

## KITCHEN BEDROOM BATHROOM

Rereading an interview I gave in the late 90's I realised how prepared I was at that time for such events, how my work was the embodiment of the act of perception, so I knew what I was up to. Now I don't, at least not in this manner. So it's not so easy to wrap up how it is to write music or make paintings as it was then. I'm not saying this with any value judgement. I think that now I've 'realised' a few more things which help me to do it (i.e. art) without having the act of perception as a model. Like for example the degree of definition & amorphousness, & how in music we are striving after a higher degree of definition in a medium which is apt to mingle with itself, & how in painting a higher degree of amorphousness as the format is already so defined. My real aim is to attempt to write anything, so one has to turn the potential anything into a something

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without losing this potential anything quality, so my work attempts to be examples of what this could be. The fact is that you can just let something (materialwise) ooze out of you (which could be - probably is - influenced by what you're listening to at the moment) & then take it from there - & the question is - how do you make this into a piece at all - and at the same time keeping the source material close to itself. The way you find of making it into a piece at all - using doubtless the whole array of compositional techniques you've developed over the years - in my case often having to do with the act of combination, degrees of combination, both with self & with 'foreign' material, the way you react to how the piece reacts to you (i.e. your interception) - which is very much like making a painting - the whole set-up of you & it & what you have to offer each other, the whole set-up of making it becomes the piece; but, I hasten

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to add (before anyone asks) this has nothing to do with art about art; it's as if the making of the piece becomes the piece — that its needs are seen to. I must say it is very recent for me that I behave like this towards writing music; before I would often set up a certain circumstance & let it roll. And this I have to admit (& without shame) I still do to some extent, as a way of writing music at all, letting it find its path through itself, & through other material. This I have done since pretty much the beginning. And as already remarked, it inevitably forms a model for something... As — inevitably as well — working on my stuff is a form of home — entertainment, probably about 50% of why I do it; it has the fortunate side-effect of avoiding the danger of self-repetition, & thus lapsing into a form of mannerism. A certain person recently remarked, when looking at my recent painting efforts, — 'but each painting is

so different' — & that, I would say, is the <sup>(4)</sup> result of the making of my work having to serve as a form of entertainment — practically the only one I have — ~~& also in the~~ which means that I manage, without trying, to avoid the mannerism that even Philip Guston became a victim of.

Also, you have to remember, that I am grateful for anything at all, & quite right too, cos officially I can't do it: I think with knocking off poems maybe I really can, whereas the other stuff (i.e. paintings & music) comes more out of an intense curiosity & a need to crack the nut, & a certain general & specific degree of intelligence rather than some massive in-born talent; the curiosity is connected to the set-up (or especially more recently, the non-set-up, which is also a form of set-up) & the degree of intelligence is what enables me to bring it about, to know how to react to it in its making, take care of its needs. Syntax plays a huge part in my work for the material seems,

on many occasions, pretty well known, I sometimes take what's there, what I love, Beethoven, Machaut, Gauguin, Raymond Roussel, & make it unknown by placing it in a new aesthetic place vis-a-vis itself; by twisting it & turning it & generally syntactically making it work in a totally new way from how it previously did, although it still has the old vestiges of its previous life. In this way I deal with the baggage that these mediums automatically bring with them. It just occurred to me that the material I take is basically only baggage, & it is the very stuff that could bog you down that I make use of, either self-invented or stolen. In some of the more recent paintings elements from paintings by Gauguin are present in scenes from my own life, either juxtaposed or incorporated. The appropriation of other people's work which I love. It's act of making it yours which is the painting itself. No different with the Beethoven Op. 90, the way in which it is appropriated is the piece itself. Finding your own way of doing something with

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something which is common property. Of course (6  
this whole stuff about the potential anything I was  
ranting on about earlier on, to achieve a degree  
of potential anythingness you have to be highly  
specific, & to use rock bottom material, — in order  
for it to be just as well something else it  
must be highly specific. Anything will not do  
when creating anything. It's only after it's  
finished that it could just as well be anything  
else, not in its making. What do I mean  
by that really? I mean that it has had the  
potential for broaching potentially any topic. In  
other words that topic is not an issue. Nor  
is genre. Not even historical style. If my  
stuff sounds or looks like someone else's whom  
I admire, so be it. Though I would never  
consciously strive after making a piece in a  
specific historical style, as indeed some  
artists do, something I can also well comprehend,  
for it becomes the substance of their work,

their material. All good art transcends the (7) time in which it was made, & has other issues in its heart, ones in common with work made in other eras, so often to programme pieces because of the relatively superficial aspect of what is seen as their historical style can, ultimately be very misleading & ultimately not that interesting.

The aspect of rhetoric in my work is something I'd like to mention. Rhetoric has to do with the act of delivery, as Daniel Defoe (an artist whom I much love) so well knew; basically one could say much of my work (maybe all) is rhetorical, as it's saying what you already know (or think you know) but in a new context, a new material context & time context too. Our ~~work~~ work is a kind of counterpoint with what's in the listener's head already — an unknown, but to some degree, at least within the frame of a single culture, a known unknown. This is not a matter of writing pieces 'for' other people, or 'influencing' people, although (maybe ~~sub~~consciously)

a certain element of this could be involved; it (8)  
has to do with, through the use of rhetoric, making  
space in their heads for your stuff to register. Our  
pieces are also "known unknowns" for they have to  
function beyond us, & we the artists therefore  
need great distance to that which we have brought  
about, so that an element of taste towards our  
own work is in no way involved.

C.N.

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