

Curatorial > PROBES

With this section, RWM continues a line of programmes devoted to exploring the complex map of sound art from different points of view organised in curatorial series.

**PROBES takes Marshall McLuhan's conceptual contrapositions as a starting point to analyse and expose the search for a new sonic language made urgent after the collapse of tonality in the twentieth century. The series looks at the many probes and experiments that were launched in the last century in search of new musical resources, and a new aesthetic; for ways to make music adequate to a world transformed by disorientating technologies.**

Curated by Chris Cutler

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At the start of the seventies, Chris Cutler co-founded The Ottawa Music Company – a 22-piece Rock composer's orchestra – before joining British experimental group Henry Cow with whom he toured, recorded and worked in dance and theatre projects for the next eight years. Subsequently he co-founded a series of mixed national groups: Art Bears, News from Babel, Cassiber, The (ec) Nudes, The Science Group and p53 and was a permanent member of American bands Pere Ubu, Hail and The Wooden Birds. Outside a succession of special projects for stage, theatre, film and radio he still works regularly with Fred Frith, Zeena Parkins, Jon Rose, Tim Hodgkinson, David Thomas, Peter Blegvad, Daan Vandewalle, Ikue Mori, Lotte Anker, Stevan Tickmayer, Annie Gosfield and spectralists Iancu Dumitrescu and Ana Maria Avram. He is a permanent member of The Bad Boys (Cage, Stockhausen, Fluxus...), The Artaud Beats and The Artbears Songbook. Adjacent projects include commissioned works for radio, various live movie soundtracks, *Signe de Trois* for surround-sound projection, the daily year-long soundscape project Out of the Blue Radio (for Resonance FM) and p53 for Orchestra and Soloists.

He founded and runs the independent label ReR Megacorp and the art distribution service Gallery and Academic, is editor of the occasional sourcebook *Unfiled*, author of the book *File Under Popular* – and many articles and papers published in 16 languages. He was on faculty for a while at the Museum School in Boston and lectures irregularly on theoretical and music related topics worldwide. He has appeared on over 160 recordings.  
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# PROBES #15.2

## Auxiliaries

The PROBES Auxiliaries collect materials related to each episode that try to give a broader – and more immediate – impression of the field. They are a scan, not a deep listening vehicle; an indication of what further investigation might uncover and, for that reason, most are edited snapshots of longer pieces. We have tried to light the corners as well as the central arena, and to not privilege so-called serious over so-called popular genres. In this new auxiliary, bagpipes, zithers, harmonicas and hurdy-gurdys do things they aren't supposed to do in contexts in which they aren't supposed to do them... rather brilliantly.

### 01. Playlist

**00:00 Programme icon**

Gregorio Paniagua, 'Anakrousis', 1978

**00:07 Rufus Harley, interview (excerpt)**

**01:39 György Kurtág, 'Splinters' (excerpt), 1973**

Hungarian composer born in 1926 who studied with Olivier Messiaen and Darius Milhaud. In his approach to composition, he gave silence as much weight as the sounds that disturb them. He was the first of the post-war Hungarians to rediscover the cimbalom and 'Splinters' was refashioned from an earlier work for guitar, not written from scratch for the instrument, though the fit is perfect. It was premiered by the cimbalom virtuoso Márta Fábíán.

**03:05 Anton Karas, 'Anna Walks Home Alone', from *The Third Man* (excerpt), 1949**

**03:57 Albert Ayler, 'Masonic Inborn' (excerpt), 1969**

A giant in the world of the avant garde jazz of the sixties (he once said: 'John Coltrane was the father; Pharoah Sanders was the son; I was the holy ghost'). And no one has argued with that. At the same time he was on a path of his own, primal and intuitive. Harder even for the avant-jazz public to follow than Coleman, Sanders or Coltrane – whose styles were at least rooted in familiar languages – Ayler was more contingent, more invested in emotion and timbre than his peers. An inspiration but also something of an outsider whose career took strange turns, especially when he moved – unconvincingly – into funk and song form. Also sometimes a bagpiper, as here (on which he also plays ocarina).

**05:33 Ion Miu, 'Untitled' (excerpt), 2006**

A Romanian cimbalom virtuoso equally fluent in folk, art music and jazz, taken from a live concert in Switzerland, in 2006.

**06:57 Rufus Harley, 'Eight Miles High' (excerpt), 1970**

Afro-Cherokee American wind-player (sax, oboe, flute, trumpet) who took up the great Scottish bagpipes in the early sixties, and thereafter specialized in them, becoming the first and certainly the world's most celebrated jazz bagpiper. Though he was championed – and played with – the likes of Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie, Dexter Gordon and Herbie Mann, conventional jazz audiences and critics remained depressingly suspicious. Active throughout his life as a community worker for the Philadelphia Housing Authority, he worked tirelessly as a musical ambassador around the world for the unfashionable cause of brotherly love.

**09:29 Matthew Welsh, 'The Self and the Other: Mirrors' (excerpt), 2005**

An American composer and bagpipe virtuoso, Welsh (b.1976) studied with Barry Truax, Alvin Lucier, Rodney Sharman and Anthony Braxton – and went on to work in contexts mixing Celtic music, gamelan, minimalism, improvisation and rock.



Anton Karas (1906–1985)

[Anton Karas]

**11:00 Michael O'Neill, 'Ur Oq & Aji' (excerpt), 1988**

Canadian composer and bagpiper from Vancouver who mixes genres and instruments from different cultures with a keen ear for new associations and uses for the pipes.

**14:06 David Watson, 'Untitled', 2001**

Serial improvising Highland piper from New Zealand, now resident in New York with an organic but highly unorthodox approach to his instrument. Here with Koichi Makagami, throat singing.

**16:01 Pete Blasburg, excerpt from the Jazz Harmonica Summit, 2009**

An American harmonica player born in the twenties who quietly worked his way through 70 years of regular gigging; never famous but a fixture.

**17:23 Toots Thielman, 'Bluesette' (excerpt), 1962**

Now in his nineties, the Belgian Jean-Baptiste Frédéric Isidor, Baron Thielemans, started out as a guitarist, moved to the USA in 1952 and played with just about every name in the jazz book, as well as on movie soundtracks and TV theme tunes. 'Bluesette' is his most famous composition, and was a worldwide hit in his original version for guitar and whistling.

**19:21 Arcangelo Corelli, 'Trio Sonata in Bb Major, Op 2 No 5' played by Tony Eysers and Judy's Harmonica Ensemble. A concert recording from 2010**

Judy's Harmonica Ensemble, a 5 piece from Taiwan, was formed in 2002. They play a mixed programme of baroque, jazz and folk musics. Here they are joined by Tony Eysers, an Australian harmonica specialist who founded the Harmonica Academy. This is a concert recording from Taiwan.

**20:23 Ennio Morricone, 'A Man with Harmonica' (excerpt), 1968. From Sergio Leone's film *Once Upon A Time In The West***

Morricone (b. 1928) is a composer, improviser, innovator, trumpeter and author of over 500 film soundtracks, as well as music for television and countless songs. Between 1964 and 1980 he was also a member of the experimental improvising and noise ensemble Gruppo di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza. A series of films with his school friend Sergio Leone, starting in 1964, made them both household names, and generated the sobriquet Spaghetti Western. This piece is taken from one of them.

**21:49 Astor Piazzolla, 'Oblivion', played by Willi Burger and the Orquesta Sinfónica de la Juventud Venezolana Simón Bolívar**

Astor Piazzolla (b. 1921) a virtuoso bandoneonist who revolutionized the traditional tango, drawing on jazz and classical music as well as traditional themes, creating what is now known as nuevo tango. Willi Burger (b. 1934) is an Italian chromatic harmonica player, one of a handful of recognised classical harmonica virtuosos.

**23:15 Arthur Benjamin, 'Concerto for Orchestra and Harmonica' (excerpt), 1953. Harmonica by Larry Adler**

Born in 1893, Benjamin was an Australian composer and pianist with a huge catalogue of works, including the soundtrack for Hitchcock's first version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. This concerto was written for Larry Adler, one of the great virtuoso harmonica players for whom countless pieces were written by the likes of Darius Milhaud, Vaughn Williams and Cyril Scott.

**24:59 George Harrison, 'Dream Scene' (excerpt), 1968. From the soundtrack to the film *Wonderwall***

One of Harrison's most inventive projects. Tommy Reilly is the chromatic harmonica player featured here. All of this soundtrack is highly recommended for its imaginative mixing of genres, instruments and cultural languages.

**29:32 Stefan Brisland-Ferner and Hållbus Totte Mattson, 'Delirium' (excerpt), 2005**

The hurdy gurdy players from two Swedish bands, Garmana and Hedningarnar collaborated on a duo hurdy gurdy record, using a great deal of recording and editing manipulation.

**30:36 Alessandro Marcello, 'Oboe Concerto in D Minor, Adagio' (excerpt), 1716**

Adapted for harmonica and played by Italian chromatic harmonica player Stefano Olivato, with the Contemporary Baroque Orchestra, 2013.



[Morricone in 1978 with Gruppo di Improvvisazione di Nuova Consonanza  
Kazimierz Serocki]

## Gregorio Paniagua, 'Anakrousis', 1978

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### 02. Notes

#### On length and edits.

The purpose of these programmes is to give some practical impression of the probes we discuss. This necessitates for the most part extracting short stretches of music from longer wholes, which, of course, compromises the integrity and disrupts the context inherent in the original works. I have also, on occasion, edited different sections of a longer work together, better to illustrate the points under discussion. So the examples played in the programmes should not be confused with the works themselves. Wherever the word 'excerpt' appears after a title in the programme transcript, this indicates that what follows is an illustration, not a composition as it was conceived or intended. If something catches your ear, please do go back to the source.

For your listening pleasure I have, as always, been cavalier in editing the tracks together, overlapping them, making sometimes hard-to-spot joins, etc. – so, for the sake of clarity, I have prefaced each track with its start time.

#### Notification

If you want to be notified when a new probe goes up, please mail [termegacorp@dial.pipex.com](mailto:termegacorp@dial.pipex.com) with subject: Probe Me.

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### 03. Credits

Recorded at Studio Midi-Pyrénées. Engineered by Bob Drake.

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### 04. Acknowledgments

With thanks to Stevan Kovacs Tickmayer, William Sharp, Charles O'Meara, Yumi Hara, Dave Petts, Mark Sylvester, Chris Wangro, David Watson and Phil Zampino.

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### 05. Copyright note

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