

Two Heads Are Better Than One **by W. Mark Sutherland**

My ongoing collaboration with Nobuo Kubota gives me the opportunity to probe the limits of human utterance and to challenge the boundaries of accepted disciplines. Together, we try to create a rigorous intermedia art-form predicated on an act of hybridity: is it sound poetry or music – or both?

While Kubota and I share sensibilities, it is important to note that we differ in age, experience, cultural backgrounds, and aesthetic approaches to our work. Kubota is a singular talent whose improvisational prowess and mastery of various vocal techniques is impressive. His creative stratagems foment in the processual act; they are immediate and intuitive. Like the “prajna” of Zen Buddhism, his creativity is the result of an intense examination of the self through the senses; it erupts in an instantaneous moment of enlightenment shattering the quotidian. While I have nurtured an interest in Zen Buddhism and the improvisational process, my aesthetics practice is principally based on a noetic and conceptual approach to art-making; in other words, theory as praxis. My methods include chance operations, formal constraints, invention and the use of games, repetition, catachresis and verbal ambiguity. These strategies are specifically designed to alienate or diminish the influence of personal taste on the creative act.

Our recordings and public performances, therefore, encompass a delicate balancing act, wherein our different approaches to creativity generate tension and energy while paradoxically complimenting each other. In a genuine spirit of collaboration, we have unintentionally produced a series of duets and solos that exhibit characteristics of both formal composition and free improvisation. If there is a single binding agent or locus governing our collaboration (beyond the self-conscious counter pointing of two voices), it can be found in our sympathetic use of space and silence as an integral component of linguistic and sonic experience. Through the subtle manipulation of the inaudible and the audible in real time, we chart the uncanny rhythms of the heart and the head.

About Kubota & Sutherland

As one of Canada's foremost free-style, improvisational performance artist/musicians, Nobuo Kubota is a master of extended vocal techniques that explore the boundaries of the human voice and its relationship to the physical body including facial mime. Kubota's vocal work is fore-grounded in sound poetry and free-jazz improvisation through his experiences as an original member of "The Artists Jazz Band","CCMC" and his association with the "Four Horsemen". The sources of his linguistic and sonic materials are found in the distillation of his cross-cultural practice that includes Korean opera, Gagaku Japanese Court music, Noh Theatre, Zen, DADA phonetic-poetry, scat singing and improvisational free-jazz. Kubota exhibited for ten years with the Issacs Gallery in Toronto and he is one of the founding members of the Music Gallery (Toronto). Recent work includes a solo exhibition entitled *Phonic Slices* at the Lonsdale Gallery in Toronto (2001), *Video Lab: Loop Holes* at The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery (Hart House, University of Toronto, 2003), a public performance at the *Propost Poetry Festival* in Barcelona, Spain (2000) and two bookworks (*Deep Text, Phonic Slices*) from Coach House Books in Toronto (2001).

In a performance setting, W. Mark Sutherland utilizes his background as a language-based visual artist, poet and musician to address the inter-relationship of linguistics and non-semantic utterance to music and sound. While Sutherland's literary antecedents can be found in the Futurist and Dada movements of the early 20th Century, his vocal inflections, use of repetition, phrasing and rhythmic emphasis is shaped by contemporary, experimental - music strategies and American Jazz and Blues traditions.

Kubota & Sutherland have performed as a duo since 1996 at the following festivals, symposiums and interdisciplinary events: *Words & Music Festival*, Dia Center, Heidelberg, Germany, *Scream In High Park*, Toronto, Ontario, *Bobebobi Sound - Poetry Festival*, Berlin, Germany, *E-Werk*, Weimar, Germany, in conjunction with the ACC Gallery and The Bauhaus University of Art and Design, *Container* (Centro Cultura Contemporanea), Florence, Italy, and *Saipoesia/ YesbePoetry Festival*, Teatro S. Martino - University Of Bologna, Bologna, Italy. As solo performers they have appeared at *Polysonneries*, Lyon, France, *Viatage A La Polinesia Festival*, Centre For Contemporary Culture, Barcelona, Spain, *Cantextualities*, Banff Centre For The Arts, Banff, Alberta, *Polyoesia 6 Festival*, Barcelona, Spain, *Eye Rhymes Conference/ Cantextualities*, University Of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, and *Historia & Storie*, Auditorium Comunale Di Via Rizzini, Villafranca, Italy.

About Cross Rhythm and White Noise by Kubota & Sutherland (2001) CD

This recording project is a collaboration between Nobuo Kubota and W. Mark Sutherland. Recorded 2000 - 2001, it features improvised duets and solos that explore, question, and extend the sonic relationships between different manifestations of human utterance, music and sound. Using vocables, speech particles, mouth mechanics and body sonics with rhythm, pitch, texture and duration, the duets and solos on this CD are a hybrid of sound poetry and music.

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