such as those governing a performance of a Raga, a performance of *The Well-Tuned Piano* and a performance of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*, certainly constitutes composition. I assert that by studying the origins and history of my music and listening to the tapes of *The Tortoise*, a knowledgeable listener can hear that all of *The Tortoise* recordings are based on my underlying compositional structure as outlined in Section I of this text. Since neither John Cale nor Tony Conrad can recognize this structure and I do, it must, therefore, belong to me.

In summary, *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*, both in its underlying structure and in its embodiment in the tapes recorded by The Theatre of Eternal Music, is my composition because the piece continues, both in method of composition and tonal content, what I had already established as my own method of composition and tonal characteristic as outlined in Section I. Further, because I had created my own style and was doing extremely original work, other musicians and performers sought me out to learn from me and participate in my projects. There is no dispute that I was the director of the group. In fact, in a letter of April 7, 1987, Tony Conrad states that, "La Monte was the director of the group effort." The composer Rhys Chatham has said that, "La Monte Young is the Miles Davis of classical music: for a young classical performer to have been a member of Young's group provided the same experience and prestige that a young jazz musician attained through being a member of the Miles Davis ensemble." Tony Conrad and John Cale joined a group that I had already formed and for which I provided musical direction, as described in Section II, and ongoing wherewithal (see Section VI Production). At the point that Tony and John began to bring up the idea that they were co-composers, it was long after they had joined the group and I had already invested a great deal of time in the group and in Conrad and Cale, and so had to settle with temporary solutions, such as giving the musicians billing as performers with no mention of a composer, in order to give me time to think over a problem that I had never dreamed of. Conrad and Cale were well aware of the instruction pieces and rule-based algorithmic works that I had composed: Tony had corresponded with me regarding my *Compositions 1960* and participated as a performer in my works, *Composition 1960 # 7* and *The Second Dream of The High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer* in May 1963, and John Cale had performed in my *Compositions 1960* while still in London. The Theatre of Eternal Music group developed around my compositions, and rehearsed and improvised within structures I established, albeit in a free and creative format that I encouraged. The group members followed my lead and carried out my performance instructions to my satisfaction for a period of time, and when they ceased to perform according to my intentions, I disbanded the group.

Precisely because the style of composition that I originated broke so radically with the long-standing precedent of considering composition to be exclusively **melodic** composition, the difficulty has arisen for me that my predominantly **harmonic-based** composition has had little or no precedent.

It is not the intention of this summation to suggest that Tony Conrad and John Cale are any the less creative as individuals because they were not the composers of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*. It is important to note that they both went on to do highly creative work in their own rights. During the period they worked with me on *The Tortoise*, they began to develop their own styles as improvising musicians, and participated in musical productions with other musicians in which, since there was not an underlying compositional framework, it could be said that they were co-composers of the works. We are aware of many tape recordings in which

they "jammed," so to speak, with Angus MacLise and perhaps Terry Jennings. These were free sessions where the participants just got together and played. Tony Conrad has archived his own collection of tapes including Angus MacLise, and under the entry for "Composer" has listed the names of each of the performers on the tape, no matter how minimal their compositional role might have been. For example, Tony lists the tambura player as a co-composer. The tambura can only play a drone. It is a very beautiful instrument but it would require great creativity to get a composition out of a tambura that was any different from the music that all tamburas have played throughout time. If every instrumentalist at a jam session, including the tambura player, is a composer, then surely this creates a new dimension for the definition of composer. This shows that Tony Conrad has a very particular sociological approach to the problem in which he concludes that anyone playing in a work that was improvised comes under his very broad definition of a co-composer. This was certainly not the case in *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* and may indicate that Tony has confused his roles in the different ensembles he has performed in over the years. If Tony's definition of co-composer is so broad, what does it actually mean that he contributed when he designates himself a co-composer of *The Tortoise*: that he simply played his instrument in a work that called for improvisation?

Tony Conrad's and John Cale's contributions to the underlying structure of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* were not in the realm of composition, but were rather in the realms of performing, theory, acoustics, mathematics and philosophy, and therefore not copyrightable as music composition. Conrad's and Cale's contributions on the level of improvisation were controlled by the underlying structure that I composed. The underlying composition is an abstract entity that could be fixed in a tangible form and copyrighted as I have done. Conrad and Cale did participate in free improvisations with other musicians during the same period, but *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* was not a free improvisation. Moreover, if the tapes had been produced as a result of free improvisation, they could not possibly have yielded, as they did, the underlying compositional structure outlined by me in Section I.

Consider the concept of Raga: a form that is made up of a number of elements that are in and of themselves characteristic of a particular Raga. These elements include characteristic scale structures, melodic patterns and cadences, vadi/samvadi (predominant note/supporting note) relationships, shruti (microtone) tunings, microtonal shadings, gamaks (ornaments) and a particular psychological state or feeling which is to be produced by the proper rendering of the above elements. These elements are comparable to a set of algorithmic rules which, when properly performed, create a whole which is yet greater than the sum of its parts, and is known as an aspect of the raga. The elements of the Raga are woven together with the technique of improvisation. Thus, no single performance of a Raga can include the entire Raga; all performances of a Raga are different, but it is clear to those who are knowledgeable of Ragas whether or not the performer knows the Raga and if he is properly summoning forth the character of the Raga. A composer can compose a Raga. An improviser may then improvise in the character of the Raga. The improviser may be a composer of his own improvisations but he is not the composer of the Raga. This is parallel to the situation with *The Tortoise* and with *The Well-Tuned Piano*. I am the composer of *The Well-Tuned Piano* but when my disciple Michael Harrison performed the work, he included improvisations, which, though based on my improvisations, may also have been different and therefore "composed" by Harrison. It does not change the fact that the underlying structure of *The Well-Tuned Piano* was composed by me, and Harrison simply improvised over this structure. Nonetheless, for legal clarity, I had Harrison sign a contract that *The Well-Tuned Piano* was my work. The fact that Conrad and Cale extemporized rhythms, bow changes, chordal voicings and occasionally made pitch selections, does not have the same significance it might have had in non-algorithmic based compositions.

In Raga tradition, every performer must have the perspective to understand that he is not the composer of the Raga even though there probably has never been a contract between a Raga composer and a Raga performer.

In *The Tortoise*, the structure is clear and well-defined much in the way that the structure of a Raga is. There were no written contracts with Conrad and Cale concerning *The Tortoise*, however, and they have either not had or chosen not to have the perspective to realize that the work was composed by me and that they were not the composers of the underlying work. Perhaps they actually innocently misconstrued their roles because of my technique of treating everyone equally in daily conversation, as if they were my advisors. Perhaps Tony Conrad's attorney friend explained to him at some point that the only way Tony could get copies of the tapes, would be if he, Conrad, was a "co-composer" and if all of Conrad's collaborative input were to be considered composition. I carefully protected the tapes by possession because they were not at that time protectable under copyright law. In particular, I could not give copies to Conrad and Cale because they were expressing their adversarial position. Tony and John tended to join and vote together, since they were in an environment where everyone else except them saw my perspective and that of Zazeela and other members of the group: that it was my music.

Tony has stated as a proof that "day of Niagara" was not even a composition, let alone had a sole composer of an underlying composition, that, "'Day of Niagara' was our name of the DATE of the recording (4/25/65), in accordance with the calendar devised by Angus MacLise." Tony should be aware by now, however, that I have long maintained a practice of naming pieces with the exact date, time and city of recording or performance of the section of the work being recorded or performed, in order to differentiate separate realizations of the same, ongoing, musical composition. Further, 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. For the record, the correct title of the work is **"25 IV 65 c. 8:15-8:45 PM NYC day of niagra" from *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*.**

Imagine what you would have if you removed my name from the "Day of Niagara" CD. If Tony recorded *Four Violins* in 1964 as he now claims, why did he wait thirty years to bring it out, and, 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.

It was the extraordinary understanding, bond and trust that had long existed between composer and performer, such as the bond between Cage, Brown and Bussotti with Tudor, the bonds among Jennings, Johnson, Riley and Young, the bonds between Maxfield with Tudor, Young and Jennings, the bonds that existed between European classical composers and their performers in times when improvisation was very much in vogue, the bonds that exist between composers and performers of Raga, the bonds that exist between composers and performers of jazz compositions, that Conrad and Cale, either naively, or intentionally, betrayed, taking advantage, unbecoming to their stature and acclaim, of an established tradition existing

between composers and performers back into time.

Just as John and Tony lived the fantasy of a group called “The Dream Syndicate” that never existed outside of their imagination, they lived and continue the fantasy that they were co-composers of the Dream Music they wanted to syndicate. It is significant to note: that of all the musicians who have performed in my groups, from before, during and after the period that Tony Conrad and John Cale were in the group, only Tony Conrad and John Cale believe that they were co-composers of my music. Every other member of the group alive, then and now, believed that it was my music and that I was the sole composer of the underlying music composition. This includes Dennis Johnson, Terry Riley and Marian Zazeela (and the now deceased Terry Jennings and Angus MacLise), who were all in the group at the same time as either Tony or John.

VIII. On the Release of Recordings of My Music

Many people have asked why I have not released more of my early music myself. I made many efforts in earlier years to find a record company to release them with no success. Columbia Records rejected my early soprano saxophone recordings and the original 1964 recording of *The Well-Tuned Piano* because they were mono. I even asked John Cale to find a company in the early ‘late ‘60s, but he was not successful in persuading any of the companies he worked with to take a chance on such experimental music. Then, in 1987, Tony Conrad and John Cale threatened to sue if I were to do anything with the recordings of music on which they appeared. Conrad and Cale even threatened to block releases of my fast soprano saxophone playing with Angus accompanying, on which they (merely) held drones. As a result, most record companies, including Gramavision, my company at that time, wanted nothing to do with releasing the music from that period, since they did not want to become entangled in a costly legal controversy.

I have many important works, some recorded and some not, from before and after that period, and in total, perhaps a thousand hours of my music is preserved on tape. Much of this music is extremely important for me to release and although I have just begun my own recording label, Just Dreams, there is simply not the financial support to put everything out in a great hurry. We have just produced the 6-hour 25-minute 1987 performance of *The Well-Tuned Piano in The Magenta Lights* on a single DVD disc for a four-month installation in Avignon, France. This is the most important recording I have ever made in my entire life as a musician. Everything else that I have ever recorded must be measured against this. It would not matter if I had just begun to compose yesterday, or in the early fifties, when I did. This work would still be what it is. To me, it is the most highly evolved and beautiful performance of one of my compositions that I have ever achieved. As much as I would like to release a recording of the *Trio for Strings* from 1958, and some of my soprano saxophone playing from the *pre-Tortoise* period, as well as music from the *Tortoise* period, and later incarnations of The Theatre of Eternal Music performing *Map of 49's Dream...* from *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*, and on throughout the history of music in the last half of the 20th century, there is simply not the financial support to put out everything at once and I have to make hard choices. Now I am raising the money to put out the commercial edition of the DVD, so it may be some months before it can go on sale, but gradually I do want to release more and more of my music. I hope my new label provides a part of the answer. Perhaps now there will be some co-venturers out in the world who will come forward to help release the music at a faster pace.

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