

*“The past does not influence me; I influence it.”* —Willem de Kooning

Music, a time-dependent art form, provides good accompaniment to evolutionary thoughts. If a musical module or gestalt shows agency along with an imperative to promulgate itself (or its “DNA”) throughout the life-cycle of a sonic ecosystem—attributes of an adapting organism—then an evolving system of such modules, fighting, eating, and fornicating with each other for survival, characterizes a great deal of Kyle Bruckmann’s work. An obsession with the dynamic tension between stasis and sudden breakouts can be found over the course of his entire output. The theory of punctuated equilibrium comes to mind. In this view of evolution, instead of a slow and steady progress of changing life forms, long periods of “equilibrium” are “punctuated” by sudden, drastic episodes where entire classes of organisms are replaced by radical new ones.<sup>1</sup>

Those surface attributes of Kyle Bruckmann’s music that engender this association—relatively static interludes broken by short bursts of hyperactivity, resulting in abrupt, extreme shifts in mood as well as “evolutionary progress” in the formations of musical elements, their interplay and development—have, lurking beneath them, a disruptive intelligence at work, showing scant interest in nineteenth-century ideals of “progress” and “evolution.” In his cheerfully contrarian way, he debunks any connection between his music and punctuated equilibrium: “That’s pretty cool! Because I don’t have the slightest idea what it is.”

Cozying up to Bruckmann’s sonic world is like hugging a saguaro cactus: it’s beautiful, rare, monumental, and ripe with nourishment accessible to only the most puncture-proof of admirers. Just when you’re thinking you recognize something or know what’s happening or is about to happen, a barb of *The Unexpected* pokes you right in the assumption. Bruckmann’s music is about experience in the moment; the pleasure and challenge of new sounds and new ways of listening; engaging in the real-time process of applying meaning to seemingly chaotic and unrelated forms. In the post-Cage continuum—with all sounds being equal, and shifting sonic relationships/juxtapositions providing what if any “meaning” is to be found—the art of improvisation has become one of recontextualization, not just of cool sounds but of modes of being. In his own words:

My composing is governed by the mindset of an improviser. I’m after a fundamentally social music; in one sense, this involves my obsession with the productive tension to be found at the borders between genres and aesthetic philosophies, with all their attendant socio-cultural baggage. In another, it implies that the skills inherent to the act of making music of any kind in real time—attention, intention, communication, flexibility, spontaneity, etc.—are conceived of as foreground. I tend to think of these procedural elements as the real compositional materials that melody, harmony, rhythm and the like are employed to realize, rather than the other way around.

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<sup>1</sup> See Gould, S.J., and N. Eldredge. “Punctuated Equilibria: The Tempo and Mode of Evolution Reconsidered.” *Paleobiology* 3 (1977): pp. 115–151.

I'm far more interested in listening and playing than in writing; what I do write makes grudging concessions to the score as a problematic literary means to an auditory end. I try to design materials with internal logic and contrapuntal integrity, but above all I focus on their potential for development in the hands of my colleagues. The notation is idiosyncratic and incomplete; the tasks required are often intentionally impossible to perfect. Building a degree of inevitable failure into the system ensures that the liberating energy of the "mistake" is not only acceptable, but entirely the point. Detours and derailments are always an option.

I prefer to outline form in broad strokes, steering dramatic contour in admittedly rather traditional ways. But the heart of the matter—the fleshing out of materials—is entrusted as much as possible to the players, and not just in the sense of theme-and-improvised-solos. I'm particularly interested in games and processes that yield richly nuanced results through the simplest, most readily discernable possible means. It's crucial to play this music with my friends, in a context of mutual trust and mischievous play. Challenging, koan-riddled, potentially exasperating fun, but fun nonetheless.

Along with fun comes responsibility. Bruckmann's had some experience bringing light to the masses, having been a radio DJ (in Texas, no less). As a composer, however, he pushes the responsibility of enlightenment straight into the ears of the individual audient. Keeping it fun (for performers *and* listeners) while administering this solemn duty is the miracle of this music. Keep your wits (and wit) about you, and you may just evolve into a higher-order organism.

Visceral fun: Steve Adams's exhilarating solo launch in *Procedural* inducing a collective (silent) roar among the assembled in studio. Exasperated fun: Matt Ingalls's and Tara Flandreau's recurring entrances in *Tarpit* (insistently recalling Ives's *Unanswered Question*). Zen fun: volleys of melodic koan challenges, ping-ponging across the wasteland of *Cell Structure*. Any aesthetic invested in "progress" and "resolution" smells of old books in the fresh air of such music, where one epoch follows another, the accreted lithostrata of history not just buried but squashed, obliterated by the ever-flowing eruption of hot, molten NOW. Even *Orgone Accelerator*, for CD playback (what used to be called "tape music") and therefore presumably conveying the exact same unfolding of sonic information with each performance, was brought into being with "the mindset of an improviser." Surely it's the audience's duty to come to the music with the same type of mind?

The art of musical improvisation is first and foremost one of *listening*, of taking in and recomposing what you're hearing. Listening as an improviser means a relaxed letting-go of preconceived ideas of what one thinks of as "music," and a profound acceptance of whatever is going on, even if what's going on violates your most heartfelt notions of musicality. As Myles Boisen once wrote, "The textbook incinerates itself as it is written, pal."<sup>2</sup> That's what makes improvisation the most dangerous game: often, and without warning, a sudden self-subversion is required to keep the ball rolling. Re-generate your music out of your own ashes, over and over. There's nothing to hold onto, because music is always and only happening in the now. You might think you're learning some rules as you go through this process, but even rules forged in this

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<sup>2</sup> Boisen, notes to (*Y*)*EARBOOK* Vol. 3, Rastascan CD BRD101 (1992).

moment may be shattered in the next. John Cage put it this way: “I’m not interested in learning. I’m interested in change.”<sup>3</sup> Cage, whose feelings about improvisation were darkened by years of seeing classically-trained musicians do it poorly, was speaking of his own composing, but the idea applies here. “Learning” implies an accumulation of ideas, and of the soft, imperceptible surrender to the comfort of “what I already like.” Accumulation weighs you down, drags you behind the moment. Sorry—no carry-on baggage on this flight. And no seats, either! (Really, it’s a shame Mr. Cage isn’t around to hear musicians such as those on this disk—surely it’d be an experience rewarding enough to change his accumulated notions about improvisation.)

Kyle Bruckmann is one of the most self-subverting people one could hope to meet. When talking to him about his composing or his playing, one feels sometimes one has met a guy who’s not much impressed by this dude Kyle Bruckmann. Of course he’s got an ego, just as any creative person has, but enveloping that ego is a shape-shifter of the first order, with the whole bundle enveloped in a cloud of self-effacement. To span the distance between classically-trained, professional oboist to circuit-bending punk-noise-rock composer/bandleader—with all that other stuff in between—requires a nature that is not just ever-ready but eager to throw off its shell of identity and appropriate a new one (we might as well mention he’s a steady-as-she-goes husband and father, too). Maybe always erasing your tracks is the only sane way to go about it.

All his protesting to the contrary, Bruckmann’s composing is rigorous. The act of composing often seats itself in an arbitrary decision, calibration, or analogue—“This composition exploits a pitch-set generated from the pattern of raisins I saw in my kid’s oatmeal this morning” or whatever—just as all scientific theorems start with “Let us assume that . . . .” Thankfully, that sort of silliness is absent from Bruckmann’s scores, and the notes seem to be standing in for nothing but the sounds they chart. Start with the notes in *Cell Structure*: a finely tuned set of inverted intervals in section D (minute mark 2’ 47”), returning, an octave higher, in D (7’ 02”), and near the end of the piece, temporally stretched (9’ 57”). The fine-tuning is all about *de*-tuning: over the course of *Cell Structure*, the two instrumentalists intercourse with the notes, smearing and prodding with false fingers. There’s a breakout moment at section E (8’ 49”) where the horns attempt to assert their intellectual and physical supremacy over an ominous digitized heartbeat and glitchy fleabites, to no avail: a final, overwhelming detonation stops them cold. The final recurrence of section D’s melodic mirrors unravels over vaguely reverberant pre-echoes, sounding like a surrealist recitation of “Taps.” Suddenly a slam of needle-drops from the electronic track shuts the door on our feeble indulgences in allegories of “what the music sounds like.” Just noise, and we’re done.

From the score: “*Advances from cell to cell are triggered by unmistakable sonic cues in the electronic part. Double barlines are thunderous blarps; dashed barlines are jagged electroshocks.*” Each advance is a door opening into yet another incarceration. Faintly reminiscent of Stockhausen’s *Telemusik* and the Lescalleet-nmperign collaborations, with a nod to Anthony Braxton’s language music (not to mention Bruckmann’s solo CD *Gasps and Fissures*), *Cell Structure* is perhaps the starkest exposition of Bruckmann’s art. Humans attempt a détente with their electronic overlords but, in the end, remain wistfully, echoingly exiled on the far side of a no-man’s-land of blarps and electrocutions, locked within the muscle-cell limits of instrumental technique and the brain cells’ illusion of passing time.

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<sup>3</sup> Cage, interview with Ed Herrmann, KPFA-FM, ca. 1990.

Composing for a bigger sonic playpen in *On Procedural Grounds*, Bruckmann gets personal.<sup>4</sup> All of the major cues and sections in the score are written for players, not instruments. Thus, when Ochs of Rova starts with the paint-peeling tenor sax after the energetic, tumbling “tune” is done, the score says “HEAD & LARRY SOLO.” Every name gets a turn, some in duos or trios, but the Rova masters are each granted a solo over differently orchestrated backgrounds. Unfolding over nearly a half-hour’s time, it’s a huge, sprawling canvas Bruckmann’s laid out for the Wrack/Rova+E machine. Dichotomies are transcended in abundance: compo/improv, fixed/moving, rhythm/horns, Rova/Wrack—even left/right is messed with, in the electronics mix: Perkis is left channel while Robair’s sounds bounce back and forth in stereo space, taking both channels. Ultimately providing the strongest chain of commonality is Rova, at this point in their deep and wide history more force of nature than musical institution. Their epic backstory (reaching to 1978 at least) has infused Rova with the ability to sound like a solo instrument when they’re all playing, and like a quartet when it’s just one guy blowing.

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<sup>4</sup> The composer notes:

In a social music, you orchestrate for particular individuals at least as much as for instruments. Relationships are key. The roster of musicians on hand here is breathtaking, and a humbling encapsulation of much of my artistic life to date. Wrack convened at the pinnacle of my time in Chicago, as my attempt to live up to the city’s Creative Music legacy, and remains to this day my lifeline to that incredibly fertile scene. sfSound is the best thing that has happened to me creatively since moving to the Bay Area, providing the most consistent source of opportunities and provocations for my development as interpreter, composer, and instigator. Assembling the cast of the title piece was an attempt to bridge these two chapters and cities, and to triangulate them with a third, more seminal stage. It was a practice of gratitude, and the fact that it actually happened is deeply meaningful to me in ways I can best express only by indulging in a bit of personal narrative:

**1993, Houston TX.** I’m an undergrad at Rice University, diligently trying to master the oboe, gamely trying to drink the house Kool-Aid regarding the instrument’s natural habitat (namely, the High Art of Western European High Imperialism). My heart is really across a muddy field from the conservatory, at campus radio station KTRU 91.7 FM. As DJ and co-Music Director, I gorge myself, launching from the hardcore and industrial that fueled my adolescence, through the gateway drug of John Zorn, into the realms of avant-garde jazz. This is all very much to my teachers’ dismay: I’m hardly supposed to be listening to records of *Mozart* when I should be locked in the practice room instead. Somehow, I internalize that all this is degenerate dalliance I’ll have to outgrow upon graduation to fly straight and get an orchestra job. Enter Creative Music, Bay Area style. The station’s General Manager and Jazz Director have the audacious idea to blow our entire budget for the year hosting a two-day festival featuring Rova and the Splatter Trio (the late-lamented skronk outfit of Gino Robair, Myles Boisen, and Dave Barrett). Gino and Myles walk through one of the very first rehearsals of my preposterous noise-rock band Lozenge. I interview Rova on the air; in a fit of exasperated befuddlement betraying my conservatory damage, I ask “so, wait, is your music *composed* or not?” Later that evening, in the same recital hall where I’d dozed through countless classmates’ Brahms, I’m punched square in the face with a conclusion so obvious in retrospect it’s almost pathetic: *this* music is being composed before my eyes, between my ears, by fully engaged, empowered artists. *This* music is vital, legit, alive; it speaks to me, it matters, and maybe I could—no, *have to*—actually play it myself. On the oboe, even.

**2003, Oakland CA.** After several years of total immersion in improvised music (at U. Michigan and in the heady brew of *fin de siècle* Chicago), the siren song of the Last Place on Earth gets too strong to ignore. My very first gig as a Bay Area resident: one of 40 performing a realization of Gino’s opera *I, Norton* (a concert prominently featured in Tim Perkis’ documentary *Noisy People*). I sit down next to Jon Raskin; there’s still a KTRU bumper sticker on his bari case.

Besides Rova, the instrumental cohort in *Procedural* includes Bruckmann's beyond-category band Wrack, which traces to his Chicago years. Wrack takes on jazz a bit like Bartók approached Balkan music—clinically—incisively translating the inbred language and tropes into a hybrid that's at once synthetic and utterly stand-alone. Drummer Daisy and bassist Hatwich provide a sure, abiding underpinning when it's swing-time, even if the notes Bruckmann's given them are as off-kilter as he can make them. (That vamp underpinning the “head”—a 9+5+9+4 cycle—recalls Bartókian funk, again.) Hatwich and violist Paulson furnish a memorably vacant interlude following Ochs' solo (the switch happens around the 8-minute mark). Stein's bass clarinet flutters and barks at Robair's electronics, providing an abstract bridge between the pulse-based flights of Raskin and Adams.

Pointillist cues interrupting/directing steady-state sound is tactically used at the outset of *On Procedural Grounds*, only, contra *Cell Structure*, live electronics provide the wash while the horns furnish the sonic openings. There follows (at 3' 34" ) the vamp + head formula beaten to death in jazz history; here Bruckmann resurrects it with a lurching zombie footstep overlaid with “tumbling, frantic” melodic lines in a horn quartet drawn equally from Wrack and Rova, oboe-bass clarinet-alto sax-tenor sax. The same material comes back, slightly recast, at 24' 49" , revealing the overall form for *Procedural* to be an arch, another thing Mr. Bartók liked to play with. (Or is it the hoary head-solos-head jazz construct? Mr. Bruckmann would probably like to have it both ways.) Any such abstraction is incidental to the experience of the music which, in a piece so big and kaleidoscopic in its revolving foregrounds and backgrounds, is more like a mod(ular) road movie with high-wattage cameos in every scene: each emerging star turn obliterates the preceding one. Reinforcing this impression is Bruckmann's preference for abrupt tape-splice-like transitions over smooth segues, displayed at nearly every junction.

*Orgone Accelerator* is another of those Bruckmann-instigated experiences that seems to erase itself as it proceeds—not that it isn't memorable, but that each new airing is bafflingly virginal. Erasing the human element from music, à la the Berlin *echtzeit* movement of the last fifteen years, is something Bruckmann's well acquainted with (hear his duo project with Ernst Karel, EKG). But he's able to hold on to humor, somehow, which isn't always heard in such decidedly ascetic music. At 5' the mostly oboe-generated sounds cease—in fact, the whole thing stops dead—and after a second or two, another process starts up, a distorted throb + crackles that would seem to have nothing to do with what came before. But have we forgotten the other throb (1' –3' ), which fills the air to the point of suffocation? If all this is somehow a tone parallel to eight minutes of heavy breathing inside an Orgone Box, we're convinced.

Bruckmann, in response to the observation that significant events in *Orgone Accelerator* happen at minutes 3, 5, and 8—and was this the result of an application of the Fibonacci sequence —says, “Gosh . . . no, not consciously. I guess organic certitudes DO have a way of asserting themselves organically.”

I suppose it's less immediately obvious how a faith in real-time interaction and open forms translates to “tape music,” which is susceptible to infinite editing and paralyzing perfectionism. But I approach my electronic work in much the same spirit as I do the notes I scribble on the page, with a similar trust in accident and a healthy dose of *bricolage*.

The technology I use is cobbled together, half-broken, and anything but cutting-edge, for reasons that are aesthetic (I love the warm, raw timbres of vintage analog instruments), procedural (I'm interested in the creative challenge of arbitrary self-limitations), and pragmatic (I can take advantage of whatever equipment I happen to have or can borrow). I play games with my gear like the ones I devise for my colleagues: using means that are blunt, even clumsy and obvious, but in the service of highly complex, finely textured results.

We end with *Tarpit*—the “cautionary fable.” You might say it has a plot that thickens over time. As a final nose-thumb to any generalizing about his music, Bruckmann builds the piece over a highly disciplined example of a smooth ramping process, in the spirit of James Tenney or Tom Johnson. On top of that the composer plants three pairs of players who are instructed to mess up the melodies he's given them: “Strive for impetuous, even eccentric, lyricism. Start in unison, but diverge gradually, and maintain independence . . . vary phrasing etc. ad lib, *growing very gradually* towards improvisation.” (emphasis added) The ensuing complexity grows, not from of a set of mathematical instructions, but from human agency and accident, something Bruckmann values, refreshingly, over strict adherence to rules.

Being acquainted with Bruckmann's bloody-mindedness at this point, we're duty-bound to ask: could the title mean “Tarp it,” like Christo—take a giant monument and wrap that sucker in vinyl, create a zeppelin-sized art burrito and hide it away in plain sight? (The wrap here being that ever-growing electronic drone.) Or, more topically, “TARP” it: throw gobs of money at a giant, invisible monster that threatens to devour everybody and everything on the planet, to placate it for a quarter of an hour? Bruckmann's characterization of *Tarpit* as a “cautionary fable” is our only clue, and maybe the obvious reading will unearth a greater cache of artifacts. The ecology lessons in Captain Beefheart's *Petrified Forest* suggest a parallel—ancient forms of hairy, snorting beasts alongside politicians, scientists, and other culture-makers, smothering in a bottomless pit of boiling black glue, slow-oozing ideas, and sulphurously stinking, outmoded moralities from prehistoric times. The harder they struggle to get out, the worse they're mired in it. Thus the sonic allegory: a wooly-mammoth wedge of black noise that looms in the background throughout *Tarpit*, and finally overwhelms the ensemble by the piece's end. At ten minutes in, the ensemble's collective sound resembles a room-sized birdcage full of flaps and twitters, telegraphing for help but receiving no answer. The mix at minute 14 favors the electronics: the point of no hope has been reached; the human players are no match for it. The looming blackness triumphs with just a few pitiful squeaks and gasps left to suggest any life, much less any of the intelligent variety, was ever here. The moral of the fable: Tread respectfully in Mother Nature's playground, humans, lest you end up another evolutionary shunt to nowhere, your evolution punctuated, period.

—Tom Djll

*Tom Djll is a composer/improviser, writer, and artist. He lives in Albany, California. His music writing has appeared in The Wire, Signal to Noise, Musicworks, Sequenza 21 and other places online and in print.*

## Composer's notes

In all my creative work, I gravitate toward the liminal and uncertain, attempting to undermine alleged dichotomies: composition and improvisation, electronic and acoustic, stasis and tension. Not coincidentally, this contrarian bent and affinity for discomfort zones is central to the working methods of sfSound as a collective. **Cell Structure** is very much a product of that unique and wonderful creative environment; it's an outgrowth of a sub-strain of our activities in which we continually develop, mercilessly critique, steal, and repurpose each other's ideas. Particularly prominent here is an exploitation of the uncanny overlap in ensemble founder Matt Ingalls and my improvisational 'bag of tricks;' a select handful of our favored tendencies are yanked into a confrontation with an unnervingly rigid electronic environment. The piece is dedicated to Matt with admiration and thanks for his cursed perseverance and twisted humor, and for inviting me into the fold.

**Orgone Accelerator** was composed for 8-channel sound diffusion, and premiered at the 2011 San Francisco Tape Music Festival. This stereo realization was mixed with help from Eli Crews. It is dedicated to Stephen Holland-Chang (aka Symbio), with a salute of tangential indebtedness to Pauline Oliveros and Hawkwind.

**Tarpit** is a cautionary fable originally concocted for sfSound's 2009 collaboration with visiting artists Lê Quan Ninh and Michel Doneda. I revised and re-scored it in 2010 for sfSound's core ensemble. It is gratefully dedicated to those friends and colleagues.

The electronic components of these three pieces are made up of detritus, culled from a scrapheap of half-baked ideas recorded on the fly and fragments left over from other projects. Thorough and accurate recording and gear-mooching credits would be tedious and absurd; but I do owe thanks to Olivia Block, Eli Crews, Ernst Karel, David Rothbaum, Monica Scott, and Keith Fullerton Whitman.

The main ingredients of **On Procedural Grounds** were originally conceived for the 2009 Chicago Sound Map project, at the instigation of my dear friends D Bayne, Michael Hartman, and Boris Hauf. It has been significantly revised specifically for Wrack, the Rova Saxophone Quartet, Gino Robair, and Tim Perkis. My deepest thanks go out to that entire crew for their creativity, dedication, and intrepid artistry; and particularly to my six Bay Area comrades, for their (at the risk of melodrama) life-altering inspiration. It is dedicated to Heidi Bullinga and Vince Kargatis, who flapped some butterfly wings nearly two decades ago, without which it is exceedingly unlikely that this whole darn CD ever would have happened.

Composer/performer **Kyle Bruckmann's** work extends from a Western classical foundation into genre-bending gray areas encompassing free jazz, electronic music, and post-punk rock. He has been active since his teens in the DIY noise rock underground while simultaneously establishing a thorough pedigree as an orchestral oboist. This unusual intersection leads him to creative work driven by an "ethnomusicological" mindset, focusing on the social aspects of how music and musicians work in the world. His varied projects delve into the cracks between different roles, contexts, and aesthetics, seeking deep structures uniting disparate subcultures, genres, and practices.

Shortly after moving to the Bay Area in 2003, he became a member of the new music collective sfSound and Quinteto Latino (a woodwind quintet specializing in Latin American composers). He has worked with the San Francisco Symphony and most of the area's regional orchestras, performed contemporary concert music with the Eco Ensemble and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and accompanied twentieth-century opera productions with Ensemble Parallèle. He has simultaneously become firmly enmeshed in the vibrant local improvised music community; current working groups include Shudder (with Lance Grabmiller and Phillip Greenlief), Addleds (with Tony Dryer, Jacob Felix Heule, and Kanoko Nishi), and Pink Mountain (an avant-rock band with Sam Coomes, Gino Robair, Scott Rosenberg, and John Shiurba).

From 1996 until his westward relocation, he had been a fixture in Chicago's experimental music underground, with frequent collaborators including Jim Baker, Jeb Bishop, Olivia Block, Guillermo Gregorio, Fred Lonberg-Holm, Robbie Hunsinger, Ernst Karel, and Michael Zerang. Long-term projects include the electro-acoustic duo EKG, the Creative Music quintet Wrack, and the avant-punk monstrosity Lozenge.

Bruckmann was born in 1971 in Danbury, Connecticut, hometown of Charles Ives. He earned undergraduate degrees in music and psychology at Rice University in Houston, studying oboe with Robert Atherholt, serving as music director of campus radio station KTRU, and achieving academic distinction as a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He completed his Master's degree in 1996 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he studied oboe performance with Harry Sargous and contemporary improvisation with Ed Sarath.

For more than a quarter-century, the **Rova Saxophone Quartet** has been acclaimed and recognized for its vital role in extending the horizons of today's genre-bending music. With its potent mix of compositional creativity and stellar musicianship, Rova explores the synthesis of composition and collective improvisation. Positioning itself in a dynamic musical nexus, Rova has become an important leader in the music movement that has its roots in post-bop, free jazz, avant-rock, and 20th-century new music, as well as drawing inspiration from traditional and popular styles of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States. Rova deliberately works at the boundaries of sound and space.

Inspired by a broad spectrum of musical influences—from Charles Ives, Edgard Varèse, Olivier Messiaen, Iannis Xenakis, and Morton Feldman to the Art Ensemble of Chicago, John Coltrane, Anthony Braxton, Steve Lacy, Cecil Taylor, and Sun Ra—Rova began, in 1978, writing new material, touring, and recording. During the past thirty-plus years the band has created dozens of quartet recordings as well as some stunning collaborative CDs. Since 1976, their own non-profit organization Rova:Arts has annually produced a premiere collaborative-performance in San Francisco, many of which have then been exported live and/or through recorded means (including *The Celestial Septet*, *Electric Ascension*, and *Figure 8*). All CDs and past collaborations are listed at the official Rova website. They have toured in Europe at least once annually since 1979, including the near-legendary tours of the former USSR in 1983 and 1989.

**Wrack** was founded in Chicago in 2002 by Kyle Bruckmann as a vehicle for his compositions in the Creative Music continuum—music blurring distinctions between compositional and improvisational procedures, creative and interpretative mindsets, Afro- and Euro-American



experimental traditions. It is equally a series of works, a chamber ensemble, and an aesthetic philosophy entangling methodologies of contemporary jazz and classical modernism. The debut record on [Red Toucan](#) featured trombonist Jeb Bishop, violist Jen Clare Paulson, bassist Kurt Johnson, and percussionist Tim Daisy. Bruckmann moved to San Francisco in 2003, but has maintained ties to Chicago's vibrant avant-jazz and improvised music community ever since. The currently active lineup (with bass clarinetist Jason Stein and bassist Anton Hatwich, alongside Paulson and Daisy) solidified during a 2005 homecoming visit.

**sfSound** is one of the San Francisco Bay Area's leading creators and presenters of contemporary music. Surveying American experimental traditions and the European avant-garde since 2000, sfSound has been groundbreaking in emphasizing the continuum between notated composition and free improvisation. They are unique as a collective of composer/performers that performs their own works, programs avant-garde repertory, and develops highly creative "radical transcriptions" of modern masterpieces. Exploring the intersection of concert music with multimedia, performance art, and live electronics, sfSound has premiered pieces by figures from the top floors of academia's ivory towers and the grittiest warehouses of the Bay Area's noise scene. This ambitious breadth resulted in a 2008 ASCAP/CMA Award for Adventurous Programming. Many recordings of past concerts, as well as featured works on upcoming concerts can be heard on sfSoundRadio, through their website [www.sfsound.org](http://www.sfsound.org).

**Tim Perkis** has been working in the medium of live electronic and computer sound for many years, performing, exhibiting installation works, and recording in North America, Europe, and Japan. His work has largely been concerned with exploring the emergence of life-like properties in complex systems of interaction. In the world of improvised music, he has performed with artists and groups including Chris Brown, John Butcher, Eugene Chadbourne, Fred Frith, Gianni Gebbia, Frank Gratkowski, Luc Houtkamp, Yoshi Ichiraku, Matt Ingalls, Joelle Leandre, Elliott Sharp, Wadada Leo Smith, and John Zorn. He was a founding member of the pioneering live computer network bands The League of Automatic Music Composers and The Hub.

**Gino Robair** has performed and recorded with Tom Waits, Anthony Braxton, John Zorn, Nina Hagen, Terry Riley, Lou Harrison, John Butcher, Derek Bailey, Peter Kowald, Otomo Yoshihide, and the ROVA Saxophone Quartet. He is one of the "25 Innovative Percussionists" included in the book *Percussion Profiles* (SoundWorld, 2001), as well as a founding member of the Splatter Trio and Pink Mountain. His opera, *I, Norton*, based on the life of Norton I, Emperor of the United States, has been performed throughout North America and Europe.

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Kyle Bruckmann

*Gasps & Fissures*. 482 Music 482-1027.

Olivia Block & Kyle Bruckmann

*Teem*. either/OAR either/4.

EKG

*Electricals*. another timbre at16.

Lozenge

*Undone*. Sickroom Records SRR028.

Wrack

*Cracked Refraction*. Porter Records PRCD 4061.

*Intent & Purposes*. 482 Music 482-1050.

Producer: Kyle Bruckmann

Engineers: Myles Boisen (track 2); Eli Crews (tracks 1 and 4).

Edited and mixed by Myles Boisen (track 2) and Eli Crews (tracks 1, 3, 4).

Mastered by Myles Boisen, Headless Buddha Mastering Labs, Oakland.

*On Procedural Grounds* was recorded on October 3, 2010, at Guerilla Audio, Oakland, CA.

*Cell Structure* was recorded on June 29, 2011 at New, Improved Recording, Oakland, CA. *Tarpit* was recorded August 24, 2011 at the same location.

Final mastering: Paul Zinman, SoundByte Productions Inc., NYC

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Francis Goelet (1926–1998), *In Memoriam*

KYLE BRUCKMANN (b. 1971)  
*ON PROCEDURAL GROUNDS*

80725-2

1. *Cell Structure* (2009) 11:15

Kyle Bruckmann, oboe; Matt Ingalls, clarinet; with electronics

2. *On Procedural Grounds* (2010) 29:17

Wrack (Kyle Bruckmann, oboe; Jen Clare Paulson, viola; Jason Stein, bass clarinet; Anton Hatwich, contrabass; Timothy Daisy, percussion); Rova Saxophone Quartet (Bruce Ackley, Larry Ochs, Jon Raskin, Steve Adams); Gino Robair, Tim Perkis, live electronics

3. *Orgone Accelerator* (2010) 7:59

Kyle Bruckmann, oboe/English horn and electronics

4. *Tarpit* (2009) 16:06

sfSound: Kyle Bruckmann, oboe; Matt Ingalls, bass clarinet; John Ingle, alto saxophone; Gino Robair, prepared piano; Benjamin Kreith, violin; Tara Flandreau, viola; Monica Scott, cello; Kjell Nordesen, percussion; with electronics

TT: 64:58

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