

## The Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble.

Butch Morris was a good friend, and an inspiration to me from the time when I first arrived in NYC in 1979. He also created something called “Conduction” and he spent much of his adult life perfecting and practicing it. Most of my early music making with Butch involved him playing the cornet, which he did beautifully. Eventually he put down his horn, and only did “Conduction”. I was involved with some of his early conductions but I did not continue to be a part of his regular ensembles, especially after I moved to Seattle.

I never thought of “Conduction” as part of my personal language. I would use it occasionally, just like I might talk about one of John Zorn’s game pieces, as a way to work with student ensembles, to help them focus on their improvisation, to consider their contribution to the whole, and hopefully get out of their own heads for a moment. And it was exactly under those circumstances that I arrived at the process that is utilized in a lot of the music on this recording.

I was working with some high school hot shots and showing them a few things - essentially a conducted improvisation. They weren’t having it. So instead I took out a chart and had them put numerals on various groups of motifs, and along with a primitive version of Butch’s system I began to essentially deconstruct and reconstruct my own pieces on the fly. It was still swinging, and it sounded like “normal music” to these kids, so suddenly they were loving it. It occurred to me at the time that this might be even more interesting with a less close-minded group of individuals, and I eventually put together this ensemble.

Originally I just casually called it the “Conduction Band”, but I was soon unhappy, and I needed a real name. First place “Conduction” was Butch’s thing, and second place “Conduction” was really only an element in what was essentially an ensemble playing my compositions. We started playing every other Monday night at The Royal Room in Seattle, and given the collective nature of a lot of the improvising I settled on the name “The Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble.” My friend Kate Olson, who plays soprano in the group, asked me soon thereafter, “Why is it called “collective”? We only play your tunes and you wave your arms around and tell us what to do.” I replied that there are lots of views historically of what is deemed “collective”, and by way of example I mentioned Joseph Stalin. Enough said, I hope you enjoy the music.

*A note about the sequencing.* The CD is divided into 2 Sides, A and B, in an attempt to recreate the form of an LP, which I believe was a much more reasonable way of digesting a set of music. When I was 17 I listened to a lot of music, but for a long time there were only 2 LPs on the little portable turntable I had in my bedroom; “Miles Davis Live at the Fillmore”, and “Fathers and Sons” featuring Muddy Waters and Otis Spann with Paul Butterfield, Mike Bloomfield, and incredibly the rhythm section of Sam Lay and Donald “Duck” Dunn. And I often wouldn’t turn the record

over for weeks at a time. I believe listening to over 70 minutes of music is fairly daunting given the vagaries of every day existence, so I hope you will listen to one side or the other. Start with Side B sometimes. Think of each side as its own set of music. It has its own internal integrity, and you will also get a better sense of what a live set might sound like on any given night.

Wayne Horvitz, Seattle, 2014