

NEW MUSICAL FIGURATIONS

ANTHONY BRAXTON'S CULTURAL CRITIQUE



RONALD M. RADANO

New Musical Figurations

Paul Steinbeck

New Musical Figurations:

New Musical Figurations Ronald M. Radano, 1993 *New Musical Figurations* exemplifies a dramatically new way of configuring jazz music and history. By relating biography to the cultural and musical contours of contemporary American life, Ronald M. Radano observes jazz practice as part of the complex interweaving of postmodern culture, a culture that has eroded conventional categories defining jazz and the jazz musician. Radano accomplishes all this by analyzing the creative life of Anthony Braxton, one of the most emblematic figures of this cultural crisis. Born in 1945, Braxton is not only a virtuoso jazz saxophonist but an innovative theoretician and composer of experimental art music. His refusal to conform to the conventions of official musical culture has helped unhinge the very ideologies on which definitions of jazz, black music, popular music, and art music are founded. *New Musical Figurations* gives the richest view available of this many-sided artist. Radano examines Braxton's early years on the South Side of Chicago, whose vibrant black musical legacy inspired him to explore new avenues of expression. Here is the first detailed history of Braxton's central role in the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, the principal musician-run institution of free jazz in the United States. After leaving Chicago, Braxton was active in Paris and New York, collaborating with Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Frederic Rzewski, and other composers affiliated with the experimental music movement. From 1974 to 1981, he gained renown as a popular jazz performer and recording artist. Since then, he has taught at Mills College and Wesleyan University, given lectures on his theoretical musical system, and written works for chamber groups as well as large opera-scale pieces. The neglect of radical challenging figures like Braxton in standard histories of jazz, Radano argues, mutes the innovative voice of the African American musical tradition. Refreshingly free of technical jargon, *New Musical Figurations* is more than just another variation on the same jazz theme. Rather, it is an exploratory work as rich in theoretical vision as it is in historical detail.

Sound Experiments Paul Steinbeck, 2022-08-03 *Sound Experiments* is a groundbreaking study of the trailblazing music of Chicago's AACM, a leader in the world of jazz and experimental music. Founded on Chicago's South Side in 1965 and still thriving today, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) is the most influential collective organization in jazz and experimental music. In *Sound Experiments*, Paul Steinbeck offers an in-depth historical and musical investigation of the collective, analyzing individual performances and formal innovations in captivating detail. He pays particular attention to compositions by Muhal Richard Abrams and Roscoe Mitchell, the Association's leading figures, as well as Anthony Braxton, George Lewis, and his famous computer music experiment, Voyager. Wadada Leo Smith and Henry Threadgill, along with younger AACM members such as Mike Reed, Tomeka Reid, and Nicole Mitchell, are also analyzed. *Sound Experiments* represents a sonic history spanning six decades that affords insight not only into the individuals who created this music but also into an astonishing collective aesthetic. This aesthetic was uniquely grounded in nurturing communal ties across generations as well as a commitment to experimentalism. The AACM's compositions broke down the barriers between jazz and experimental music and made essential contributions to African American expression.

more broadly Steinbeck shows how the creators of these extraordinary pieces pioneered novel approaches to instrumentation notation conducting musical form and technology creating new soundscapes in contemporary music *This Is Our Music* Iain Anderson, 2012-05-26 This Is Our Music declared saxophonist Ornette Coleman's 1960 album title But whose music was it At various times during the 1950s and 1960s musicians critics fans politicians and entrepreneurs claimed jazz as a national art form an Afrocentric race music an extension of modernist innovation in other genres a music of mass consciousness and the preserve of a cultural elite This original and provocative book explores who makes decisions about the value of a cultural form and on what basis taking as its example the impact of 1960s free improvisation on the changing status of jazz By examining the production presentation and reception of experimental music by Ornette Coleman Cecil Taylor John Coltrane and others Iain Anderson traces the strange unexpected and at times deeply ironic intersections between free jazz avant garde artistic movements Sixties politics and patronage networks Anderson emphasizes free improvisation's enormous impact on jazz music's institutional standing despite ongoing resistance from some of its biggest beneficiaries He concludes that attempts by African American artists and intellectuals to define a place for themselves in American life structural changes in the music industry and the rise of nonprofit sponsorship portended a significant transformation of established cultural standards At the same time free improvisation's growing prestige depended in part upon traditional highbrow criteria increasingly esoteric styles changing venues and audience behavior European sanction withdrawal from the marketplace and the professionalization of criticism Thus jazz music's performers and supporters and potentially those in other arts have both challenged and accommodated themselves to an ongoing process of cultural stratification *Message to Our Folks* Paul Steinbeck, 2018-09-28 This year marks the golden anniversary of the Art Ensemble of Chicago the flagship band of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians Formed in 1966 and flourishing until 2010 the Art Ensemble distinguished itself by its unique performance practices members played hundreds of instruments on stage recited poetry performed theatrical sketches and wore face paint masks lab coats and traditional African and Asian dress The group which built a global audience and toured across six continents presented their work as experimental performance art in opposition to the jazz industry's traditionalist aesthetics In *Message to Our Folks* Paul Steinbeck combines musical analysis and historical inquiry to give us the definitive study of the Art Ensemble In the book he proposes a new theory of group improvisation that explains how the band members were able to improvise together in so many different styles while also drawing on an extensive repertoire of notated compositions Steinbeck examines the multimedia dimensions of the Art Ensemble's performances and the ways in which their distinctive model of social relations kept the group performing together for four decades *Message to Our Folks* is a striking and valuable contribution to our understanding of one of the world's premier musical groups *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?* Eric Porter, 2002-01-31 Among the many books on the history of jazz an implicit division of labor has solidified whereby black artists play and invent while white writers provide the

commentary Eric Porter's brilliant book seeks to trace the ways in which black jazz musicians have made verbal sense of their accomplishments demonstrating the profound self awareness of the artists themselves as they engaged in discourse about their enterprise Susan McClary author of Conventional Wisdom The Content of Musical Form With What Is This Thing Called Jazz Eric Porter has given us an original portrait of black musicians as creators thinkers and politically conscious individuals This well written thoroughly researched work is a model of a new kind of scholarship about African American musicians one that shows them as people who are both shaped by and actively shaping their political and social context One of the book's most important contributions is that it takes seriously what the musicians themselves say about the music and allows their voices to join that of critics and musicologists in helping to construct a critical and philosophical framework for analyzing the music Professor Porter's work is rare in its balanced attention to the formal qualities of the music historical interpretation and theoretical reflection His is a work that will certainly shape the direction of future studies What Is This Thing Called Jazz is an extraordinary work Farah Jasmine Griffin author of If You Can't Be Free Be a Mystery In Search of Billie Holiday A major contribution to American Studies in music Eric Porter's lucidly written book is the first to thoroughly analyze and contextualize the critical historical and aesthetic writings of some of today's most innovative composer performers Placing the vital concerns of artists at the center this work provides academic and lay readers alike with important new insights on how African American musicians sought to realize ambitious dreams and concrete goals through direct action not only in sound but through building alternative institutions that emphasized the importance of community involvement George E Lewis Professor of Music Critical Studies Experimental Practices Area University of California San Diego

The University course of music study, piano series Rudolph Ganz, National Academy of Music (New York, N.Y.), 1920 **The Musical Quarterly** Oscar George Sonneck, 1924 **The Musical Leader**, 1928 **Journal of the American Musicological Society** American Musicological Society, 1998 **The New Music Review and Church Music Review**, 1923 **Truth**, 1925 *Head Hunters* Steven F. Pond, 2005

This is the story of one of the most influential and controversial jazz recordings of the twentieth century Head Hunters captures a transitional moment in music history a time when jazz and rock combined to create a whole new often controversial genre Symbolizing that genre was Herbie Hancock's 1973 album Head Hunters this was Hancock's foray into the fusion jazz market the first jazz album to go platinum and the best selling jazz album of all time to that point The album became a flash point for a major shift in both the production and reception of jazz the sales numbers were unprecedented and the music industry quickly responded to the expanded market with production and promotion budgets rising tenfold Such a radical shift helped musicians pry open the door to the control booth permanently enlarging their role in production **New Music Review and Church Music Review**, 1910 **Musical Courier**, 1895 Vols for 1957-61 include an additional mid January no called Directory issue 1st 5th ed The 6th ed was published as the Dec 1961 issue *Black Arts West* Daniel Widener, 2010-03-08 A social and cultural history of African

American arts activity in Los Angeles between the Second World War and the 1992 riots **Membership Directory and Handbook** Society for American Music,2009 *Membership Directory and Handbook* Sonneck Society,1998 **Reports of the President and the Treasurer** John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation,1998 Includes biographies of fellows appointed reappointments publications musical compositions academic appointments and index of fellows **A Framework for the Analysis of Performer Interactions in Western Improvised Contemporary Art Music** Michael Pelz-Sherman,1998 **Between Rock and a Jazz Place** Kevin Fellezs,2004

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