In 1959, **Philip Corner** (born 1933) was drafted into the United States Army and sent to Korea as a trombone player until 1961. Far from being an unwelcome interruption in his career, Corner has described this as a "fortuitous" event, as he discovered "the most beautiful piece of music in the history of the world," a Korean court orchestra piece called *Sujecheon* (*Long Life, As Endless As The Sky*). While stationed in Korea, he also studied calligraphy with Ki-sung Kim, who gave him the Korean name Gwan Pok—Contemplating Waterfall. While Corner was "already composing Cage-like indeterminate pieces by the late 1950s," these Korean experiences remain perhaps the most formative in the evolution of his own musical language.

While continuing to create indeterminate scores, Corner added a beautiful calligraphic style to his graphic scores as well as for his general handwriting. This latter attribute affords a particular quality to his often poetic descriptions of the performer's role or range of choices in all his works since that time. In an interview with Marcus Boon, Corner says, "One of the things I learnt in Korea was to go into the quality of sound. I wanted to bring this notion into the range of possibilities—not in order to sound Oriental, but to enter into this thing that the Orient had explored that the West hadn't. And I pushed that as far as it could go, finding that place on the outside of the circle—which funnily enough leads to something that's 180 degrees removed, which is self expression!" Looking at his extremely varied output, Corner's commitment to spontaneity, self-expression, and his exquisite calligraphy remain central. The other quality that Corner's music presents—especially for performers—is a Koan-like challenge. As he notes at the end of his instructions to C Major Chord, "This music might be considered the most demanding piece in the literature. No demands at all are put on you, because there is no limit to what one can demand of himself."

One aspect of indeterminate scores that remains central for the performer and listener alike is that there can never be "the" definitive performance. Given the score of a determinate work such as a Beethoven symphony, piano sonata, or string quartet for instance, a performer or listener feels that by careful and continuous study and much listening experience/contemplation, one can arrive at a complete understanding of a work and can even give a definitive performance of it. Because of the multiplicity of questions and answers raised by an indeterminate score, many equally valid realizations will always exist. Beginning to prepare such a score entails a careful study of the problems being posed by the composer to the performer(s): What is suggested (actual musical materials, an attitude toward performing or a prescription for using the materials)? What is demanded? What is allowed? What, if anything, is forbidden? Christian Wolff composes music in which the score is often determined but which is indeterminate with respect to performance. This means that the performer(s) must decide details, ranging from tempi, phrasing, the number of repetition of materials or phrases, and so forth, sometimes in the moment of performance. Not only does this music embed certain spontaneous acts in its occurrence but it also raises issues of the politics or the sociology of music-making itself. Decisions not taken by the composer are also not to be made by the conductor for the group but by the group itself. Why would musicians choose to play such music when they can find the matters taken care of in most scores and can simply get on with playing? In the case of The Barton Workshop, performing a lot of music by Christian Wolff has allowed everyone to become involved equally in the music-making process, erasing hierarchies in the process. Everyone is equally important.

In the case of Corner's music, ensemble pieces allow this same approach to music-making and feature everyone's spontaneity in creating the music. In the solo or duo music, a player takes up this music because he or she is given exactly what Corner says in *C Major Chord: "There is no limit to what one can demand of himself."* The great Dutch cellist Anner Bijlsma was asked a question about cello technique during a master class. He replied, "Technique? Technique you buy in a practice room, but not aesthetic

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¹ Marcus Boon: *Philip Corner: A Long Life, Endless As the Sky* (originally published in *The Wire*) http://www.hungryghost.net/mb/corner.htm

richness . . . For aesthetic richness, you must work your entire life." Corner's music is offering such an opportunity to every musician. No more—but no less.

Corner hasn't worked like many composers, creating pieces on a commissioned basis for a specific performer, ensemble, or festival. But he has always been busy composing and creating music in the thick of the New York avant-garde of the 1960s to the '80s (the Tone Roads Chamber Ensemble, Judson Dance Theatre, Fluxus, The Living Theatre, Gamelan Son of Lion, Sound Out of Silent Spaces) until he moved to Italy in 1992. In listing the pieces on this set of CDs, the practice of listing by whom a piece was commissioned simply becomes a kind of irrelevancy with the torrent of music that Corner has instigated in his lifetime.

For Two Trombones No. 2 (1960) was composed initially as "Piece for 2 Brass Instruments" and performed on trumpets at The McNay Art Institute in San Antonio, Texas, on April 16, 1960. The piece is an open-form work consisting of nine phrases on the left-hand side of the score, eight phrases on the right-hand side, and a central circle of short phrases or gestures to which the players must return after each selected phrase has been completed. Corner gives a formal scheme whereby each player is instructed to choose a phrase from either the right or left side and whether it must be the same or a different phrase from the other player. While the score is indeterminate as to what each player will choose for each cycle, the demand that some phrases must be identical means that the choices cannot be made during performance and thus the choice of phrases from the right or left side of the score must be determined before the performance. The material in the central circle and the response of the first or second player to arrive there is made in real-time.

ZEN Om (and Calling! OM) comes from a large collection of explorations of the possibilities of one note, made during the sixties and seventies. Their scores are now in the collection "OMNI-OMs: 45 OM essences" published by Frog Peak Music.

Calling! OM was first used in Elaine Summers and Company's performance of "Energy Changes" for the Museum of Modern Art's Summer Garden series on September 21, 1972. This is a version for a centrally placed piano (played by Philip Corner) and two distantly situated trombonists who during the performance converge into the same performance space as the pianist and finally onto the same pitch which the piano has been reiterating.

attempting whitenesses (1964) for a dance by James Waring, Stanzas for Meditation, was realized by an ensemble of recorder players. The premiere occurred at the Judson Dance Theatre in New York City on May 19 and 20, 1964. It consists of a page of instructions that delineate an attitude toward playing and four pages of graphics. In general, a sense of purity—of whiteness—is to be created, out of which a series of disturbances grow. These disturbances are suggested by Corner's beautiful graphics. Ironically the "score" indicates only these aberrations rather than the general tenor of the notes that are played.

Round Sound (1963) is a multi-tracked realization by Hilary Jeffery. Round Sound was premiered by a brass ensemble on a Tone Roads concert at the New School for Social Research on April 24, 1964. The graphic score can be realized as a solo or by any number of low instruments. The score consists of text material plus three pages consisting of models for beginning, ending, or interrupting longer notes, for which there are also "models" of what might occur.

One Note More Than Once, versions (A) and (B) (2005), is a five-page score which integrates texts and graphic models. It was premiered in Amsterdam in January 2006 by Hilary Jeffery and received subsequent performances as a street procession in Asolo (Treviso, Italy) on October 4, 2006, and as a

theatrical environment at the Teatro Municipale of Reggio Emilia on October 15, 2006. It is presented in two versions here to illustrate for the listeners how one score can lead to two relatively different listening experiences.

An Earth Breath Trilogy (2005) received its premiere in Amsterdam in January 2006 with James Fulkerson but, in fact, represents Corner's long time spent working with improvisation through an alphorn. Corner's alphorn was made by Beat Kollelegger in Switzerland in time to be used in an eponymous outdoor happening created by Alain Gilbertie at the Arte Sella Festival, Borgo Valsugana, in September 1992. Corner has used this in alternation with other forms from withinstascys as a daily meditation. This tripartite formulation (dated February 2005) is recent, growing from a desire to give a clearer shape to its essence (a progression from breath to tone, a sounding process) which he included in the sounds he gave to the Merce Cunningham Company during their two evenings of events at the Museum MART of Roverto (March 25 and 26, 2005). It is a text score.

Big Trombone (1963) consists of a tape collage (using Wild Weekend by the Rockin' Rebels) which was prepared in Charlie Morrow's studio for Corner's improvisation at a concert at the Gramercy Arts Center on July 30, 1963, and as an aural model for an improvising trombonist. The first taping of the trombone part—to serve as a model for James Fulkerson's subsequent versions—was realized in the loft of John Herbert MacDowell. Although Corner has made some textual suggestions in a "score" format at Fulkerson's request, the score is really an aural score that hints at how to play over the tape collage. According to the late Hugh Davies, a chronicler of the development of electro-acoustic music, Big Trombone was the first-ever work for trombone and tape.

ZEN Om was played by Corner as a solo on a clay pot for the dance From the Still Point by Elaine Summers at the New York University School of Education on July 22, 1972. The New Age Brass Quintet performed it as a concert piece during their residency with the Experimental Intermedia Foundation at SUNY Binghamton during the summer of 1973.

Just Another 12-Tone Piece (1995) was stimulated, if not inspired, by the New Juilliard Ensemble at Lincoln Center. The actual premiere was in Frankfurt, Germany, by the Hessischer Rundfunk Neue Musik Ensemble in November 1997, directed by Malcolm Goldstein. The score consists of two hexachords (twelve sound objects): a material hexachord and a spiritual hexachord plus two sheer noises for any number of players. The content of each of these is chosen independently by each player.

Each of the 12 tone-sounds is to be played on a different pitch. The ordering of the events in performance is left open. All of the tonal qualities apart from that specified are left to the performer's choice.

Sang-Teh, movement III ("Situations") (1960–61) was composed for a concert in Seoul, Korea, on March 3, 1961, performed with violin, cello, flute, and piano four-hands, and subsequently performed privately on traditional instruments at the Kuk-Ahk Won (National Music Institute). Sang-Teh consists of fifteen movements, any one of which is a complete piece in itself. The pieces are for an unspecified ensemble playing in "Korean" unison. The ensemble utilizes microtonal ornamentation and timbral modulation within these heterophonic structures—albeit in a chromatic soundspace. Movement III has the following instructions:

Each note followed by silence.
Only limited ornamentation.
Only one need play each note—but others may overlap it.

Passionate Expanse of the Law was composed upon Corner's arrival at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio,

Texas, in the fall of 1959. It was then premiered during his absence in Korea under the direction of Philip Krumm at The McNay Art Institute on April 16, 1960. On this occasion it was done in two versions: for string quartet and for full ensemble. Upon his arrival back in New York City, Corner directed a performance at the Judson Memorial Church in January 1962.

Passionate Expanse of the Law consists of a specified form consisting of graphically notated materials for an unspecified number of instruments. It is one of the rare pieces by Corner that utilizes a conductor—a figure who is ignored on most occasions by the musicians but who nevertheless does give important information at critical moments.

Lovely Music (1961–62) was extracted from material for a dance by Beverly Schmidt, *Pindaric. Lovely Music* was performed in the Kaufman Concert Hall in the YM-YWHA in New York City on April 16, 1962, and received its first concert performance in the Composer's Forum series held in the Donnell Library in New York on December 16, 1972. It is scored for a minimum of three instruments and/or voices plus a percussionist (gong and one or two high bells).

The score for *Lovely Music* utilizes a structuring process in which the percussionist provides a backbone for the piece. Each performer is given a full set of pages from which he or she chooses what will be played—not so much in a given order as according to any desire. Corner provides a verbal description of the structuring process for the instruments/voices while noting that "a form overall tends rather than fixes. The gong is central, it grows and draws all the others into it."

When They Pull the Plug (2002) was thought up while thinking of electrical failures and was taken up by the Laboratorio di Ricerca Musicale of Palermo—with the help of materials from the botanical gardens—on October 29, 2004.

It is a piece for chordophones and/or membranophones and also metallophones and idiophones are possible. The instruments, in any combination from solo to even a quite large ensemble, are to be played with objects mostly unrefinedly natural (stalks and branches with leaves, stones, shells, dried grasses, flowers—even some roughly manufactured like bricks and tiles, glassware, ceramics, machine parts, or rusted metals.

This performance is divided into three sections based on the activating materials that have been utilized by the percussionist. This score is entirely textual.

Like much of Corner's output, *The V9 Chord which begins the Chopin D Major Prelude* . . . *as a revelation* (1969) exists in many variants which he has been exploring for differing settings in varying circumstances over a long period of time. The first The first "revelation" utilized six measures derived from Mozart's C minor Piano Concerto as *Solo 7* during the premiere of Lejaren Hiller/John Cage's HPSCHD at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The "as a revelation" concept was later developed in 1971 (*The F* * *Section in the middle of the D Major Prelude of Chopin* . . . *as a revelation*) for The Center for the Creative and Performing Arts in Buffalo, New York. During the 1970s, the composer created other versions/pieces (including the one on this CD) using music by composers such as Ravel, Satie, Berlioz, Ives, and Webern.

There are versions for piano, piano with instruments or just various instruments by themselves. The process is one of bringing out implied inner voices—a process which could be applied to other extracts of classic works or indeed any pattern—a chord or a progression of them arranged as a broken pattern.

Whether it was his master of calligraphy's astute powers of observation, Corner's "growing into his name," or simply his innate personality, "Contemplating Waterfall" is a most apt name for this

extraordinary composer as it alludes to his very perceptive nature, his profound musical insight, the musical challenges and opportunities he offers to his interpreters, and, finally, to the torrent of music he has produced during his unique life.

—James Fulkerson

Phil's success as a daring experimental composer comes from someplace, it seems to me. After years of knowing him, doing both music and higher education with him, I have some ideas about that "someplace." First, it's a place of clarity, or understanding of how music works.

Here is a story that illuminates it: It was the early eighties, and Phil and I were discussing the wonderful Cape Breton (Nova Scotia) fiddle tunes which I had arranged and Phil was to accompany on piano—which he did, successfully embodying that folk style of piano-playing. This folk music, like much other in the pantheon of world music, uses a pungent redaction of classical (European) harmony to serve its own purposes. One formula in Cape Breton style is to alternate the dominant chord (V) with the chord on the lowered seventh degree of the scale. I off-handedly asked Phil where he thought the idea of the "dominant" chord came from and, likewise, why the "lowered seventh" chord was used as a substitute for the dominant. He said without skipping a beat: the Dominant (V) comes from the Harmonic Series, and the lowered V11 chord comes from its "proximity" to the Tonic (meaning your finger has only to move a whole step down from the Tonic to find it). Somehow, I was struck dumb with the probability of this as the truth, simple and stark. I'm still thinking about it! What more can I say about a certain instantaneous clarity which Phil has about musical matters!

Next is Phil's commitment to something entirely the obverse of tradition: his primary and long-time commitment to the *verbal score*. A verbal score tells you how to make the music—in language, rather than in musical notation. There may be some musical symbols in a verbal score, maybe a graphic, but you are being told how to make the music via language, not musical notes in musical staves to be played by specific musical instruments or voices (though the verbal score also can tell you what instruments should be played). The verbal score is the elephant-in-the-room of the modernist and experimental music traditions, since it wipes clean the premises of musical notation. Moving from idea (expressed in words and maybe diagrams or sketches) to realization requires imaginative input from the performers on a level quite different from and more inclusive than what performers do with traditional musical notation. The verbal score can be difficult for a trained musician, and a godsend to a talented, but non–musically literate performer. A verbal score may ask the performers to do anything, including making up their own sounds or notes according to the instructions given. Call it the Platonic idea of musical composition because the idea precedes the actual notes, that is, the realization in sound.

Nothing challenges music conservatory training and tradition more than the verbal score: the concept that you can make music without that musical literacy which the conservatory is in charge of instilling. The tool of the verbal score does an end-run around that pillar of cultural education, musical notation. It is radical, too, because it steals musical technique away from the medieval power center of the Conservatory. The verbal score as a tool was around during the beginning of Phil's career. Yoko Ono may have done the earliest ones in the mid-fifties. La Monte Young did a series in 1960. (Sometimes these are called conceptual scores, or conceptual music. A full account would include the Fluxus artists such as George Brecht, Bob Watts and others who developed "Event Scores" influenced by John Cage's teaching.) Most of the pieces on this CD set come from verbal scores. The listener probably can't tell from listening alone that this is so. And I have more than an inkling of it myself only because I've played in and directed performances of many verbal scores, including some of these.

The verbal score puts an intelligent agent in charge of finding the right performance for the composer's

idea, but the performer is also the composer's partner, on the same level because he or she is in possession of the concept behind the music, expressed succinctly in words. Yet verbal scores can also be challenging because invariably there are questions about exactly what might be meant by the words or sentences. And the musicians must be willing to give of themselves, to inhabit the ideas, to do, to compose what is needed to make the ideas into music. A spiritual commitment is required, and the building of a performance community, because there is no such thing as simply "playing the score."

Maybe just from this short discussion, the reader can sense what a powerful and flexible tool is the verbal score: first, because it addresses performers in their native language, their first language; and second, because it can say things that notes can't. Phil has taken this path with the largest portion of his oeuvre. It's a brave path, because it requires so much from the performer, and because musicians usually expect to be faced with notes, not words. There's been a price: Many ensembles don't take on this kind of work. I recently asked Phil if he ever thought of doing the realization into notes and music scores of any of his verbal pieces. He said, sure, as long as there was a request from a performing group. So here is a plea: Please, performance groups, ask Phil for a piece!

In thinking about all this, it suddenly occurred to me to ask what if music notation from its beginnings had taken the form of human language, written and spoken, before it took its familiar form of notes and rests? Wouldn't the verbal score then be at the center of music culture and music teaching instead of at its periphery? Imagine writers and composers together, teaching the use of language to convey sound, idea, emotion, performance. This is a thought experiment we should all consider making.

This brings me to the final point: Phil's wide knowledge and appetite for many musical traditions, his respect for technique, and compositional mastery of both Eastern and Western traditions as sources for his compositional ideas, have made him good at teaching others. His teaching was both learned and liberatory. During the time that Phil and I taught in the music department of Rutgers University, Phil developed a manual for introductory music theory called "Elemental Music Craft." It was supposed to be a book, but ended up a series of lesson plans and hand-written notes, sometimes, not surprisingly, resembling his poetic verbal scores. His approach allows the creative and the traditional elements of the musical language to be integrated in a systematic, yet progressive way, appropriate, for a change, to the century we actually live in.

His approach overcomes the immovable scholasticism of music theory as it has been taught since medieval times in music theory courses worldwide, the kinds of courses that discourage so many brilliant music students from studying music theoretically. Music as composed, as performed, as conceptualized—all these come from the same place in Phil. Students get that right away. And so do his friends, colleagues, and lifelong musical collaborators. We are all indebted to him.

—Daniel Goode

Daniel Goode is artistic director of the Flexible Orchestra, co-founder/director of the DownTown Ensemble, and Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University. His works are available from Frog Peak Music, www.frogpeak.org.

Philip Corner is a composer of interdisciplinary works that have been performed throughout the world; he is also active as a performer, visual artist, and writer. Mr. Corner studied composition with Mark Brunswick and musicianship and piano with Fritz Jahoda at the City College of New York, where he earned his B.A. in 1955, and composition with Henry Cowell and Otto Luening at Columbia University, where he earned his M.A. in 1959. He also studied analysis with Olivier Messiaen at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris from 1955–57 and studied piano privately with Dorothy Taubman in New York from 1961–75.

He was drafted into the United States Army in 1959 and shipped to South Korea in 1960–61, where he introduced his own music, as well as that of John Cage, Olivier Messiaen, Wallingford Riegger, Anton Webern, and other composers. While there, he also studied calligraphy with Ki-sung Kim. He has participated in various concerts, exhibitions, and festivals with the Fluxus group since 1961.

As a performer of new music, he has been active as a pianist, trombonist, and vocalist and has also played alphorn and various natural objects, including resonant metals. He served as a resident composer and musician to the Judson Dance Theatre in New York from 1962–64. With Malcolm Goldstein and James Tenney, he co-founded the Tone Roads Chamber Ensemble in 1963, a new-music group that performed until 1970. He co-founded with Julie Winter (meditation leader) and Carole Weber (flute) the music-ritual ensemble Sounds out of Silent Spaces in 1972 and, with Barbara Benary and Daniel Goode, Gamelan Son of Lion in 1976 and often played with both, as well as with the Experimental Intermedia Foundation in New York.

He taught music and helped to expand the music program at the New Lincoln High School in New York from 1966–72, gave courses on analysis of new music and experimental composition at the New School for Social Research from 1967–70, and introduced an innovative music theory program at Rutgers University where he taught from 1972–92.

In addition, he taught piano privately in New York from 1962–68. He is married to the dancer/choreographer Phoebe Neville, with whom he has often collaborated, and has lived in Italy since 1992.

The Barton Workshop is an Amsterdam-based ensemble founded in 1989 by the American composer-trombonist James Fulkerson. The goal of the ensemble is to perform the leading edge of contemporary music, whether notated or not. The workshop primarily creates "composer portrait" concerts, usually in collaboration with the composers, which provide either an overview or an in-depth representation of a chosen composer's work. The Barton Workshop has collaborated with such composers as Alvin Lucier, Christian Wolff, Nicolas Collins, Steve Lacy, Philip Corner, and Frank Denyer and given world and European premieres of works by Galina Ustvolskaya, Henryk Gorecki, Alvin Lucier, James Fulkerson, Jerry Hunt, Frank Denyer, Nicolas Collins, and others.

Composer–trombonist **James Fulkerson** was born in the United States in 1945 and received his musical training at Illinois Wesleyan University and the University of Illinois. Mr. Fulkerson has been a composer-performer at the Center for the Creative and Performing Arts in Buffalo and composer-inresidence with the New York State CAPS Program, the DAAD (Berlin), Victorian College of the Arts (Melbourne, Australia), Dartington College of the Arts (Totnes, United Kingdom), and The School for New Dance Development (Amsterdam). As a trombonist, he has always been associated with performing and championing experimental music and experimental composers. More than 175 solo works have been composed for him, including *Ryoanji* and *Five*³ by John Cage.

Hilary Jeffery, composer-trombonist, works in improvised, electronic, and contemporary music. He has studied at Dartington College of the Arts, the University of York, and the Institute of Sonology, and with James Fulkerson at the European Dance Development Centre in Arnhem, The Netherlands. He has recorded as a soloist and member with Hugh Davies, Germ, Earthling, Sand, Kreepa, Band of Holy Joy, Jimi Tenor, The Meta Orchestra, Paul Dunmall Octet, Moksha Big Band, The Barton Workshop, Apa Ini, and The Kilimanjaro Dark Jazz Ensemble.

Percussionist **Tobias Liebezeit**, born in Wuppertal, Germany, has specialized in the interpretation of scores by the New York School and experimental music evolving from this tradition. For more than fifteen years he has closely collaborated with the German composers' group Wandelweiser. As a soloist

and chamber musician he has been responsible for the premieres of works by Michael Pisaro, Antoine Beuger, Kunsu Shim, and Jürg Frey, among others. He has made many recordings and performed throughout Europe, the United States, and Japan.

Taylan Susam is a composition student at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and a composer of experimental music. Susam is active in planning and presenting concerts especially in Den Haag and Amsterdam, performing with his melodica quartet and oscillator performance duo (with Jeremiah Runnels). His music has been performed in the United States and in many European countries.

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For a comprehensive list of Philip Corner's compositions, visit http://composers21.com/compdocs/cornerp.htm.

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DISC 1 (TT 77:39)

Trombones

- 1. For 2 Trombones No. 2 (1960) 13:26 James Fulkerson and Hilary Jeffery
- 2. *Calling! OM* ("from the '70s") 8:54
 James Fulkerson and Hilary Jeffery, trombones; with Philip Corner, piano
- 3. attempting whitenesses (1964) 10:07 James Fulkerson and Hilary Jeffery
- 4. *Round Sound* (1963) 5:14 Hilary Jeffery, multi-track
- 5. One Note More Than Once (2005) (A) 7:41 Hilary Jeffery

An Earth Breath Trilogy (2005) 14:04

6. I 3:28

7. II 4:56

8. III 5:36

James Fulkerson

9. *Big Trombone* (1963) 9:27

James Fulkerson, solo trombone improvised over tape collage

10. One Note More Than Once (2005) (B) 8:44 Hilary Jeffery

DISC 2 (TT 75:22)

Ensemble

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2. *Just Another 12-Tone Piece* (1995) 4:06

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3. Sang-Teh, movement III (1960–61) 13:21

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4. Passionate Expanse of the Law (1959) 11:30

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5. Lovely Music (1961–62) 13:53

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6. Part I 3:41 7. Part II 4:41 8. Part III 4:33

Tobias Liebezeit, percussion solo

9. Chopin Prelude I: The V9 chord which begins the Chopin D Major Prelude . . . as a revelation (1969) 12:24

The Barton Workshop

The Barton Workshop:

Jos Zwaanenburg, flutes; John Anderson, clarinets; Krijn van Arnhem, bassoon/contrabassoon; James Fulkerson, trombone; Nina Hitz, cello; Boris M. Visser, violin; Manuel Visser, viola; Rozemarie Heggen, contrabass; Dante Oei, piano (track 9); Tobias Liebezeit, percussion Taylan Susam, conductor (*Passionate Expanse of the Law*)

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