In the summer and fall of 1978 I had the opportunity to tour America and Europe performing solo music for the alto saxophone. The route of these performances included such diverse places as Boulder, Colorado; Austin, Texas; San Francisco as well as Vienna and Central Europe. The challenge of performing so many solo concerts in one period represented a new experience for me—normally my solo performances are few and far between (averaging at most one or two concerts every other month) and I was able to learn a great deal from this opportunity. The past couple of years have seen many changes reshape world creativity. Of those changes, certainly the dynamic acceleration of solo activity can be viewed as a major factor responsible for the expanded reality of present day creative music. The reality implications of this phenomenon are clear; for the emergence of solo activity increases the dynamic spectrum of individual participation—and this is true on many levels. The progressional continuance of this period has now seen the forming of a new kind of creative musician—whose activity transcends any one criterion and whose scope cannot be limited by superficial boundaries concerning whether or not a given participation is 'correct' or 'legitimate.' In actual terms we can now experience a spectrum of solo musics involving every kind of instrument—this is true whether we are focusing on the saxophone, guitar, trumpet, trombone, etc. I believe these changes represent a positive advancement for world creativity, and a signal as to what the future holds.

My involvement with solo activity can be broken down into several categories: one, the development of an alternative language pool for improvisation (which for the past twelve years has involved utilizing the altosaxophone as a separate tool for exploration); two, the development of a body of solo music that utilizes improvisation only in its infra-structure (a music comprised of 50% written material and 50% open material for every kind of instrument); three, the use of traditional material in a solo context (involving the use of material from every sector and time zone of earth music, from rags and bebop to Western Art Music to Tibetan Music); four, the development of a body of works for the creative multi-instrumentalist (that being a solo music which would allow, and plan for, the use of several instruments and/or medias in a given performance—including percussion and choreography); five, the development of a series of completely notated works and six, a more extended view of solo activity. All of these categories, and hopefully new ones as well, will determine the reality of solo music as we move to the next cycle. I believe we are now on the threshold of a major vibrational and reality change in earth creativity and life. The progressional emergence and participation of solo creativity will be important for how it will clarify the nature of alternative creative expansion.
In 1967 as a means to explore improvisation and composition I moved to dissect the components of music methodology into several areas for alternative investigation. At the time I referred to my approach as 'conceptual grafting'—since the essence of this viewpoint involved isolating various factors as a means to build a music from particular parts, and this approach has underlined the route my work has since taken. By 'conceptual grafting' I meant that a given composition could be put together based on the integration of particular elements—as opposed to the nature of its harmonic or thematic reality. In fact, the reality of conceptual grafting would have nothing to do with conventional harmony nor would there necessarily be a theme in the way we have come to view this word. Instead this approach would move to clarify the dynamic implication of 'principal elements.' The best example to understand this approach would be to imagine painting a picture with only blue or with only green, or better still with mostly blue but with isolated touches of red and brown. The essence of conceptual grafting is this and nothing more—that is, an attempt to develop alternative considerations for participating in the creative process, based on the reality of its 'working ingredients.'

For the most part, all of the material on this record can be viewed as representing the first category of my involvement with solo music and as such the basic focus of this essay will attempt to clarify just what this approach is. The fact is, the reality of my solo music has served as the basis of my total approach in creative music—and this is especially true for how I have come to utilize improvisation. This can better be understood by viewing the dynamic implications of the post Coleman and Taylor juncture of the music in the sixties. For the information scan of creative music in this period would transcend the nature of how functionalism was perceived and practiced from the forties on thru to the fifties. The dynamic implications of Coleman, Taylor and Coltrane's activity (among others) would exhaust the traditional application of harmony rhythm and structure, and in doing so also establish the nature of alternative investigation for the next generation of creative musicians. My attempts to solidify an alternative methodology is a direct response to what this development posed for both myself and for expanded functionalism. For the expanded implications of post Ayler creativity is not one dimensional but instead gives insight as to the total reality position of alternative functionalism—as manifested in the reality of creativity and/or composite information dynamics. With this in mind, the accelerated continuum of alternative creativity must be viewed for what its emergence will pose to the composite reality of information dynamics and 'particulars'—and will not be the work of any one person but will solidify, in its nature state, as a result of the work of many people. With this in mind, I offer my work as one approach among many.

The use of conceptual grafting has moved to give another understanding of creative dynamics and information focus. For the solidification and practice of this technique has helped to clarify my understanding of alternative functionalism and/or musical language. Moreover the reality of this technique has also moved to shape my own improvisational vocabulary in other contexts as well. At present the reality of my 'working instrumental vocabulary' has to do with the extended use of conceptual grafting as an isolating factor for 'idea construction.' In other words the dynamics of my participation in creativity is not simply about 'expressing myself' as this is understood in existential terms (as I am becoming less and less interested in myself in that position) instead, since the middle sixties I have moved towards constructing a re-systemic viewpoint that clarifies the reality dynamics of alternative methodology—with respect to the implication of basic elements and reconstruction. By attempting to isolate and utilize fundamental material in this manner, I have become interested in gaining insight as to the composite implications of principle source information--and what this could positively mean for transformation. The essence of my work in this context can be viewed with respect to what it raises about alternative functionalism, rather than what it signifies about any one individual (although I have not meant to imply that this technique is of no value for the individual). In other words, the extended implications of a given mixture of elements transcends the dynamics of any one person (which is to say, a given mixture of source ingredients does produce a particular effect on any person experiencing that mixture—no matter who is playing).

All of the compositions on this record—with the exception of the three pieces I have included from the traditional repertoire—can be viewed with respect to the nature of its use of conceptual grafting. For the dynamics of this principle do not move to solidify one kind of music but instead help to differentiate one procedure from another. Each composition on this record is built up from a separate mix of elements—which is to say,
improvisation in this context is not simply about playing whatever seems to be appropriate for the moment but rather 'invention with respect to the nature of its ingredients and the added demands of its schematic.' What you have here is not a music designed for open improvisation rather the technique of conceptual grafting can be viewed as an elastic approach to composition. As such, the actual music on this record can be viewed as one example of a particular mix—with the understanding being that not only are other versions possible, but also other versions by different musicians. The nature of a given 'mix' of material in this process can be viewed in much the same fashion as one views chord changes in traditional music. For the reality of a particular interpretation must not only respect the principle ingredients of its given mixture, but also the progressional sequence or 'nature of treatment' of its components. As such, all of the material in a given composition is dictated as well as how that material is to be treated (or at least how a given principle is to be executed either technically and/or conceptually). The challenge then for the creative musician is to function from a given set of coordinates and actualize 'it.' This approach can again be transferred to painting in the sense of making the decision to paint a given picture using only blue as the principle color—with red and brown for particular shapes—and basically choosing to work from given shapes—like maybe deciding to use the 'circle' as the primary shape and the 'square' as a secondary shape. In the final analyses the concept of conceptual grafting gives insight as to the reality of decision making—and the dynamic implication of 'principle-material.'

The reality of conceptual grafting can be viewed on several levels, for the dynamics of this approach is not limited to any one region or information focus. Instead the continuum of this forming methodology will address itself to both the implications of re-functionalism and the particulars of spiritual designation. In other words the dynamics of principle material is not separate from its spiritual implications and its physical universe effect—and yet I do not present this viewpoint as something new in itself, because it isn't. The fact is, the extended spiritual significance of information and principle fundamentals has long been understood and practiced in world culture (ie. Africa, India the American Indian, Tibet and the East) and has only been subjected to dynamic confusion in the last five hundred and some years in the West. There is now the need for new attempts to deal with extended methodology—in all of its dynamic aspects (encompassing the functional implications of a given system as well as the vibrational and spiritual implications related to that system). Yet, I am not proposing that the emergence of conceptual grafting will solve this most complex problem—for the particulars of planet reconstruction will involve much more than the dynamics of a given technique—but I can say this approach has greatly clarified the route my own creativity has taken. The basis of this approach has moved to give an alternative view of principle material and reconstruction, and this information can be of value in the search for the solidification of a complete alternative methodology (and viewpoint). I see the technique of conceptual grafting as only one factor in this re-solidification—serving more in this period as a foundation for extended investigation than a complete viewpoint.

The solidification of this approach in the middle sixties established the nature of my involvement with creativity on many levels that I am only now beginning to understand. In the beginning conceptual grafting was only a tool I utilized for musical analyses—as a means to gain insight into the music of my early influences—later, this same technique would provide the basis for establishing my own creative viewpoint. As such, the technique of conceptual grafting has helped me transcend the reality of post-Webern organization and/or John Coltrane saxophone licks, by providing a context for examining the dynamics of methodology (that being—how given musical situations are formulated, and the importance of understanding musical language). The realness of this technique would clarify the dynamics of 'principle working elements' without imposing an empirical system separated from real spirituality. In accepting this disciple the progressional reality of my activity has become increasingly clear—that being: the reality of my work can be viewed as an investigation as to the meta-implications of principle formation—as it pertains to the dynamic fundamentals which solidify what a given information line means in its expanded sense (its actual physical universe effect as well as its spiritual assignment) and what this implies for the formation of a possible alternative world music. As such, to investigate the reality of various disciplines is to move towards gaining insight as to the multi-implications of transformational methodology—and what this poses for the dynamic cosmic factors which dictate principle information. I have chosen this route because I believe that the reality implications of creativity are directly related to the
progressional continuance of search life—and positive change. In other words creativity is about something—and is not separated from the fundamental laws that govern the composite universe. The nature of this period in time has necessitated that this 'something' be investigated and vibrated to, on as many levels as possible; and yet I have not meant to construct a wrong impression about my viewpoint. In the final analysis, I have chosen the route which makes the most sense for me—which is to say, my work has not solidified because the universe has necessitated that I come forth to save the planet. Rather I have moved, like all of us, towards that which is most real to me—with the hope that something of positive value can also come from what I am interested in.

I have included three compositions from the tradition on this record as a means to have the widest possible spectrum of material. Each of the compositions was chosen because of the nature of its particular dynamics—that being, a blues from the tradition, a richly constructed harmonic composition and a super harmonic structure from John Coltrane's third period. The use of traditional material in this context moves to open new possibilities for treatment. Not only is there no piano voicing chord positions but the rhythmic aspect of the music can also be shaped more with respect to the nature of a given idea construction. As such, I have regularly included standard material in my solo concerts (at least for performances involving the use of material from category one initiations) both as the color consideration, and as necessary material in its own right.

Finally it is important that the concept of conceptual grafting be viewed in its most real context. In other words, I have not simply constructed an organizational approach that has precedence over the actual 'isness' of the music. Rather, the concept of conceptual grafting was conceived as an alternative means to approach creative organization and/or conceptual material. The challenge for the creative musician is to make a given integration of elements 'live.' In other words, the primary focus of the music is not on the 'how' but on the 'is'—this is true whether the approach is perceived as traditional or extended.

Anthony Braxton '79

Anthony Braxton: alto saxophone

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COMPOSITION NOTES

Composition 1 [Comp. 77A] is designed to utilize principle information in a medium fast to fast pulse continuum. The most apparent factor that holds this work together is the nature of how given idea fragments are mashed together in a somewhat reverse development situation. The dynamics of this piece also utilize extreme intervallic leaps—which is to say, the idea construction of this work is both varied and complex in that the actual 'stuff' of the music has nothing to do with development but instead deals with the constant collision—or in most cases interruption—of fragmented constructions. The principle working tools which underlie how this process works can be reduced to (1) intervallic phase fragments and (2) accented eighth note movement figures. There are three time units in this movement—fast—medium slow (with the use of more silence)—and medium fast. The extended use of this approach also finds the use of melody—like related material in juxtaposition to reverse development and thrust projected materials (constructed as to give the impression of more than one instrument).

This composition is dedicated to the composer Ulysses Kay.

Composition 2 [Comp. 77C] is a work designed to deal with the dynamic possibilities of a major third diatonic phrase (ie. CDE, DEF, EFG, etc.). This version can be broken into three sections—original position, extended position, and mixed position. Original position is only the basic use of this principle in its normal diatonic state—with the added possibility of changing keys whenever desired. The extended position of this technique has to do with the modification of some aspect of its use—which in this improvisation was an intervallic separation. The mixed position of this technique utilizes the same 'germ figure' with the added use of melodic material—that is, improvisation utilizing melodic organization and conventional development.

This composition is dedicated to my friend Barbara Mayfield.
Composition 3 [Comp. 77D] was conceived as a work to utilize the possibilities of slap tongue technique and can be broken into three distinct compositional areas. The first area utilizes short multiphonic phrases as a tool for establishing focus on slap tongue possibilities (which in this case are against short pianistic phrases). The second section utilizes multiphonic massed configuration movements with the use of slap tongue technique as an integral factor in shaping attack. The third section utilizes multiphonic phrase movement against ultra high sound figures—with the added use of instrument sounds as a color factor. Throughout the composition there is the added ingredient of vocal intermixture—added to both given multiphonic chords or as an integral factor in a given phrase-patch.

This composition is dedicated to my friends Emilio and Pat Cruz.

Composition 4 [Comp. 77E] is built from five notes (G, Ab, C, D, Eb) basically and was designed as a vehicle to make a shakuhachi type music. (I have long been interested in this kind of approach.) There are three basic treatments in this version, one—the basic statement of material with respect to the five note row, two—the use of this same concept with the addition of circular breathing and three—the fragmented use of given figures. This composition was also constructed to utilize a more accented vibrato in given sections, and also half tone and micro tuning. As an improvisor this composition presents a special challenge in that its reality is not separate from world culture and as such, this work represents a new beginning to solidify a wider basis for working material—for me that is.

This composition is dedicated to the dancer Sheila Raz.
Composition 5 [Comp. 26F] is based on the concept of a repetition continuum. That being the use of repetition and the gradual change of events by either adding a given element to the basic idea scheme or taking away a given element. The range of material in this version can be separated into several categories—simple configurations, having to do with an idea built from one or two notes—multiple configurations, ideas that are constructed from several different figures and shape configurations, that being shapes which serve as generating considerations for repetition. The use of dynamics must also be considered a principle factor in this composition, for the nature of how a given figure is set up dynamically determines whether or not its transformation can be successful. The nature of a given idea transformation also necessitates the use of link structure elements—that being the modulation of given aspects of a principle idea structure.

This composition is dedicated to the composer Phillip Glass.

Composition 6 [Comp. 77F] is basically an open-ended ballad. By open-ended I mean the improvisation is not based on either chord changes or a predetermined time structure but instead extends freely with respect to the stated melody at the beginning of the work. The theme at the beginning is not a constructed melody in a completed sense but rather a set of figures which can be used in several ways for improvisation. This particular version utilizes an increased spacial arena—from (if numbers one to ten could represent a tempo-pulse parameter) a velocity of three-to-one-to-three. The structure of improvisation in this version accents the register of a given idea alignment. That is: the opening improvisation is in the middle register of the saxophone and is played at a mezzo forte—the middle section is played in the low register at a pianissimo—and the third section is high register at a forte.

This composition is dedicated to my daughter Terri.
Composition 7 [Comp. 26B] is constructed to deal with the dynamic possibilities of staccato long and short sound movements. The first treatment utilizes changes in intervals as a reality factor and is the primary shape (the staccato short sound in this context is also the principle language factor as well). The second treatment for this principle utilizes the long staccato sound in an extended context—establishing the reality of the idea but functioning as one ingredient among many. The third use of this principle is staccato permuted type ideas which maintains the basic focus of constructed elements but not in a dominant manner. The extended use of this approach also finds the use of melodic related like material put in juxtaposition to reverse development. Again, in this work there is no development as such, rather the natural continuance of its design moves to utilize principle material in as many ways as possible—for its moment improvisation.

This composition is dedicated to the saxophonist and composer Kallaparusha Difa.

Composition 8 [Comp. 77G] is based on the whole tone scale and utilizes the eighth note as the primary language factor. There are three basic treatments in this particular version and each treatment differs only with respect to its tempo. The first section is medium to medium slow, the second section is fast, and the third section is medium slow. The basic phrasing of this work utilizes a more legato type connection between events. This particular approach gives only three possibilities for treatment—diatonic postulation, harmonic or chordal postulation (that being the use when possible of major third and augmented fifth patterns in a given idea formation) and scale changing (going from one whole tone scale to the other and back). The actual continuum of this work does utilize conventional type development—(ie. from idea to idea a given expansion was executed with respect to what preceded it).

This composition is dedicated to the birth of my son Tyondai.
Composition 9 [Comp. 26E] utilizes intervallic shifts as a means to establish its working language. By intervallic shifts I am referring to the execution of a given figure in several registers of the instruments—or in several permutations. The secondary working language of this work are multiphonic sound block configurations with the added use of voice material. In the principle language, dynamics are used in a somewhat extreme manner as a means to establish the rotation of events from interval to interval. The continuum of events in this work should not be viewed as variation but instead expansion as a means to isolate given aspects of its idea base.

This composition is dedicated to the multi-instrumentalist composer Karl Berger.

Composition 10 [Comp. 77H] is designed to deal with the dynamic possibilities of trills. This work utilizes several types of trills—from the chromatic and diatonic trill, to the intervallic trill, to the extreme intervallic trill. This version is constructed in three principle sections and each of these versions can be viewed with respect to its tempo function. That being, the first section is slow, utilizing chromatic and diatomic trill possibilities in a ballad like context, the second section is faster with a more extreme use of trill material—and the third section utilizes the trill in a more integrated phrase context. The actual progression of events in this work are conventional as far as idea sequencing is concerned—although there is no theme as such.

This composition is dedicated to the birth of David Aaron Weltin to my friends Hans and Bonnie Weltin.

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