

CECIL TAYLOR 80 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

TIME AND TIMES

Featuring Cecil Taylor & Tony Oxley

LA BELLE USINE A.S.B.L.
& RUBY FLOWER RECORDS WITH

MUZIEKGEBOUW AAN 'T IJ & BIMHUIS, AMSTERDAM

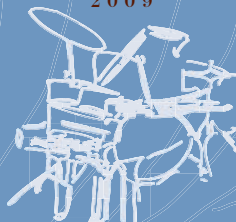
LANTAREN-VENSTER, ROTTERDAM

JAZZDOR / MUSICA / PÔLE-SUD, STRASBOURG

FOLLOW THE SOUND FESTIVAL AND DE SINGEL, ANTWERP

PHILHARMONIE LUXEMBOURG

2009



CECIL'S LATEST CHAPTER(S?)



Cecil Taylor playing at his apartment in the 1960s, by Charles Rotmil

Two decades ago, the biggest news in Cecil Taylor's world was a month-long block of concerts in Berlin to showcase the breadth of his musical endeavors—solos, and duets, and small- and large-ensemble performances with players mostly new to his circle. Looking back across Taylor's creative history, the Berlin month in 1988 becomes a boundary before which he mainly assembled ensembles around the central, American-based figures of his group, the **Unit**, and after which, with the Unit name finally retired, international collaborations and summit meetings have played a much larger role. There are exceptions on both sides of this over-simplified divide, but the indisputable lasting impact of the Berlin work was the beginning of an ongoing bond with Tony Oxley.

CT opines in hindsight that the impresario of those concerts devilishly knew what was good for his featured artist — that he must have anticipated what a treat it would be for Taylor and Oxley to join forces. In fact, the idea was an afterthought; Oxley was added into the program of drum pairings after the series had already begun. Their duet on July 17, 1988 turned out to be the dessert, so

to speak, the last item in the month's concert schedule, a day after their first meeting in person, ages 59 and 50, respectively.

The large-scale Berlin '88 CD box project quickly became the single most visible item in Cecil Taylor's recorded catalog, and it still holds that status. *Leaf Palm Hand*, the duet disc with Oxley from that collection from that first encounter, is likely still the most visible project of their history, and until *Alanthus*

Altissima, their current debut together on microgroove, it has been their only duet through 15 hours of published collaborations. Oxley instantly became part of The Feel Trio with William Parker, a new formulation in CT's *praxis* that would be a steady vehicle for most of the next five years. After a hiatus,

Taylor and Oxley working together — duo this time — resurfaced in 2000. Maybe every time they play now carries a certain dose of "reunion" character, though their choice to play together is as regular as it can be.

For much of these 20 years since the Berlin moment, Cecil Taylor's music has had two lobes. On one side are European performances, nearly always with Tony Oxley if they're with anybody, and by now the two have made hundreds of appearances — on the continent. Oxley lives in Germany; his hand-crafted kit is much more cumbersome than is the case for most drummers, and while he's grown older, the skies have also become less friendly for musicians packing their instruments. His visits in 1989, 2000, and 2008 have been the rare breakthroughs to play the States with Taylor—so, with CT based in Brooklyn, there exists an entire second hemisphere of Taylor's group activities in the USA including a variety of partakers. Listeners hearing CT in concert in one part of the world could fill in the other half of the picture from records, as American trio documents in this century have begun to balance the stockpile from the Nineties.

On both continents, nearly all of Cecil Taylor's performing work is in festivals and concert halls. Only the US groups have enjoyed even a whiff of the jazz club exposure that CT still gravitates to. There's something to the idea that what he offers in clubs in

his own country is really the continuous thrust that is tangibly descended from the music of the Sixties. He fuels that impression more than a little, selecting the piano/bass/drums trio for almost every stateside case that's not a co-billing of headliners.

During preparations for their New York stand last summer, Oxley predicted that American audiences might not get exactly what they were expecting. The way they'd been playing recently in Europe was different from the dense, intense, going-up-in-flames of 20 or even 10 years ago. Nowadays it's a constant push and pull, spurts of high energy and velocity interspersed with cool-downs where the pace and dynamics change frequently, in small quanta. It's not unlike the conversational interplay of what now is called **European Free Improvisation**. For the older style that Tony's talking about, consider the physical results of their momentum-driven residence at Tonic in November 2000: One particular set had a punishing density that left Oxley

with sore hands and the realization that an upcoming gig with CT would have to mean an athletic training schedule to prepare for it.

In that full-throttle, **kaleidoscopic** Old School playing, there's hardly a question of controlling the rate of ideas or involvement in the music; full engagement for both players is *de rigueur* at all times. Action and reaction swirl beyond recognition. By contrast, especially in the club environment, the energy sometimes planes out to a near-transparency where the breathless audience could (seem to) sense thoughts being exchanged between Taylor and Oxley.




Ultimately this recent ‘New Music’ model invites us to follow the sense of sequence in the duets, what leads to and from certain choices and gestures. Maybe the musical outcome as embodied in the latest recordings delivers the ‘understandability’ many clamor for. For detractors, that means no nervous headache; for supporters it may mean actually having a chance to hear every nuance instead of losing some to the delicious **blur**.

Whether every set falls neatly into one of two types of playing is again debatable, just as it’s unclear whether to segregate these types as old and new, concert and club, or European and American. Not subject to debate is that both musicians use more modes of interaction, and perhaps different modes of action, than they would have a decade ago, or two decades ago. Since the beginning, CT/TO collaborations have always drawn some of their **sublime compatibility** from the fact that that Oxley’s music-making matches Taylor’s in giving the impression that it could go on forever, undemarcated by beats in micro, measures in macro, or even accents to that might imply the grand tectonics of structure. So in the proposition of an evening-length concert, there was is always a greater danger of not finding an outlet to disengage from playing than there is of running short on ideas. While that marathon property hasn’t departed from Taylor or Oxley’s creativity, their current projection is more variegated. Five- and seven-minute pieces don’t occur only as encores to longer ones. And the new paradigm allows that energy will sometimes suck all sound down to level zero even within a piece, then breathe, change direction, and move out again.

Cecil Taylor **refuses** to subjugate the music to a special occasion in history—not 20th anniversary reunions, not Oxley’s 70th birthday before the first USA venture last year; also neither to manifold issues of change and positivity that were on so many minds in as they opened in New York on the night of the U.S. presidential election of 2008, nor even CT’s own 80th birthday, which is the *raison d’être* for the concert you’re attending. Instead, he tells us wordlessly and devoutly every time about the sacred act of drawing vibrations from these membranes. Finally, Cecil Taylor and Tony Oxley go again to work, night after night, casting and welding the miracles that are their own *cause célèbre* and the **jubilant ritual** of music itself.

Ben Young, compiler of the forthcoming bio-discography: “A New Energy: Cause and Effect in the Music of Cecil Taylor”



Could feel the instinct
within the value
registering
on a particular
extension of a
human limb
at rest
an internal
light fractured
by angular
placement
which assuages
yet, stimulates
the senses in a
dreamt acknowledgement
memorialized as
incidents accrued

Cecil Taylor, 2008

CECIL TAYLOR 80th BIRTHDAY

TIME AND

LA BELLE USINE A.S.B.L and RUBY FLOWER RECORDS are proud and honoured to pay tribute to CECIL TAYLOR for his 80th birthday celebration. The American pianist, poet and dancer has been applauded as a special breed of artist: brilliant, formidable and controversial, he has it all: the whole package of artistic gifts and in abundance.

With the control over every sound and a long-range of vision, Taylor's playing is concept, beauty, intelligence and all the idiosyncrasies that comprise great artistry of the sort that electrifies our souls.

Born in Long Island City in Queens, NY on March 25, 1929 from a Cherokee dancer, pianist and violinist mother with a Kiowa Chef by trade father, he began his musical studies at age five. From 1947 to 1951, Cecil Taylor attended The New England Conservatory of Music and developed a rare combination of insight, inspiration and an amazing technique.

Career highlights include the 1957 Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island, and in 1958, New York's Great South Bay Jazz Festival. By the

finally started to get the recognition he deserved. In 1986 the Berlin Free Jazz Society sponsored a "Cecil Taylor Week". In 1979 he composed and played the music for a twelve-minute ballet "Tetra Stomp: Eatin' Rain in Space", featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov and Heather Watts. In 1978, he performed for President Jimmy Carter on the White House lawn and also lectured as an in-residence artist at universities. During that period he started playing with larger ensembles and big-band projects and with a who's who of European free improvisers including British drummer and painter and painter TONY OXLEY. The duo Cecil Taylor and Tony Oxley covers an amazing combination of sound-scapes and is still active today.

In 1991 he was awarded the MacArthur Foundation Genius fellowship.

Cecil Taylor doesn't use traditional notation. However, his music is largely composed and highly structured in

such way that he has created a new language in music in which there is no separation between intellect and emotion, but instead based on structure and technique. All

this is ignited with a colossal amount of passion.

Passion for Cecil Taylor is the force of the spirit which has to be developed in order to survive. He acknowledged love and the spirits of people he loves/loved for having changed his life, filling him with abundance when researching about the writers, dancers, architects and the women singers who inspired him. Yet Taylor claims that everybody has a voice, but the

impact depends on the integrity and how one makes the instrument come alive and what one can make the audiences feel with that **VOICE**.

When questioned about his talents as poet and dancer Taylor muses that any gift one has is not about that at all. For him it's about a force, about the ungiven, the uncreative, and the amorphous; considering himself merely a vessel or a sponge. He attempts to make anything that exists as part of the palette to describe whatever it is and what he thinks he wants to do. And what Cecil Taylor likes and what he wants to do is to be as beautiful and as loving and as all-consuming as possible ... always.

Cecil Taylor is fascinated with **words**, but without thinking of rhythm in language and knowing that they are there. He reads an array of different writers and the same thing with music. Therefore his choices for what he will listen to are vast, yet when he is playing he feels he is dancing too ... so the harmony and the melodic collide.

Taylor believes that among the whole virtues an artist should practice integrity, must stand and do, so he's committed to the magic. Then the magic asserts itself in ways that he doesn't have to apprehend, because it is incorruptible. For Taylor that is the beauty. That is the force.

As he considers that art was here before us, Taylor thinks that preparation adds a little something to it. And when the artist, he Cecil Taylor, gets a chance to communicate with others, he begins to find out something else: what it really means to have an audience in front of him and not to even hear them breathe. That's when it goes beyond himself.

The **duo** Cecil Taylor and Tony Oxley is an ultimate union; the most unifying musical characteristic is that they play as if they are one person. Oxley understands the complicated music, the dynamics, and the aspects of form Taylor constructs. This duo is a joy for both artists. Taylor says of Oxley: "He is immense in what he does in his conception of sound. I've been very fortunate..."

DAY CELEBRATION

TIMES

early 60's Taylor was performing with his own bands. His duos and extended trios developed often volcanic new forms of conversational interplay. In 1962 Taylor began to write poems inspired by the letters he exchanged with a poet.

In the 70's he began to perform solos and taught at the University of Wisconsin, Antioch College in Ohio, and Glassboro State College in New Jersey. In 1973 he ran his own record label Unit Core and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. In the 1980's his career was already propelled in Europe and Japan and

TONY OXLEY

Tony Oxley is an avant-garde, inventive and significant **drum-mer** who has created a new style of drums in free improvisation. Though Oxley swings as bold as anyone, he steps aside from the drums's traditional role. He developed a drum/percussion kit suited to his personal mode of playing and by the 70s became the first drummer to actively utilize electronic resources to modify the sound of his instrument. Instead of playing a certain beat, he might emphasize and brush behind the soloist's lines, or quardary in complicated dialogues, glossing and transposing with an open-ear awareness of give and take.

Born Anthony Oxley on 15 June, 1938 in Sheffield, England, at eight years old he was already a self taught pianist and began playing the drums at age seventeen. From 1957-1960 he studied music theory in the military band of the British Army and developed his drumming technique performing works by Beethoven, Mozart, and Dvorak.

By the early 1960's he was already leading his own quartet which for him was a period of learning, of taming himself, and discovering other ways of playing music. Though by 1966 Oxley had already moved be-

yond traditional jazz, he was established as the house drummer at the legendary and timeless jazz club in London, Ronnie Scott's and enjoyed performing with the legends that had helped invent jazz.

In 1970, Oxley together with guitarist Derek Bailey, saxophonist Evan Parker and journalist Michael Walters founded Incus Records; thereafter he helped to form the Musician's Cooperative putting the British improvised music scene on firmer ground. That same year he worked as artist-in-residence at the Sydney Conservatorium in Australia and then thereafter joined the London Jazz Composers Orchestra. In 1973 he became an instructor in jazz at the Barry Summer School in Wales, and in 1974 he formed another group of his own known as Angular Apron. The same year Oxley met painter-musician Alan Davie, began to play the violin and discovered rhythmic possibilities on the instrument, and has since had an abiding interest in working with string ensembles of all kinds.

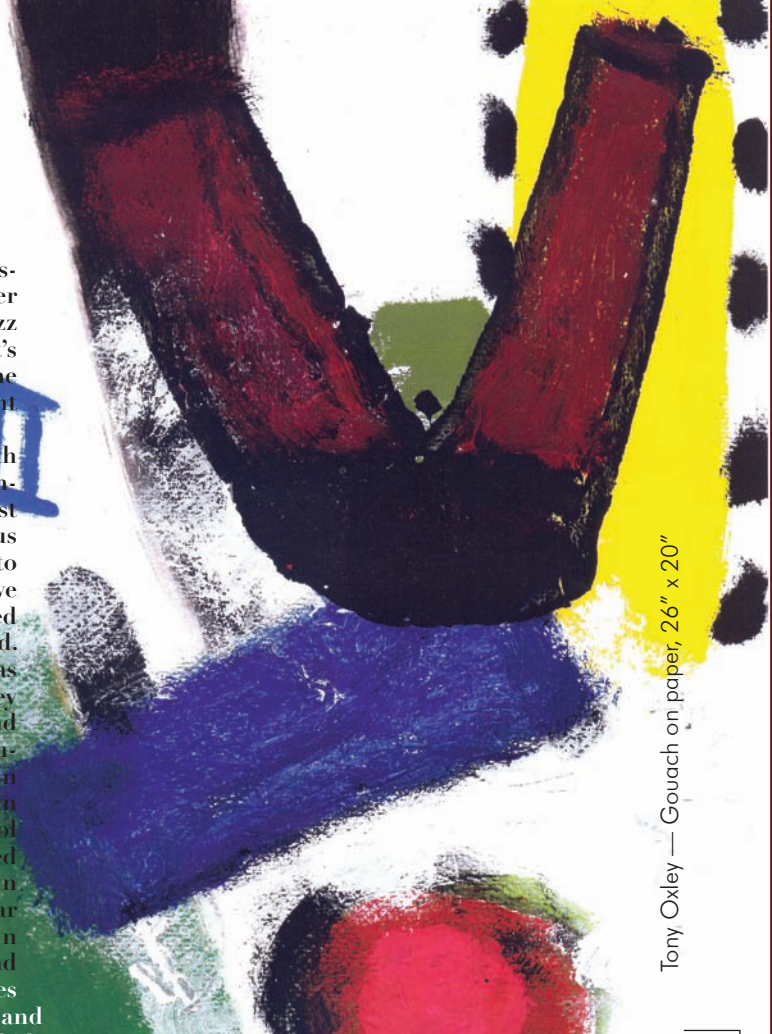
Oxley assesses that professional electronic composers require a large desk of treatment possibilities, so he had the idea to cut this down to a minimum in order to improvise. He's also constantly changing his sound source and in so doing he would quite easily move his equipment to any situation.

Through the 1980s he worked with various musicians and also formed his own Celebration Orchestra during the latter half of that decade. By the 80s Oxley began a long lasting working relationship with Cecil Taylor.

Not only is Tony Oxley a brilliant **percussionist**, he's also a talented painter. His paintings are based on colour, and composition. The simplest forms of his paintings evoke the most complex emotions. His style explores the relationship between structures and the natural world with unrecognizable shapes which also involves layering. Oxley's dialogue with **painting** is very instinctive and unorthodox. His works are colourful, joyful and spontaneous. The derivation of his painting titles are in the same spontaneous fashion of the work he creates.

Ana Isabel Ordonez, Luxembourg Summer 2009

Tony Oxley — Gouach on paper, 26" x 20"



Tony Oxley, by Hans Peter Schaefer



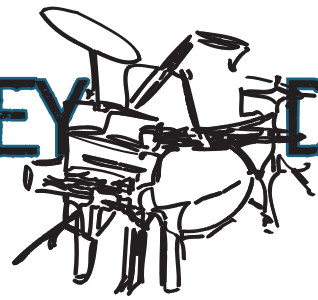
CECIL TAYLOR & TONY OXLEY DUO

Cecil Taylor and Tony Oxley create an enormous palette of textures that can converge on the listeners and performers as a full wall of sound, exploring an outstanding range of material. The scope of conception plus the diversity and deepness of Taylor and Oxley's approach to playing has contributed

into cultivating an extremely multifaceted performance style exploring an array of musical **intensities**

This duo confronts improvisation as a simultaneous emergence of attention and intention aiming to reach the challenge of a chamber music quintessence form accentuating possibilities to showcase accurate dialogues of voices.

Piano, percussion, electronics, poetry and dance tandems challenge each other with the combinations. The duo has an enormous cornucopia of sound production and range along with their respective traditional settings. But in the hands of these two master sound producers, the instruments go beyond one another.



Heat in room
shadows cast
over 143's gravel
a haunting
blood red scarf
cast around
cream colored
shoulders
internally
a nurtured
swoon
birthing song
singular
reappears
as in having
once
within the
life
knife thrown
caesarean
opening
they cannot be
reach'd for ..

Cecil Taylor, July 30 2008

Tony Oxley — Gouach on paper, 20" x 18" (detail)





Where does one even begin to describe this **man of music** and history past, present and future? Perhaps it's best to and through experience, not words. There has, is and will only be one: Cecil Taylor. Whether through his orchestral purging of whatever piano he straddles or the equally frenetic words and delivery of his unique poetry – momentum, sometimes circular sometimes skywards to infinity, is a guaranteed, an ever-surging constant in this man's reality and our experience of his art. No performance is like another when in the hands and the extraordinary mind of one of the true masters and legends of our time, of any time for that matter. As **player/composer/improviser**, Cecil Taylor is a giant that walks this Earth, though not contentedly by merely existing or strolling through it, deserving as he is for such retirement. To this day, he relentlessly explores pockets of the sound universe which he seems to be the only one holding the key to; after all it is into his keyhole we are all fortunate enough he offers us more than the occasional glimpse. Though other significant improvisers will forever be compared to him, he will never be caught resting on his laurels, and will continue to have each and every one of us trying madly to catch up as long as he's breathing and playing, and surely after then as well. There may be no other choice

LOOKIN' AHEAD (NEVER BEHIND) CECIL TAYLOR AT 80

for us as his collective listeners than to simply give in to his notes-filled onslaughts. Perhaps it's best to give in and have such experiences wash over, or rather through us; find the calmness amongst the stormy riptides. At the very least, we can appreciate in overwhelming astonishment the gifts he has given and continues to give us.

Each Cecil Taylor work, an entity, a living, breathing **organism** unto itself, demands to be absorbed and recognized as a whole. After all, he devours on the whole with performances stereotypically lasting an entire hour without pause - and he would, or should, expect nothing less from those up for the challenge to experience any one of his performances. It's an endurance test to be sure as much on player as listener; as much are his demands on the music he plays, he is equally demanding of each listener's set of ears and our respective and collective undivided attention, a simple fact that anyone who has witnessed a Cecil Taylor concert can attest. And once you've had a taste of his energy music, the experience will surely drive you back for more (perhaps the very reason many of you are here now. And for those experiencing for the first time, fasten your seat belts!). In a world full of clones, music and otherwise, it's not hard to see why we place such importance on individualism and belatedly at the very least have given Mr. Taylor the

throne he so rightfully deserves to sit atop. There is certainly something life-affirming about trying to follow, let alone keep up with the mindset and waves of notes this man is able to seemingly supernaturally conjure and stir up in front of our very eyes and ears. The youthfulness, the vigor, the raw emotion - if we could only all be so young!

Cecil Taylor presents a

Lesson in life, and revealingly age in human years has evidently nothing to do with it. The search, however, has almost everything to do with it. And this living legend we are celebrating in our lifetime, and more importantly in his lifetime, has shown and continues to reveal to us that the discovery does not necessarily mean the end of the journey, but rather the beginning of a new journey of mind in sound, or even that perhaps journeys don't necessarily need to have cut and dry endings at all but rather continuation points. Recently-turned octogenarian in late March, it's no surprise that Cecil Taylor has been surprising us all for well over 50 of those years and continues to do so. So, may the search continue!

A belated **happy birthday** to you, Mr. Taylor, and many more...

Laurence Donohue-Greene
Managing Editor,
All About Jazz — New York
www.newyork.allaboutjazz.com

CONCERTS

24TH SEP TEMBER

Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ & Bimhuis
AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

The Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ opened its doors to the public in the spring of 2005. This spectacular building has become Amsterdam's Concert Hall of the 21st Century, with an exciting, contemporary programme which continually forges links with other eras, styles, cultures and art forms. The Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ shows current musical developments in the form of special series, festivals, multimedia concerts and exhibitions.

In collaboration with Bimhuis.

www.muziekgebouw.nl
www.bimhuis.nl



Cecil Taylor is considered as one of the greatest creators in jazz music. His name is being mentioned next to Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus and Sonny Rollins. He is one of the most creative piano players in jazz music. Lantaren/Venster in Rotterdam, celebrate his very special 80th birthday with a short tour of the man who is creatively present now for half a century.



26TH SEP TEMBER

Lantaren/Venster
ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Lantaren/Venster is a multidisciplinary theatre. The main cultural disciplines that the theatre presents are: Film, Modern Dance, Theatre, and Jazz music. Lantaren/Venster has a rich history, since 1949, in the city centre of Rotterdam, and looks forward to a new future in a new building in 2010.



www.Lantaren/Venster.nl

2ND OCT
TOBER

Auditorium de France 3
JAZZDOR / MUSICA / PÔLE SUD
STRASBOURG, FRANCE

MEZZO
CLASSIC - JAZZ TV

Ce concert de
Strasbourg fera
l'objet d'un DVD
grâce à Mezzo TV,
France 3 Alsace et
Oléo Films.



francetélévisions



alsace

Jazzdor, Musica et Pôle Sud, acteurs privilégiés des musiques d'aujourd'hui, ont choisi de présenter ensemble, à Strasbourg, l'unique concert de Cecil Taylor et Tony Oxley en France. Pianiste, poète, danseur, cet artiste total pionnier d'un langage qui n'appartient qu'à lui continue de défier les lois de l'équilibre. Aucun autre que lui n'a ce rapport physique au piano et c'est davantage à la peinture finalement que son Art fait penser, plongeant dans l'instrument comme personne, malaxant une pâte sonore en perpétuel mouvement, en perpétuelle recherche d'inouï. Heureux anniversaire Mr Taylor!

Philippe Ôchem

www.jazzdor.com

www.strasbourg-festivals.com

www.festival-musica.org

www.pole-sud.fr

deSingel

4TH OCT
TOBER

Salle Bleue
DE SINGEL ANTWERP,
BELGIUM

www.desingel.be

FOLLOW THE SOUND



Good music knows no age or stylistic limits – nor do great musicians. Far from it: Once one has listened to Cecil Taylor's intense and dynamic play, the achievement of a life devoted to music, one can hardly think of a more **personal approach** to the piano. Together with free improvisation pioneer Tony Oxley, this outstanding artist surely will make his first concert in the Grand Duchy an **unforgettable evening**. The Philharmonie Luxembourg is proud to welcome Cecil Taylor on stage at the Grand Auditorium – Happy Birthday and much more years to come, Mr. Taylor!

Matthias Naske
DIRECTOR
GENERAL
PHILHARMONIE
LUXEMBOURG

8TH OCT
TOBER

Philharmonie
Luxembourg
LUXEMBOURG
GRAND-DUCHY

www.philharmonie.lu

**PHILHARMONIE**
Luxembourg



The Embassy of the United States of America in Luxembourg is pleased to offer haut patronage and sponsorship of the Cecil Taylor 80th Birthday Tribute at the Philharmonie. Cecil Taylor is an American treasure. The range of his talents is as remarkable as the length of his prolific career. Few artists have gained as much notoriety and recognition as Mr. Taylor has through his decades as an entertainer.

We are proud to welcome him to Luxembourg as a cultural ambassador from the United States. If music, dance and poetry are the most powerful means to communicate across cultures, then Mr. Taylor is a true diplomat, having reached millions of people around the world through his inspired work.

It is an honor to welcome Mr. Taylor to Luxembourg and I invite you to enjoy his performance tonight with Tony Oxley.

Happy birthday,
Cecil Taylor!

Mark J. Biedlingmaier
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, A.I.
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA

BIRD BEAT & BRIDGE 3 MORPHEMES OF CECIL TAYLORS AGGLUTINATIVE LANGUAGE

*"the HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE
the HEART, by way of the BREATH, to the LINE"*

Charles Olson.

Cornerstones of Taylor's art form are Lamantia's surrealism and Kerouac's Bop Prosody. In 1959 both praised Taylor's iconoclastic phrasing and testified of his layered intricacies of motion. For Lamantia, Taylor's music was an analogue of surrealism's automatic message given his stream-of-conscious poetry. "More than anything else, I have always tried to be a poet", said Taylor, "I never understood how musicians could play music for poets and not read poems".

Kaufman and Creely were influences as well as Olson's concept of projective verse, a movement towards form via activity determined by function, or what Taylor defines as word placement, lending new meaning to individual words. Or Langpo & Vispo poetry, merging language with music and/or visual art. In 1995 Taylor danced, read poetry and played piano among Kirili's large sheet-metal sculptures. Waldman, who deconstructed art into waves of music, and Babs Gonzales, who placed words in terms of the rhythm section, were inspirational too.

Like Duncan, Taylor is a brilliant, associative talker in a continuous stream. One word sets him off in one direction, and another gets him on another trip. A real polymath, endowed with an encyclopedic memory. Categorizing Taylor's **poetry** is like trying to categorize the ocean. Music and poetry accumulate as waves of action, and become oceanic as crosscurrents and contrapuntal crests,

sometimes calming so, in the lull, Taylor can set forth another languorous, luminous and starkly haunting line. Pursuing the same obsessive lengths of verbal diaspora like Ginsberg or McClure's long wave-like stanzas, Taylor invokes in his poetry the ancient principle of agnosia: a dark knowing, a knowing through not knowing, not so much to assert their mysticism as to emphasize one of the strengths of open form. And openness is the issue.

Taylor's **holistic vision** is not interested in separations: including everything and leaving it all out are essentially the same thing. Taylor: "No one culture has all the answers, but each culture has its own magic". His inspiration seems rootless, a mixing of astrology, orthography, cognitive science, Aztec, Egyptian & Native American cosmology along with his trademarked onomatopoeisms. It is all about magic and capturing spirits descending into glossolalia. Lamantia and Kerouac recognized the significant relation of poetry to jazz. Much the way the defining characteristic of Bird is the phraseology, both Kerouac and Taylor saw that too in word structures. Bird began to hear longer lines, Kerouac long-line bop sense.

The sense that one does not want to finish but ending though a phrase with a kind of bang, a sudden hard stop sometimes on an unexpeted beat. Likewise, Taylor finishes brief encores with an abrupt one note bang. In Bop, with no strong or weak beat, one

could play anything at all over time, one could go anywhere and not worry about how to come back. The whole universe could be there. Taylor com-

Could feel the instinct within the value of... registering on a particular extension of a human limb at rest an internal light fractured by angular placement which assuages yet, stimulates the senses in a dreamt acknowledgement memorialized as incidents accrued"

Cecil Taylor 29-30 May 2008

pared his method of **spontaneous art** form to Kerouac's fast typing, fast writing. Likewise, Taylor transmits spontaneous music and poetry in massive gigabytes. Ideophones that are almost totally outside him are fed back in from an objective source, the dictionary, through part-of-speech tagging in the context of computational linguistics. An incredible generative cycling is going on. A matter of **momentum** that works in rhythmic waves picking up things that one might not otherwise even sense.

Kerouac used travel notebooks, comparably to what musicians call fake

books. He took off what was in his notebooks at every slit second. Taylor showed an interviewer one of his notebooks, that was just absolutely inked to the brim. In other words, inexhaustible storehouses of verbiage. When assisting a Taylor performance, one wishes to parse it out into a hundred+ sections because the myriad themes explode like bubbles on a pot of boiling water, lingering just long enough to know that they were there before disappearing forever into the air. Taylor's art form suggested to Coolidge an "amphetamine of dares". Go beyond preconception.

Taylor calls poetry music in print, situative or oral communication analogue to the Afro-Indian-American griot tradition. After all, Kerouac's first language was a kind of Quebecois called Joul, which is a totally vocal language. Taylor, a vehicle for ancestral forces? "In Cecil Taylor's music as in poetry, the game of allusion is played to give spiritual and historical resonance to a language of self-invention. The game playing nourishes both the poet's iconoclasm and his faith in holy tradition - two character traits essential to any people whose artists must invoke release, revolt, and remembrance to survive a culture dedicated to the disposable" (Tate). The manner in which Taylor speaks his lines, his stutters and slides through syntax, his growls, groans, moans like a Tuva throat-singer, opens onto what Olson called the "field of language" an entirely new American language coming out of the lines that extends out as far as the poet's breath. (Jurek). Kerouac: "The rhythm of how

The crescent bends as it widens

arm leaves fingers that magnetically enfold infest

the excru-desence floating root coalesce

Cecil Taylor 2008

game playing nourishes both the poet's iconoclasm and his faith in holy tradition - two character traits essential to any people whose artists must invoke release, revolt, and remembrance to survive a culture dedicated to the disposable" (Tate). The manner in which Taylor speaks his lines, his stutters and slides through syntax, his growls, groans, moans like a Tuva throat-singer, opens onto what Olson called the "field of language" an entirely new American language coming out of the lines that extends out as far as the poet's breath. (Jurek). Kerouac: "The rhythm of how

you decide to rush your statement determines the rhythm of the poem".

Taylor's methods allow him to create poems as living things like Lamantia, who entices us to near visionary confabulations of our own; we who seek, like him, "the genius of present life". Taylor: "Improvisation is the capability to talk to oneself. Meaning the magical lifting of one's spirits to a state of trance, experiencing oneself as another kind of living organism, much in the way of a plant, a tree.

The growth, that is what it is". Are Taylor's **music** and word improvisations constructions of **cantilevers** and inclined pylons? Taylor constructs bridges between art forms and when working in all these forms long enough they become involved in the molding. Taylor: "What is a bridge? To look at a plan of a bridge is far more interesting to me than using a musical score. Music/poetry is not in the notation/writing, but in the heart-beat". Hence the deep abiding love for

the fluid poetry of Calatrava's bridges. Looking at a Calatrava bridge, one cannot ignore the spacial, rhythmic connotations, particularly when looking at cable-stay box-girder or simple suspensier bridges with its

hyperbolic curve, the catenary or chain. The application of catenary to the construction of arches is ancient. "As hangs a flexible cable, so inverted, stand the touching pieces of an arch", said Hooke in 1671 to the Royal Society when solving the problem of the optimal shape of an arch. This reflection was conjured up when listening to the 12 minutes solo outing Pontos Cantados. It is like peering into an abyss, a provocative, labyrinthine journey into aural dimensions, reminiscent of the oscillation, ripple & side-sway of movement and undulating motion of bridges in the wind. Clusters of notes, a rising and falling chromatic pattern, an angular figure around a minor triad, abstract sequence of intervals, vamps in the left hand, blueslike riffs, flat-out romantic chord sequences (and substitute notes for letters and chords for words): all catenaries Taylor is using to construct without falsework his bridge, his arch, ancient to the future. Pontos Cantados calls up the Majorcan Es Pontas arch with a mysterious totem pole in its vicinity.

Totem poles bear witness of the Native American identity, that, in lacking a form of written language, attributes story-telling qualities to them. Given his Cherokee & Kiowa ancestors, can Taylor's poetry documented on Chinampas be considered as pemmican? Taylor's verbum domini he uses to introduce phonemes & graphemes in his narrative texts •

TAYLOR LE PIANISTE

« On apprend à préparer, non à inventer; à continuer, non à commencer; à prévoir, non à créer; il n'y a pas plus de règles pour improviser que pour inventer ou pour vouloir; l'apprentissage étant toujours selon l'intervalle, jamais selon le fait de l'instant. Incipere non discitur. »

Vladimir Jankelevitch

Cecil Taylor, cela se voit et s'entend, n'est pas un pianiste ordinaire. Extraordinaire, de plus, il le demeure devant les plus grands de son époque et au-delà.

Inimitable, inimitié, à lui seul il est un monde, — un monde parallèle qui, par quelque rayure du temps, nous accompagne jusqu'à aujourd'hui, visible, audible, mais toujours unique et sans pareil, à quelque distance du jazz *comme il se fait et se pense*, du moins *pianistiquement*. Or, cette vérité, il ne suffit pas de l'exposer. Il faut encore la comprendre.

Traçons, sur le clavier, une ligne imaginaire, d'un point A, noir ou blanc, à un point B, noir ou blanc. Cette ligne, le jeune Taylor la dessine tout de suite de son œil affranchi, cherchant la plus magistrale manière de la monter et de la descendre. *Exit* les méthodes apprises, déjà, *exit* les modèles et les filiations. Taylor a un corps et une âme, les doigts de l'esprit, les mains de la matière, les yeux du ciel et de l'enfer, et c'est à eux, à tous ces rouages humains, qu'il donnera les commandes. Et voilà qu'entre les deux points, **A** et **B**, une échelle se forme et se déforme, que le serpent de la main trace sa voie et son chant, que renaît et se réarticule, sous les libres jointures, le piano, épuré, explosif, prêt à tout, — que des zigzags impossibles s'y réalisent, s'y percutent, s'imposent, se colorent. La porte s'est ouverte et la riche multiplicité du couple corps-esprit (de la matière habitée) a parlé,

donné le moteur, au sens grec, la *puissance*. Alors la maîtrise, de jour en jour, au fil des ans, des concerts et des sillons, peut s'installer, user son espace et sa raison, creuser son temps.

Car ces emprunts aux automatismes, aux réflexes, aux échos de la vie, où dansent les bruits du chaos et le geste des ancêtres, ce ne sont que des chevaux à dresser, des instincts à civiliser. La toile s'est offerte, les pinceaux s'agitent, les couleurs crient, primaires et primales, mais nulle création ne voltige encore, tout n'est que promesse et avenir. Rien ne se composera, en effet, sans l'artiste qui **pense**. Et Cecil Taylor, une fois acquis ses moyens, une fois son dispositif en place, sera celui-là, ce musicien des renaissances, celui-là qui, le long du siècle moderne et de ses dépassements, donnera un discours à sa méthode et concevra son œuvre.

Taylor, en fait, est **l'anti-Gould**, la contradiction pianistique de cet autre génie. Cela bien au-delà des musiques, des écritures, des non-écritures ou des mémoires. Glenn



Gould n'aimait guère le piano, dont il étouffait ou déjouait la nature, castrait le timbre. Gould luttait contre le corps, celui de Gould et des autres, fuyait le monde physique, cherchait Dieu dans l'**Absence**. La

musique même, pour lui, eût pu se passer des sons. Pure abstraction des sphères, concept glacé pour quelque tympan d'éther, elle portait sa substance comme un mal à peine nécessaire, comme le poids de la chair — de la chair quand elle pèse et se refuse. Ses plus hautes réussites, ainsi, sont des paradoxes. Taylor, pour sa part, considère son corps en ami fidèle, fait alliance et paix avec le **réceptacle** qu'il est, sait jouir de son incarnation et de l'attraction tellurique. Taylor affectionne, sert et goûte le piano, son piano, autre réceptacle, autre chef-d'œuvre instrumental, *après* le corps. Sa musique est incarnée, terrestre, c'est-à-dire sous le ciel et non pas au bout de son azur; vivante est-elle par le **sonum**, simple en son principe, sans contradiction. Sa musique enfin, est éminemment et suprêmement pianistique — percussive, certes, mais encore là, *pianistiquement* percussive. Le grand Taylor est né du piano et son œuvre, à tout instant, redonne au piano cette naissance, ce don.

Avec Cecil Taylor, la musique est affaire de création, de procréation, de réenfantement, de fécondité, d'offrande et d'abondance, de généreuses prières à la vie et à l'amour. Avec Cecil Taylor, la musique est

Musique.

Claude Marc Bourget

CECIL TAYLOR 80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

TIME AND TIMES

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