

Exhibition Guide

**Milford Graves:
Fundamental Frequency**

February 11– May 14, 2023



Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency

Best known as a pioneering jazz percussionist, **Milford Graves** (1941–2021) was a visionary professor, inventor, gardener, herbalist, acupuncturist, martial artist, and sculptor.

A revolutionary force in music making, Graves transformed the role of drumming in jazz by introducing a new way of dealing with unmeasured time that proclaimed the drummer as not simply a beat-keeper, but rather, a dynamic and influential improviser. In the 1960s, Graves joined the vanguard of the New York jazz scene and became an instrumental figure in the Free Jazz movement, resulting in groundbreaking collaborations with musicians like Giuseppi Logan and Don Pullen as well as poets and activists like Amiri Baraka. He was also a member of the iconic jazz ensembles the New York Art Quartet and the Albert Ayler Quartet, with whom Graves famously performed at John Coltrane's funeral. The breadth of Graves' expansive collaborative network extended across the U.S. to Europe, Africa, and Japan, as emphasized in his work with Japanese avant-garde performers Min Tanaka, Toshi Tsuchitori, and Kaoru Abe.

Yet Graves applied his interest in rhythm far beyond the boundaries of music. A true polymath and innovator, he maximized his instrument's potential through a decades-long study of the human body, investigating the relationship between the drumbeat and the heartbeat, understanding them both as complex, vibratory systems. This rigorous exploration of life's fundamental rhythms led Graves to invent his own martial arts form called Yara—a practice of breath, balance, and most importantly, of rhythm, loosely based on the movements of the praying mantis, the Lindy Hop, and African ritual dance—which he developed and taught in his dojo. He further extended his studies of the body to include intensive scientific experiments on heartbeat variations, herbal and holistic medicine, and biorhythms, which he conducted in his home garden and basement laboratory in Jamaica, Queens. For nearly forty years, Graves taught these concepts as a music professor in the Black Music Division at Bennington College, where he amassed countless disciples. Graves' creative practice later extended to collages, notational drawings, and multi-media sculptures that incorporate medical equipment and engineering software from his laboratory as well as elements from his personal collection of talismanic objects.

From the stage to the dojo to the garden to the lab, Graves sustained a rigorous exploration of the cosmic relationships between rhythms and the universe. Embracing an expansive approach to sound, spirituality, and the study of human anatomy, Graves' persistent search for life's fundamental frequencies dissolves the boundaries of music, movement, and medicine as we know them.

Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency is organized by Artists Space, New York, in collaboration with Mark Christman and Ars Nova Workshop, Philadelphia. The exhibition is curated by Danielle A. Jackson with Stella Cilman. The presentation at ICA LA is organized by Amanda Sroka, Senior Curator, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant.

Major support for *Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency* is provided by Karen Hillenburg and Sebastian Clough. The exhibition is also generously funded by Betsy Greenberg and Steve NyBlom, Akio Tagawa, and Yuval Bar-Zemer. Additional support provided by Kate Lally and Paul Solomon.

ICA LA is supported by the Curator's Council and Fieldwork Council.

Milford Graves: Frecuencia fundamental

Famoso como un pionero percusionista de jazz, **Milford Graves** (1941-2021, Jamaica, Queens) fue un profesor, inventor, jardinero, herborista, acupuntor, especialista en artes marciales y escultor.

Graves, que fue una fuerza revolucionaria en la creación musical, transformó el papel de la percusión en el jazz al introducir una nueva manera de tratar el tiempo no medido, haciendo del batería no sólo el cuidador del ritmo, sino proclamándolo un improvisador dinámico e influyente. En la década de 1960 Graves se unió al vanguardia del mundo del jazz de Nueva York y se convirtió en figura instrumental del movimiento de jazz libre, lo que resultó en innovadoras colaboraciones con músicos como Giuseppi Logan y Don Pullen, así como con poetas y activistas, entre ellos Amiri Baraka. También fue miembro de icónicos conjuntos de jazz como el New York Art Quartet y el Albert Ayler Quartet, con este último con quien Graves hizo su famosa colaboración en el funeral de John Coltrane. La red colaborativa de Graves se extendía por Estados Unidos y Europa, África y Japón, como destaca su trabajo con los intérpretes vanguardistas japoneses Min Tanaka, Toshi Tsuchitori y Kaoru Abe.

Sin embargo, Graves aplicó su interés por el ritmo mucho más allá de las fronteras de la música. Un verdadero erudito e innovador, maximizó el potencial de su instrumento mediante décadas de estudio del cuerpo humano, entendiendo el ritmo del tambor y el latido del corazón como dos complejos sistemas de vibración complementarios. Esta exploración de las vibraciones esenciales de la vida llevaron a Graves a inventar su propio rigurosa arte marcial llamado Yara, una práctica de respiración, equilibrio y, lo más importante, ritmo, basado libremente en los movimientos de la mantis religiosa, el Lindy Hop y los bailes rituales africanos, que desarrolló y enseñó en su dojo. Amplió más sus estudios del cuerpo para incluir experimentos científicos intensivos sobre las variaciones de los latidos del corazón, la medicina herbaria y holística, y los biorritmos, que llevaba a cabo en el jardín y en el laboratorio que tenía en el sótano de su casa de Jamaica, Queens. Durante casi cuarenta años, Graves enseñó estos conceptos como profesor de música en Bennington College, donde fue un querido maestro y tuvo una influencia indeleble en generaciones futuras. La práctica creativa de Graves se extendió más adelante al collage, dibujos notacionales y esculturas multimedia que incorporaban equipo médico, software de ingeniería y elementos de su propia colección de objetos talismánicos.

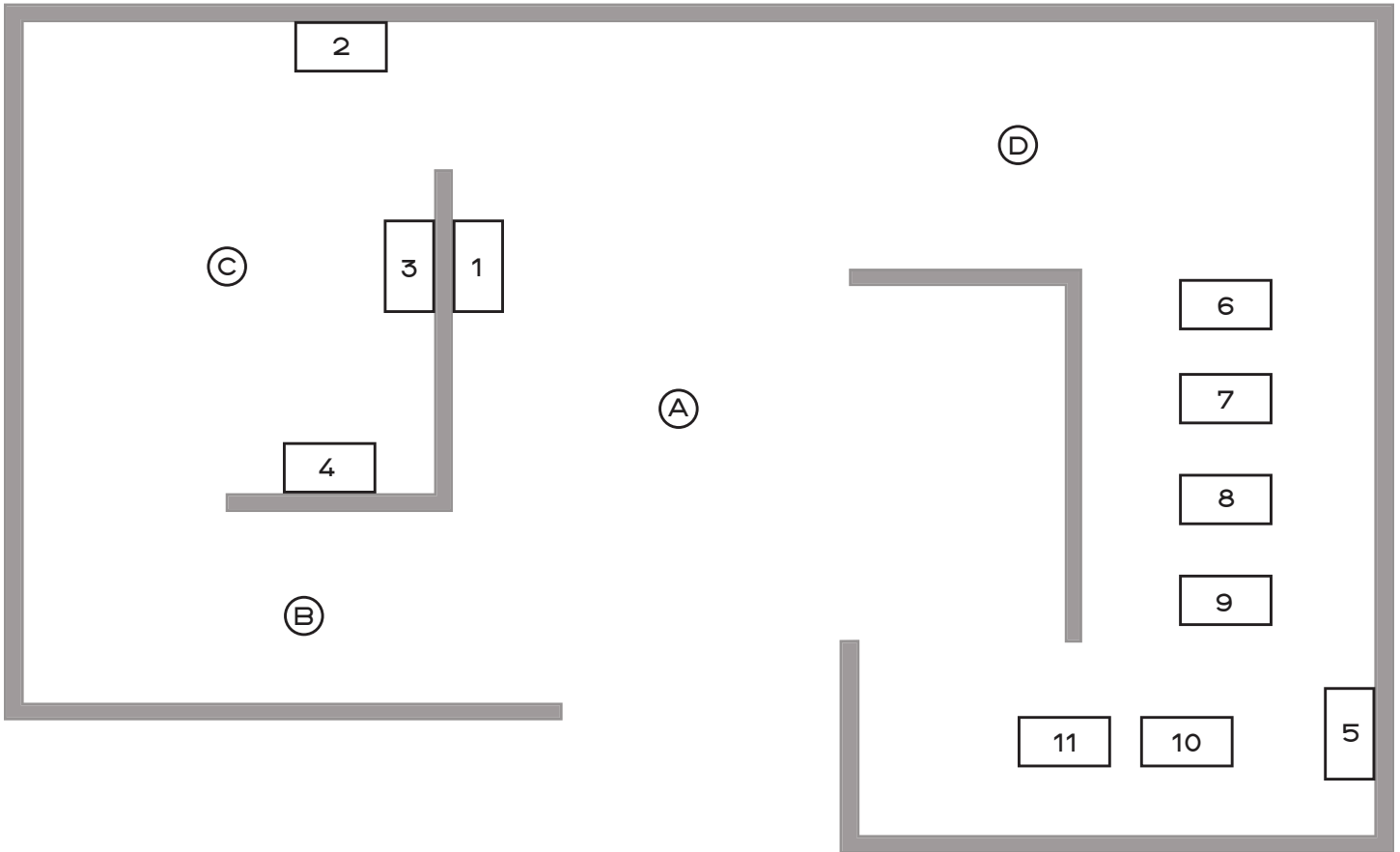
Del escenario al dojo al jardín y al laboratorio, Graves mantuvo una exploración rigurosa de las relaciones cósmicas entre los ritmos y el universo. La persistente búsqueda de las frecuencias fundamentales de la vida que llevó a cabo Graves, y que abarcó una aproximación expansiva al sonido, la espiritualidad y el estudio de la anatomía humana, disuelve las fronteras de la música, el movimiento y la medicina tal y como los conocemos.

Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency está organizada por Artists Space, Nueva York, en colaboración con Mark Christman y Ars Nova Workshop, Filadelfia. La exhibición está curada por Danielle A. Jackson con Stella Cilman. La presentación en ICA LA está organizada por Amanda Sroka, Curadora principal Principal, con Caroline Ellen Liou, Asistente Curatorial.

Apoyo importante para *Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency* provisto por Karen Hillenburg y Sebastian Clough. La exposición también recibe generosos fondos de Betsy Greenberg y Steve NyBlom, Akio Tagawa, y Yuval Bar-Zemer. Apoyo adicional provisto por Kate Lally y Paul Solomon.

ICA LA recibe apoyo del Consejo Curatorial y Fieldwork Council.

Exhibition Floorplan



**Unless otherwise noted, all works are by Milford Graves (1941–2021), and courtesy the Estate of Milford Graves.*

GALLERY A



Stills from *Yara Session*, c. 1988. Color video, 56:27 minutes

Yara is a Yoruba word that means to be nimble or flexible. Actually it's spontaneous improvised, and it's reacting according to that particular situation. Yara is composed basically of West African dance movement. Warrior movement. A lot of movements that influenced me over the years. And to me it was only natural, just to flow into this type of movement, since it was part of my culture and lifestyle.

And the mantis story... I met guys, man, who was studying in Chinatown. And they had a complaint, man. They were really complaining, man. And their complaint was that if you weren't Chinese, you wouldn't get into the inner core, man. So that started to hit me. I said, "Wow, man." These guys have been studying|that for a long time. That they were on the outskirts of things. I said, so I can't depend on anybody that's very protective — culturally or ethnic-wise — of what they do. I said I think I'm gonna have to evaluate this whole situation.

What is martial arts? What's Kung Fu? Where did it come from, man? Well, I started reading books on Chinese martial arts, the history of this art and the history of that art. There was many times, man, when I was reading about this so called grandmaster — he'd be up in the mountains meditating, and he saw this and he saw that. I said, "wow — I could do the same thing, man. I'll just go out in nature 'cause that's where they got it from."

...So that's when I looked in the magazines - plant magazines — and I saw a place where I could get these praying mantis from and I ordered them. I said, I'm gonna let them go. And I watched them and all their moves — ha! So I went to the best teacher. I went to the praying mantis himself. And that was better than what any human could teach me, 'cause if you go to another human, he may have a limitation. Maybe he can't move a certain way, right? If he can't move a certain way, then that means I'm not gonna get full mantis. I'm gonna get only a little bit of the mantis. But if I go to see all these different mantises, I'm getting the whole praying mantis, you know. I mean. I'm getting the whole praying mantis, man.

So that's how my stuff came. It came from going right to the source. When human folk want to shut you out, 'cause they don't like the way you look, they don't like the way you talk, or else they're very culturally or ethnically locked into their own set, then I'm gonna say, well, what's the origin of what they do? So I say, wow, it all goes back to this, here. It goes back to hanging out with nature.

– Milford Graves

Yara es una palabra yoruba que quiere decir ser ágil o flexible. De hecho, es improvisado espontáneo, y reacciona según una situación particular. Yara está compuesto básicamente de movimiento de danza de África occidental. Movimiento de guerrero. Muchos movimientos que me han influido a lo largo de los años. Y para mí era natural, fluir hacia este tipo de movimiento, pues era parte de mi cultura y mi estilo de vida.

Y la historia de la mantis... conocí a una gente, güey, que estaba estudiando en Chinatown. Y tenían una queja. Se quejaban, güey. Y su queja era que si no eras chino nunca ibas a acceder al núcleo, güey. Y eso empezó a molestarme. Dije, “ay, güey”. Estos tipos llevan mucho tiempo estudiando esto. Estaban en la periferia de las cosas, dije, así que no puedo depender de nadie que proteja demasiado lo que hace (en lo cultural o en lo étnico). Dije, creo que voy a tener que evaluar esta situación.

¿Qué son las artes marciales? ¿Qué es el kung fu? ¿De donde vienen, güey? Bueno, empecé a leer libros sobre artes marciales chinas, la historia de este arte y la historia de la otra. Muchas veces leía a sobre esto que llamaban un gran maestro (que meditaba en las montañas y veía esto y lo otro). Dije, “ah, yo podría hacer lo mismo, güey. Voy a salir a la naturaleza, porque de ahí es de dónde lo sacan”.

...Ahí es cuando miré revistas, revistas de plantas, y vi dónde podía conseguir estas mantis religiosas y las pedí. Dije, voy a soltarlas. Y las observé y cómo se movían, ¡ah! Fui al mejor maestro. Fui a la misma mantis religiosa. Y fue mejor de lo que me podía enseñar ningún humano, porque si vas a otro humano a lo mejor tiene limitaciones. A lo mejor no se puede mover de cierta manera, ¿no? Si no se puede mover de cierta manera eso quiere decir que no voy a tener toda la mantis. Solo voy a tener un poco de la mantis. Pero si voy y miro todas estas mantis, recibo toda la mantis religiosa, ¿no? Digo. Recibo toda la mantis religiosa, güey.

Y así me llegó la cosa. Vino directamente de la fuente. Cuando los humanos quieren excluirte porque no les gusta cómo te ves, no les gusta cómo hablas, o están demasiado encerrados en su conjunto cultural o étnico, pues ¿qué es lo que hacen? Yo digo, todo vuelve a esto, vuelve a pasar tiempo con la naturaleza.

– Milford Graves

Center of gallery

Yara Training Bag, c. 1990
Wood, punching bags, hand-painted boxing gloves, springs, samurai sword, rubber balls, acupuncture model, tape, metal fixtures, athletic socks, and rope

Toshi Tsuchitori
Practicing Yara in the dojo, 1976
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Monitors, top to bottom

Yara (Warm Up), c. 1980s
3:31 minutes

Yara Video 1, c. 1980s
3:06 minutes

Yara Video 2, c. 1980s
6:50 minutes

Toshi Tsuchitori
Milford Graves, Toshi Tsuchitori and Hugh Glover in the dojo, 1976
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshi Tsuchitori
Milford Graves at home, 1976
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Three stacked color videos with audio featuring the sounds of brass instruments, drumming, voices singing, clothing brushing up against skin, muffled instructions, sneakers screeching across the floor, deep breaths, and indistinguishable utterances

Yara Session, c. 1988
Color video with audio featuring a symphony of instruments including drums, the rhythmic shaking of the Shekere, and the banging of the cowbell, as well as muffled voices, deep breaths, and sneakers screeching across the floor, 56:27 minutes

Chair, c. 1989
Wood, metal, Egyptian figurines, mirror, copper, brass, and casters

Lois Graves
Costume, 1969
Various fabrics

Clockwise, left to right

Untitled, 2020
Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, and collage elements on paper

Yuji Agematsu
Yara photographs, c. 1989
Four black and white photographs

Untitled, 2020
Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, and collage elements on paper

Pathways of Infinite Possibilities: Yara, 2017
Wood, metal brackets, copper wire, plastic medical figures, artifacts, medical heart specimen, wooden model hand, religious figurine, water element, printed labels, lights, stones, glue, amplifier, speaker, metal brackets, and casters

Vitrine 1

Yuji Agematsu
Yara Scrapbook, c. 1989
Color and black and white photographs

Toshi Tsuchitori
Yara sign, 1976
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori



Photographer unknown, *Milford Graves's Garden*, c. 1980s. Color photograph.

Graves commonly referred to his home laboratory as the “Center for Universal Wisdom.” Beyond the rhythmic studies of the heart, Graves explored healing through alternative forms of medicine, including the practices of acupuncture and herbology, through which he investigated the interconnectedness between music (vibration), herbs (energy), and the body (heartbeat).

For the artist, the body, like the drum, contains a number of hyper-energized points that have the power to rebalance the system and heighten consciousness. Over the course of an acupuncture session, the healer must know how to stimulate an individual’s key points—their crossroads—to facilitate a transformational vibration that lifts the recipient into another realm. This is a practice that is rooted in the body and at the same time transcendent.

Central to an acupuncture session is the consumption of herbs. An avid gardener, Graves understood the healing properties of herbs and plants on a deeply spiritual and personal level. The artist once said “plants are constantly picking up cosmic energy, beyond photosynthesis . . . they may not have the machines to detect everything, but to me it’s just like human’s [sic], man. We’re constantly breathing in air. We’re breathing in all kinds of elements that are of nature. So, what makes you think that plants are any different?” Tending to what he called his “global garden,” Graves’s floral sanctuary embraced the comingling of several plant cultures, allowing the energies and internal music of these living organisms to grow in unison. Here, lush greenery of all types, from spearmint to curly dock to Chinese lanterns, lived together in harmony.

GALLERY B

Graves se refería habitualmente a su laboratorio casero como el “Centro para la Sabiduría Universal”. Más allá de los estudios rítmicos del corazón, Graves exploraba la sanación a través de formas alternativas de medicina, incluyendo la práctica de la acupuntura y la herbología, a través de las cuales investigó la interrelación entre la música (vibración), las hierbas (energía) y el cuerpo (latido del corazón).

Para el artista, el cuerpo, como el tambor, contiene un número de puntos de hiper energía que tienen el poder de reequilibrar el sistema y elevar la conciencia. Durante una sesión de acupuntura, el sanador debe saber cómo estimular los puntos clave del individuo, sus encrucijadas, para facilitar la vibración transformativa que eleva al receptor a otro plano. Esta práctica está enraizada en el cuerpo y al mismo tiempo es trascendente.

El consumo de hierbas es una parte central de una sesión de acupuntura. Graves, que es un jardinero empedernido, entendía las propiedades curativas de las hierbas y las plantas a un nivel profundamente espiritual y personal. El artista dijo, “las plantas recogen energía cósmica constantemente, más allá de la fotosíntesis..., no tendrán las máquinas para detectarlo todo, pero para mí son como los humanos, güey. Siempre estamos respirando aire. Estamos respirando todo tipo de elementos que son de la naturaleza. ¿Qué te hace pensar que las plantas son diferentes?” Al cuidar lo que llamaba su “jardín global”, el santuario floral de Graves acogía la convivencia de varias especies vegetales, permitiendo que la energía y la música interna de estos organismos vivos creciera al unísono. Aquí convivían en armonía exuberantes plantas de todo tipo, desde menta a lengua de vaca y alquequenje.

Clockwise, left to right

Herbal Chart, c. 1980
Ink on paper

Movements in the Snow, 1990
Color video with audio featuring the ambient sounds
of wind blowing and the rustling of tree branches,
10:28 minutes

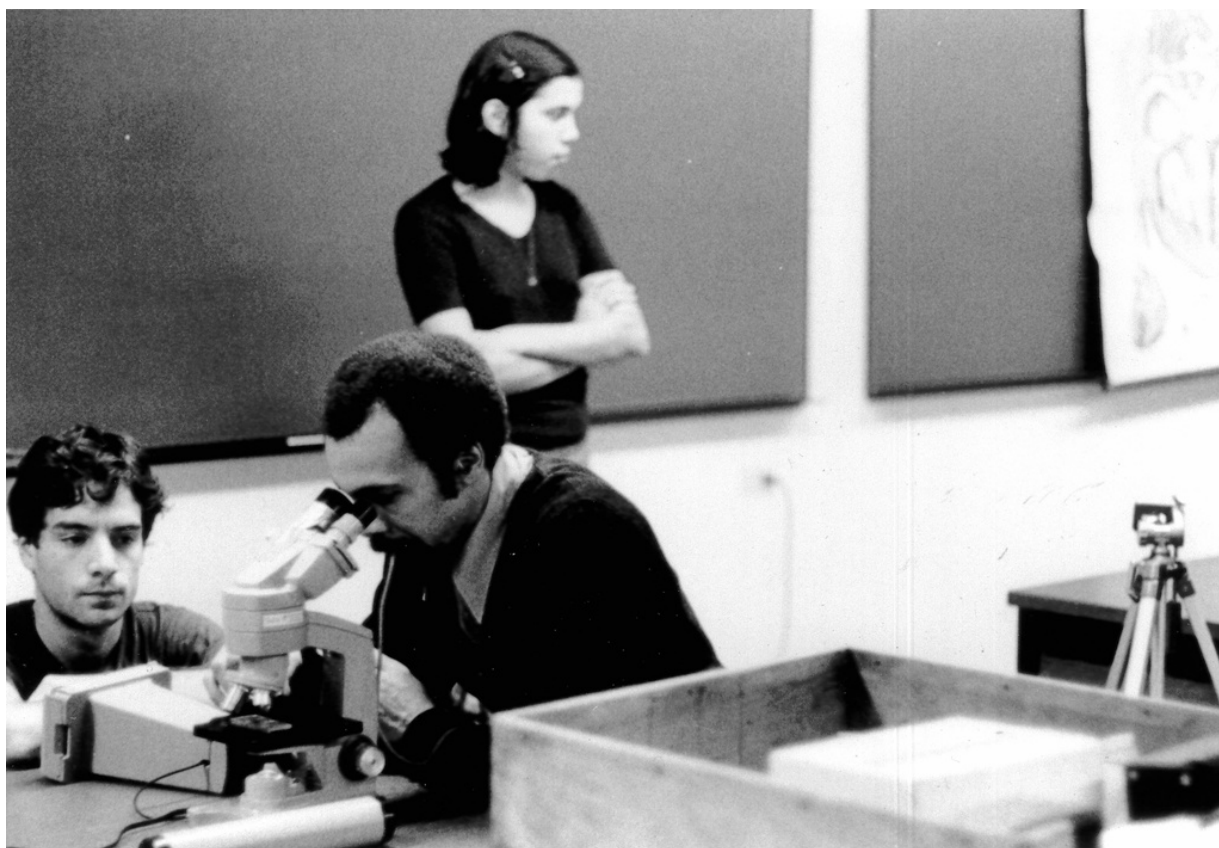
Collage of Healing Herbs and Bodily Systems, 1994
Mixed media on paper

Yuji Agematsu
Acupuncture photographs, c. 1990
Six black and white photographs

Demonstration of Needling Technique, c. 1980s
Color video with audio featuring rhythmic hand
drumming and acupuncture instructions narrated by
Graves, 25:16 minutes

Photographs from the garden, undated
35mm slides

Eating in the Garden, 1990
Color video with audio featuring a narration by
Graves along with ambient sounds of crickets
chirping, spraying water, footsteps across the soft
earth, airplanes flying overhead, and the chewing of
crunchy leaves, 5:02 minutes
(see page 37 for transcription)



Photographer unknown, *Milford Graves in the lab*, c. 1970s. Black and white photograph.

Beyond his role as a celebrated percussionist, Graves dedicated his life to a critical investigation of heart rhythms, pulseology, and the scientific study of vibrations. He even trained to become a medical laboratory technician, after which, he worked for two years as a laboratory assistant in a veterinarian's office.

Graves believed fervently in embracing “fundamental” or “total” sound. When preparing to perform for a large crowd, he would plant himself near the audience and listen intently to the people—their laughs, the banter—to understand the “grand fundamental tone.” If the energy was positive, he would feed it back to them through the music, but on an amplified plane. If it was negative, he would adjust the energy and project a different sound—a strategy he would later use in his computer-generated studies.

After his years as a technician, Graves was offered a faculty position in the Black Music Division of Bennington College where he hosted research sessions around heart rhythms. Forming what Graves called the “Institute for Bio Creative Intuitive Music,” these sessions would begin by connecting students to EKG machines. A stethoscope would then be taped over their hearts to monitor the sound of the heart valves opening and closing and electrical sensors would be attached to their wrists and legs to detect electrical impulses that cause the heart to beat. Graves would then play “spontaneously improvised music” made up of live and pre-recorded sounds—what he termed Bābi music—and observe the body's reactions, gathering data from both muscular and electrical responses of the heart as it awakened to the sounds.

In the early 2000s, Graves further built out his home laboratory and began to use and manipulate LabVIEW, a highly adaptable engineering software and development system. Through this system, Graves created a program that allowed him to extract musical melodies from the heart and manifest them in a customized visual interface that includes wave and line graphs as well as digital illustrations and animations, all of which would later become core elements in the multimedia sculptural works Graves created in the last years of his life.

GALLERY C

Más allá de su reconocido papel como percusionista, Graves dedicó su vida a la investigación crítica de los ritmos del corazón y al estudio científico de las vibraciones. Incluso se preparó como técnico de laboratorio médico, tras lo cual trabajó dos años como asistente de laboratorio en la oficina de un veterinario.

Graves creía firmemente en el sonido “fundamental” o “total”. Cuando se preparaba para actuar frente a un grupo grande se plantaba cerca del público y escuchaba con atención (sus risas, su ruido) para entender el “gran tono fundamental”. Si la energía era positiva, se la devolvía a través de la música, pero en un plano amplificado. Si era negativa, ajustaba la energía y proyectaba un sonido diferente, una estrategia que más tarde utilizaría en sus estudios generados por computadora.

Tras sus años como técnico, en 1973 ofrecieron a Graves una posición en la facultad de la División de Música Negra de Bennington College, donde organizó sesiones de investigación centradas en los ritmos del corazón. Formando lo que Graves llamó el “Instituto para la Música Intuitiva Bio Creativa”, estas sesiones empezaban por conectar a los estudiantes a máquinas de electrocardiogramas. A continuación, se colocaba un estetoscopio sobre el corazón para monitorear los sonidos de la apertura y cierre de las válvulas cardíacas y se les colocaban sensores en las muñecas y piernas para detectar impulsos eléctricos. Luego, Graves tocaba “música improvisada espontáneamente” que consistía en sonidos grabados y en vivo (lo que él denominó música Bābi) y observaba las reacciones corporales, reuniendo información de las respuestas musculares y eléctricas del corazón al despertar con los sonidos.

A inicios de los 2000, Graves amplió su laboratorio casero y empezó a usar y manipular LabVIEW, un software de ingeniería y sistema de desarrollo muy adaptable. A través del sistema, Graves creó un programa que le permitía extraer melodías del corazón y manifestarlas en un interfaz visual adaptado que incluía gráficos de ondas y líneas, además de ilustraciones y animaciones digitales, todo lo cual se convertiría más tarde en elementos fundamentales de esculturas multimedia que Graves creó el último año de su vida.

Clockwise, left to right

LabVIEW animation, c. 2014–20
Software screen captures that visualize the accompanying audio, 4:21 minutes

Cosmos 2, 2017
Wood, copper netting, hand-painted drum, lights, metal, glue, and casters

Cosmos 3, 2017
Wood, acupuncture head, figurines, artifact, turntable, printed label, metal, glue, and casters

Cosmos 4, 2017
Wood, copper netting and tubing, hand-painted drum, plasma globe, tree branch, model brain, lights, printed label, stones, transducer, amplifier, wires, wooden crate, metal bracket, glue, and casters

Cosmos 5, 2017
Wood, anatomical model, metal figurine, plastic figure, turntable, magnet, copper pipe, outdoor house lamp, transducer, amplifier, printed label, wires, metal, glue, and casters

LabVIEW chart, 2004
Paper collage

Bikongo-Ifá: Spirit of the Being, 2020
Wood, tabla, acupuncture model, bata drum, Nkondi figure, George Washington Carver bust, compass, glass, peanuts, LabVIEW animation, computer monitors, bells, plasma lamp, globe, eagle figurine, alarm clock, collaged paper printouts, copper wire, paint marker, metal fasteners, and casters

LabVIEW animation, c. 2014–20
Software screen captures that visualize the accompanying audio, 2:53 minutes

Untitled, 2020
Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, and collage elements on paper

Vitrine 2

EKG Heart Monitoring Print Out (Tom Calabro), 1978
Ink on continuous paper

Vitrine 3

Bäbi Described, c. 1976
Audio featuring drumming, piano, and narration by Milford Graves, 18 minutes

EKG Heart Monitoring Print Out, 1978
Ink on continuous printer paper

Bäbi (IPS), 1977
LP
Courtesy of Clifford E. Allen

Photographer unknown, *Milford in the lab*, c. 1970s
Three black and white photographs

Flyer for *Institute of Bio Creative Intuitive Development*, 1978

Untitled, 2020
Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, and collage elements on paper

Milford Graves Teaching at Bennington College, 1977
Black and white video with audio, 1:02:41 min.
Courtesy of Ben Young
(see page 38 for transcription)

Untitled, 2020
Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, and collage elements on paper

Vitrine 3

Milford Graves' stethoscope

George David Geckeler M.D.
Stethoscopic Heart Records Revised - Heart Recordings (Columbia Records), 1973
LP courtesy of Mark Christman

EKG Heart Monitoring Print Out, 1978
Ink on continuous printer paper

Center of gallery

Pathways of Infinite Possibilities: Skeleton, 2017

Human skeleton, steel pipe, wires, stickers, medical ear model, dun dun (talking drum), preserved heart, stethoscope, video monitor, transducer, amplifier, wood, metal, printed labels, marker, and casters

Pathways of Infinite Possibilities: Heartbeat, 2017

Wood, display spinal column, scientific models, acupuncture model, printed diagrams and labels, old circuitry, wooden construction, video monitor, lights, amplifier, wires, metal brackets, glue, and casters

Pathways of Infinite Possibilities: Golden Ratio, 2017

Wood, medical education model, dried pineapple, stethoscope, plastic hand, figurines, fan, transducer, amplifier, metal brackets, wire, glue, yardstick, and casters



Philippe Gras, *Milford Graves at the Festival d'Automne à Paris*, New York, 1974. Black and white photograph. Courtesy of Philippe Gras.

Graves often performed with a drum set that was hand-painted in vibrant colors with the bottom drum skins removed to allow for what he called “maximum resonance.” Manipulating the instrument itself and how it’s played, he maximized the drum’s potential. In the process, the drum became host to the coexistence of Latin and African polyrhythms, Indian tabla, and Japanese gong rhythms, amplifying it into a kind of percussive choir that echoed the versatility and nimbleness of the Yara movements. Graves’s holistic and expansive approach to sound experimentation enabled him to understand his instrument as more than drums. His expression was full body and limbs—an exhaustive immersion into the depths and heights of what propulsive spiritual energy could produce.

His was a process of collaboration and communion—in body, instrument, and spirit. Part document, part study center, these galleries feature excerpts from Graves’ musical journeys across the globe—from New York to Nigeria to Japan—and chart his expansive network of collaborators. Throughout the archival footage and sound objects scattered across these galleries, one will notice that in extremely intense moments of playing, Graves would revert to the basic instincts of hand drumming. Flinging the sticks away, he would play open handed or create bilateral movements with his elbows. Etched and marked on top of the drum skins are circular nodes—a reference to the north, south, east, and west positioning of the cosmos. Also appearing elsewhere in the exhibition in the artist’s drawings and notations, these nodes further highlight Graves’s view of his drums as a tool by which to reach another plane.

GALLERY D

Graves tocaba con una batería decorada vivamente donde a menudo quitaba las pieles del tambor inferior para permitir lo que llamaba “máxima resonancia”. Al manipular el instrumento y cómo se toca, maximizó su potencial. Así, el tambor se convertía en anfitrión de la coexistencia de los polirritmos africanos y latinos, la tabla india, y los ritmos del gong japonés, creando una especie de coro de percusiones que era un eco de la versatilidad y agilidad de los movimientos del Yara. Este enfoque tan amplio y experimental al sonido permitió a Graves entender su instrumento como algo más que una batería. Su expresión usaba todo el cuerpo, los miembros, y a veces era gutural, una inmersión exhaustiva en las profundidades y las alturas que podía producir la energía espiritual propulsiva. Era un proceso de comunión y colaboración entre cuerpo, instrumento y espíritu.

Parte documento, parte centro de estudios, estas galerías presentan extractos de los viajes musicales de Graves a través del planeta, trazando su amplia red de colaboradores al mismo tiempo que ilumina su inventiva como intérprete y productor. Las diversas estaciones de audio que se presentan subrayan más el compromiso de Graves con la publicación privada, especialmente a través su Programa de Autosuficiencia (SRP por sus siglas en inglés), un sello discográfico que llevó a cabo con Don Pullen, además del sello independiente de Graves, conocido como el Centro de Estudios de Percusión (IPS), que creó en colaboración con el baterista Andrew Cyrille.

Las imágenes de archivo que se presentan muestran momentos intensos de actuación, cuando Graves volvía a los instintos básicos de tocar el tambor a mano. Deshaciéndose de las baquetas, tocaba con la mano abierta o creaba movimientos bilaterales con los codos. Marcados sobre las pieles de la batería hay nódulos circulares (una referencia a las posiciones de norte, sur, este y oeste del cosmos). Estos nódulos, también visibles en las anotaciones y dibujos del artista, resaltan aún más la idea de Graves de los tambores como una herramienta para alcanzar otro plano.

Clockwise, left to right

Philippe Gras

Milford Graves at the Festival d'Automne à Paris,
New York, 1974

Reproductions of originals

Courtesy of Philippe Gras

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of Greg Wooten

Photographer unknown, framed by Yuji Agematsu

Milford Graves with Don Pullen with handpainted
LPs, c. 1970s

Color photograph in plastic frame

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of Hugh Glover

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of Chris Reisman

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of Bernard Drayton

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of Björn Thorstensson

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of the Estate of Don Heffington

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of Andrew and Jenal Rafacz

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Acrylic on LP sleeve

Courtesy of Martin Ehrlich

Milford Graves and Don Pullen

At Yale University (SRP Records), 1966

Goldleaf LP sleeve

Courtesy of Clifford E. Allen

Hand-painted drums, c. 1970s

Wood and metal bass drums, toms, snares, and
acrylic paint

Mortar and pestle, c. 1970s

Wood

Earth Resonance, 2020

Tone generator, transducer, painted gong, with audio

Untitled, c. 1980s

Acrylic on bark, framed

Milford Graves Quartet (Hugh Glover, Milford

Graves, Joe Rigby, and Arthur Williams)

Performance at Jazz Middelheim Festival, Antwerp,
Belgium, August 15, 1973

Black and white video with audio featuring a variety
of percussive sounds interspersed with Graves'
grunting and guttural utterances into the microphone,
22:39 minutes

GALLERY D

In frame

Percussion Ensemble (ESP disk), 1965
LP

Milford Graves and Don Pullen
Nommo (SRP Records), 1967
LP

Milford Graves and Don Pullen
Nommo (IPS), 1977 (Second edition)
LP

Bäbi (IPS), 1977
LP

All works courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Vitrine 5 (see page 16)

Lois Graves
Costumes, 1969
Various fabrics

Aki Onda, *Milford Graves and Min Tanaka*, 1985
Reproductions of originals
Courtesy of Aki Onda

On monitor

ETV Japan Special, 1993
Color video with audio featuring dialogue in
Japanese and English, 44:46 minutes

School for Autism visit with Min Tanaka, 1988
Color video with audio, 1:51 minutes

*Milford Graves Solo Performance at the
Kai-Komagatake Shrine*, 1988
Color video with audio, 25:32 minutes
Courtesy of Charlie Steiner, Vagabond Video

Lois Graves
Costume, 1969
Various fabrics

Poster for Min Tanaka and Milford Graves
performance at Le Palace, c. 1980s
Reproduction of original
Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Listening stations, left to right

Milford Graves/Charles Gayle/William Parker
Webo
Unreleased album, forthcoming 2023
Sound recording courtesy of Black Editions Group,
Los Angeles
©Black Editions Group 2023

Milford Graves
Bäbi (IPS), 1977
LP courtesy of Chris Reisman
Sound recording courtesy of Corbett vs. Dempsey,
Chicago

Milford Graves/Arthur Doyle/Hugh Glover
Children of the Forest
Unreleased album, forthcoming 2023
Sound recording courtesy of Black Editions Group,
Los Angeles
©Black Editions Group 2023

Milford Graves and Andrew Cyrille
Dialogue of the Drums (IPS), 1974
LP courtesy of Clifford E. Allen

Milford Graves and Don Pullen
Nommo (SRP Records), 1967
LP courtesy of Greg Wooten
Sound recording courtesy of Corbett vs. Dempsey,
Chicago

Lona Foote
The Knitting Factory, c. 1987
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of the Photo Estate of Lona Foote

Untitled, 2020
Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, and collage elements on paper

Untitled, 2020
Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, and collage elements on paper

In center

Vitrine 6 (*see page 17*)

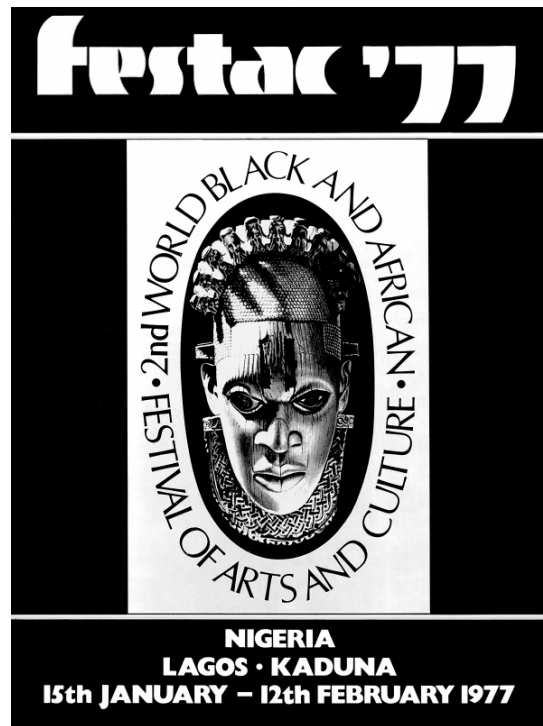
Vitrine 7 (*see page 19*)

Vitrine 8 (*see page 20*)

Vitrine 9 (*see page 21*)

Vitrine 10 (*see page 23*)

Vitrine 11 (*see page 24*)



Cover, *FESTAC '77: The 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture* (Köln: Walther König, 2019)

1977 was a pivotal year for experimentation and international travel for Graves, including trips to Nigeria and Japan. It was during this year that Graves visited Lagos, Nigeria, for the month-long festival known as FESTAC '77 (The Second World Black Festival of Arts and Culture). This was a Black diasporic convening that showcased Black art on all scales from music to fine arts to literature to drama to dance to religion. Artists who performed at the festival ranged from free jazz musicians, such as Graves and Sun Ra, to R&B singer Stevie Wonder to South African singer Miriam Makeba to visual artists, such as Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold, among others. At the time the festival was held, it was considered the largest pan-African gathering to ever take place. In the months leading up to the festival, FESTAC liaisons were sent to major cities in the United States and beyond to encourage Black musicians, poets, writers, and visual artists to attend. HBCU (historically Black college and universities) and magazines such as *Ebony* also sent journalists to cover the festival. Photographer and journalist Calvin Reid, then a student at Howard University, covered the event; Reid's photographs of Milford Graves and his interview with the artist for the special issue of *The Hilltop*, a university magazine, are on view here. Like many of the attendees, Graves was inspired by the breadth of experimentation that was celebrated at the festival, and he referred to his experience of such creative communion and community for years to come in conversations with musicians and as part of his lectures at Bennington College.

Milford Graves at FESTAC, 1977
Cassette tape

The Hilltop, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1977
Magazine

Milford Graves at FESTAC, 1977
Three photographs

All works courtesy of Calvin Reid

1977 fue un año fundamental para la experimentación y los viajes internacionales de Graves, e incluyó viajes a Nigeria y Japón. Fue durante ese año que Graves visitó Lagos, Nigeria, para un festival de un mes de duración conocido como FESTAC '77 (El Segundo Festival Negro de Arte y Cultura). Esta fue una reunión de la diáspora Negra que destacó el arte Negro a todos los niveles, desde las bellas artes a la literatura, el drama, la danza y la religión. Los artistas que participaron en el festival fueron desde músicos de free jazz como Graves y Sun Ra al cantante de R&B Stevie Wonder, la cantante surafricana Miriam Makeba y artistas visuales como Betye Saar y Faith Ringgold, entre otros. Cuando se presentó, el festival fue considerado la mayor reunión panafricana de la historia. En los meses previos al festival los FESTAC envió representantes a las ciudades más importantes de Estados Unidos para animar a participar a músicos, poetas, escritores y artistas visuales Negros. HBCU (Universidades y Colegios Negros Históricos) y revistas como Ebony enviaron a periodistas a cubrir el festival. El fotógrafo y periodista Calvin Reid, por ese entonces estudiante en la Universidad de Howard, cubrió el evento. Aquí están expuestas las fotografías de Milford Graves que hizo Reid y su entrevista con el artista para un número especial de The Hilltop, una revista universitaria. Como muchos de los participantes, Graves se sintió inspirado por la variedad de experimentación que se celebró en el festival y durante años habló de la experiencia de semejante comunión y comunidad creativa en conversaciones con músicos como parte de sus conferencias en Bennington College.

Graves's time as a percussionist with the New York Art Quartet (NYAQ)—which also included John Tchicai on saxophone, Roswell Rudd on trombone, and Lewis Worrell on bass—has a significant place in his musical journey. He first became connected to this notable free jazz ensemble in 1964 at the New York loft of visual artist, composer, and experimental filmmaker Michael Snow. Snow had a piano in his loft and would often make it available to musicians for their rehearsals, transforming the space into a hub for hip and new music sessions and parties. That same year, Snow's experimental film *New York Eye and Ear Control* featured an improvisational score by Rudd, Tchicai, and free jazz musician Albert Ayler.

It is said that Graves was in attendance for the *New York Eye and Ear Control* recording session, together with reedman Giuseppi Logan. After an invitation to take over the drums later that night, Graves became the newest member of the NYAQ, and the ensemble continued to rehearse at Snow's loft.

These recently unearthed black-and-white photographs document a NYAQ rehearsal for a December 1964 performance at New York's Judson Memorial Church. Of the many special moments in the ensemble's history, their debut LP includes poet and social activist Amiri Baraka (then Leroi Jones) reciting the famed poem "Black Dada Nihilismus." The audio featured here includes a selection of recordings from NYAQ's concert in the sculpture garden of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) on July 15, 1965, which took place as part of their "Jazz in the Garden" series.

The MoMA performance and their second LP, *Mohawk* (1965), marked the end of the iconic ensemble's collaboration. In 1967, Graves joined powerhouse saxophonist Albert Ayler's quartet and they went on to achieve great praise for their seminal performance at John Coltrane's funeral as well as for the release of the LP *Love Cry* (1968). One of the group's most notable and rarely seen performances is a 1968 appearance at the Second Buffalo Festival of the Arts at the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, New York. These color photographs are the only known documents from the event, described by Graves as one where musicians had to go "deep down inside."

New York Art Quartet
Performance at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 15, 1965
Sound recording, 15:42 minutes

Michael Snow
New York Eye and Ear Control, 1964
35mm film container
Courtesy of the Film-makers' Cooperative

New York Art Quartet
Mohawk (fontana), 1965
LP courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

New York Art Quartet featuring Leroi Jones
New York Art Quartet (ESP Disc), 1965
LP courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Photographer unknown
Albert Ayler and Milford Graves outside of John Coltrane's Funeral at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, New York, 1967
Black and white photograph

Booklet from *The ESP Sampler*, 1967
Courtesy of Martin Zimmerman

New York Art Quartet
Concert at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1965
Reel-to-reel box

Albert Ayler
Love Cry, 1968/1970
LP courtesy of Clifford E. Allen

Will Gamble
Milford Graves & New York Art Quartet at Michael Snow's Loft, c. 1960s
Four black and white photographs
Courtesy the Estate of Will Gamble

Ayler Brothers Jazz Concert (featuring Milford Graves), March 9, 1968, Buffalo Arts Festival, Albright-Knox Gallery Auditorium, Buffalo, New York
Five photographs
Courtesy of Albright-Knox Art Gallery

El tiempo que Graves pasó como percusionista del New York Art Quartet (NYAQ), que también incluía a John Tchicai al saxofón, Roswell Rudd al trombón, y Lewis Worrell al bajo, jugó un papel importante en su desarrollo musical. Se conectó por primera vez con este importante grupo de free jazz en 1964 en el loft de Nueva York del artista visual, compositor y cineasta experimental, Michael Snow. En este loft Snow tenía un piano que frecuentemente ponía a disposición de músicos para que ensayaran, transformando el espacio en un centro para sesiones y fiestas de música nueva y de moda. Ese mismo año, la película experimental *New York Eye and Ear Control* (Control de ojos y oídos de Nueva York) incluyó una partitura improvisada de Rudd, Tchicai, y el músico de free jazz Albert Ayler.

Se dice que Graves asistió a la sesión de grabación de *New York Eye and Ear Control* junto a Giuseppi Logan, experto en instrumentos de viento. Después de una invitación a que tomara la batería esa noche, Graves se convirtió en un nuevo miembro del NYAQ, y el conjunto siguió ensayando en el loft de Snow.

Estas fotos en blanco y negro descubiertas recientemente documentan un ensayo del NYAQ para una actuación en la Judson Memorial Church de Nueva York. Uno de muchos momentos especiales en la historia del conjunto, su primer LP incluye al poeta y activista Amiri Baraka (entonces Leroi Jones) recitando el famoso poema “Black Dada Nihilismus”. El audio presentado aquí incluye una selección grabaciones del concierto del NYAQ en el jardín de esculturas del Museo de Arte Moderno (MoMA) el 15 de julio de 1965 que tuvo lugar como parte de su serie “Jazz en el Jardín”.

La actuación del MoMA y su segundo LP, *Mohawk* (1965) marcó el fin de la colaboración del icónico conjunto. En 1967, Graves se unió al cuarteto del importante saxofonista Albert Ayler, logrando grandes elogios por su actuación seminal en el funeral de John Coltrane, además de por el lanzamiento del LP *Love Cry* (Grito de amor, 1968). Uno de las actuaciones más notables y raramente vistas del grupo es su participación en el Segundo Festival de las Artes de Búfalo en la Galería Albright-Knox, en Búfalo, Nueva York. Estas fotos en color son los únicos documentos conocidos de ese evento, descrito por Graves como uno en que los músicos tuvieron que “adentrarse muy hondo”.

In the late 1960s, Graves performed concerts and frequently participated in events at Harlem’s New Lafayette Theatre (NLT). A radical and deeply political theater organization and community, NLT played a significant role in the Black Arts Movement—a political and cultural movement rooted in Black expression and Black self-determination that spanned the sectors of music, literature, publishing, and the visual arts. For musicians who were shunned by popular downtown jazz venues or deemed as too radical, Harlem became a haven for the freedom of Black expression; NLT, in particular, was famed for hosting several musicians, poets, and visual artists that ranged from Marvin X to Amiri Baraka (then Leroi Jones) to Rashid Ali to Maxine Raysor, and others. Collaborating with many of its members, Graves extended his work to theater, most notably composing the music effects for Baraka’s play *Experimental Death Unit #1* (1966).

Arguably one of the most unique and extraordinary elements of the Black Arts Movement is a rigorous dedication to publishing—the idea of Black voices narrating their own stories. To that end, Graves’s writing appears in two issues of the groundbreaking publication *The Cricket*, launched in 1968 by Larry Neal, A.B. Spellman, and Amiri Baraka. Subtitled it Black Music in Evolution, the editors proclaimed in their first issue that the “true voices of Black Liberation have been the Black Musicians,” and with this sentiment the publication quickly became a symbol of radical blackness. In one of his famed Cricket manifestos, Graves notes that the “Black musician must realize his existence as a creative force.” This idea is further echoed in an interview that Marvin X conducted with Graves in 1969 in the *Journal of Black Poetry*, in which the artist speaks about his recording imprint Self-Reliance Program as a collective project aimed at preserving Black creativity and as an alternative model to mainstream labels.

East Side Review, January/February 1966
Magazine
Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Amiri Baraka
Four Black Revolutionary Plays, 1969
Publication
Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Journal of Black Poetry, Vol. 1, no. 12, 1969
Magazine
Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Poster for *Sight and Sound*, 1969

The Cricket: Black Evolution in Music, no. 1, 1968
Magazine
Courtesy of Christopher Funkhouser

The Cricket: Black Evolution in Music, no. 3, 1969
Magazine
Courtesy of Aldon Nielsen

A finales de la década de 1960, Graves actuó en conciertos y participó a menudo en eventos del Nuevo Teatro Lafayette (NLT) de Harlem. NLT, una organización y comunidad teatral profundamente política, jugó un papel importante en el Black Arts Movement (Movimiento de Arte Negro), un movimiento político y cultural con raíces en la expresión y la autodeterminación Negra que abarcaba sectores de la música, literatura, el mundo editorial, y las artes visuales. Para músicos rechazados por los locales populares del jazz en el centro de la ciudad o considerados demasiado radicales, Harlem se convirtió en un refugio para la libertad de expresión Negra. NLT en especial era famoso por albergar a varios músicos, poetas y artistas visuales que iban desde Marvin X y Amiri Baraka (entonces Leroi Jones) a Rashid Ali y Maxine Raysor, entre otros. Graves colaboró con muchos de sus miembros, y extendió su trabajo al teatro, donde compuso los efectos musicales para la obra de Baraka *Experimental Death Unit #1* (Unidad de muerte experimental No. 1, 1966).

Podría decirse que uno de los elementos más únicos y extraordinarios del Movimiento de Arte Negro es una dedicación rigurosa a la publicación (la idea de que las voces Negras cuentan sus propias historias). Con ese objetivo, aparecen escritos de Graves en dos números de la innovadora publicación *The Cricket* (El grillo), lanzada en 1968 por Larry Neal, A.B. Spellman y Amiri Baraka. Subtitulada *Black Music in Evolution* (Música Negra en evolución), los editores proclamaron en el primer número que las “verdaderas voces de la Liberación Negra han sido los músicos Negros”, y con esta idea la publicación pronto se convirtió en un símbolo de negritud radical. En uno de sus famosos manifiestos en *Cricket*, Graves nota que el “músico Negro debe darse cuenta de su existencia como fuerza creativa”. Esta idea tiene ecos en una entrevista posterior de Graves con Marvin X en 1969 publicada en el *Journal of Black Poetry* (Revista de poesía Negra), donde el artista habla de su sello de grabación Self-Reliance Program (Programa de Autosuficiencia) como un proyecto colectivo dirigido a preservar la creatividad Negra y como alternativa al modelo de los sellos convencionales.

This grouping of collaborative projects brings together a unique and interconnected history of the New York art scene but also sheds light on several significant collaborations, highlighting the interplay between like-minded but contrasting practitioners.

In 1966, Milford Graves and Don Pullen joined forces to create their seminal Self-Reliance Program (SRP) record imprint through which they released their stunning hand-painted *In Concert at Yale University* albums (a selection of which are on view nearby) as well as the album *Nommo* (1967). Prior to that, they collaborated with Giuseppi Logan and recorded *The Giuseppi Logan Quartet* (1965) and the subsequent record, *More* (1966). Outside of the recording studio, Logan, Pullen, and Graves interacted with a broader group of artists engaging in various forms of performance in the New York scene. In a 1965 event organized by Ken Dewey—titled *With and Without*—at the Palm Gardens on 52nd Street, they performed as part of an event that marked the passing of the Confederate Memorial Day. The program brought together a seemingly disparate, but interconnected, group of artists, such as Fluxus composer Benjamin Patterson, poet Norman Pritchard, and experimental performance artist Carolee Schneemann, among others. Through this event, Dewey brought together various cultural communities across New York who, although working separately, were each, in their own way, seeking to expand the categories of art and performance.

Since the beginning of Graves's unique interdisciplinary career, collaboration and a search to deepen his understanding of the drum as an instrument were essential. His seminal drum dialogues with Andrew Cyrille speak to the versatility of the instrument and feature prominently in the rhetoric of experimental music. With conversations dating back to the late 1960s, Cyrille and Graves continued to collaborate into the 1970s, releasing the LP *Dialogue of the Drums* (1974) by their record imprint, the Institute of Percussive Studies. In the 1980s, they worked with percussionist Famoudou Don Moye and drummer Kenny Clarke recording *Pieces of Time* (1984). Graves went on to further tour and collaborate with Moye. In 1987, they performed together in New York at the now-iconic experimental music venue the Knitting Factory, which had opened that year and was situated below the studio and home of famed jazz photographer Raymond Ross.

Milford Graves and Andrew Cyrille
Dialogue of the Drums (IPS), 1974
LP
Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Catalogue for *IPS Records*, no. 2, c. 1970s
Courtesy of Yuzo Sakarumoto

Coda, 1974
Magazine
Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Flyer for *Dialogue of the Drums*, 1974

Pieces of Time (Soul Note), 1984
LP
Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Lona Foote
Milford Graves and Famadou Don Moye, c. 1987
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of the Photo Estate of Lona Foote

Lona Foote
Milford Graves, c. 1987
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of the Photo Estate of Lona Foote

Pamphlet for *Without and Within*, 1965
Courtesy of Nathaniel Otting

Announcement for Milford Graves and Don Pullen at the Afro-Arts Cultural Center, New York, 1968
Photocopy

Pullen-Graves Music
Envelope containing slides, 1968

The Giuseppi Logan Quartet (ESP Disc), 1965
LP
Courtesy of Clifford E. Allen

Giuseppi Logan
More (ESP Disc), 1965
LP
Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Este grupo de proyectos colaborativos reúne una historia única e interrelacionada del mundo del arte de Nueva York, pero también ilumina varias colaboraciones importantes, subrayando el juego entre participantes de ideas afines pero contrastantes.

En 1966, Milford Graves y Don Pullen se unieron para crear su sello de grabación Programa de Autosuficiencia (SRP) a través del que lanzaron varios álbumes impresionantes pintados a mano *In Concert at Yale University* (En concierto en la Universidad de Yale), una selección de los cuales se puede observar aquí cerca, además del álbum *Nommo* (1967). Antes habían colaborado con Giuseppi Logan, grabando *The Giuseppi Logan Quartet* (1965) y el siguiente disco, *More* (Más, 1966). Fuera del estudio de grabación, Logan, Pullen y Graves se relacionaron con un grupo más amplio de artistas, participando en varias formas de performance en el ámbito neoyorquino. En un evento organizado por Ken Dewey en 1965, titulado *With and Without* (Con y sin), en el Palm Gardens de la Calle 52, actuaron como parte de un evento que marcó el fin del Día de los Caídos Confederados.

El programa reunió un grupo en apariencia dispar, pero conectados entre sí, como Benjamin Patterson, el compositor de Fluxus, el poeta Norman Pritchard, y la artista experimental de performance Carolee Schneemann, entre otros. A través del evento, Dewey reunió varias comunidades culturales de todo Nueva York que, aunque trabajaban por separado, cada una, a su manera, buscaba ampliar las categorías del arte y la interpretación.

Desde los inicios de la impar carrera interdisciplinaria de Graves, la colaboración y la búsqueda por profundizar en su comprensión del tambor como instrumento fueron fundamentales. Sus seminales diálogos con batería con Andrew Cyrille hablan de la versatilidad del instrumento y son parte prominentemente de la retórica de la música experimental. Con conversaciones que se remontan a finales de la década de 1960, Cyrille y Graves siguieron colaborando hasta los 70, lanzando el LP *Dialogue of the Drums* (Diálogo de los tambores, 1974) con su sello discográfico, el Instituto de Estudios de Percusión. En la década de 1980 trabajaron con el percusionista Famoudou Don Moye y el batería Kenny Clarke grabando *Pieces of Time* (Pedazos de tiempo, 1984). Graves siguió colaborando y haciendo giras con Moye. En 1987 actuaron juntos en Nueva York en el hoy icónico local de música experimental *The Knitting Factory*, que abrió ese mismo año y estaba ubicado bajo la casa y estudio del famoso fotógrafo de jazz Raymond Ross.

In 1977, Milford Graves took his first trip to Japan at the invitation of the influential producer and music critic Aquirax Aida. Perhaps best known for producing Japanese free jazz artists, such as Kaoru Abe, Aida frequently promoted tours of Japan for Western artists, including Milford Graves and Derek Bailey. Spending nearly a month in Japan, Graves teamed up with Abe as well as Toshi Tsuchitori, Takagi Mototeru, and Kondo Toshinori to create the masterpiece *Meditation Among Us*, recorded in July 1977 and released later that year. Playing here, *Meditation Among Us* includes one of the few instances in which, on one track, Graves plays the piano in addition to the drums.

Graves's time in Japan was also commemorated by an extensive two-volume feature of writing and documentation in *Jazz Magazine*, issues of which have become incredibly rare. The two volumes presented here are praised as a seminal record of free jazz happenings, with texts by Graves, Tsuchitori, and Aida detailing their unique collaboration as well as ruminations on Graves's fundamental sound philosophies and famed martial art form "Yara." Graves's time in Japan was formidable, establishing long-lasting relationships and friendships, particularly with Tsuchitori—the only living musician from the original ensemble.

While much of Graves's trip was filled with concert gigs and recording sessions, he took the time to learn about his surroundings and further deepen his passions, visiting Japanese acupuncturists to observe and discuss their techniques and practicing other complementary martial art forms, such as Tai Chi.

Meditation Among Us, 1977
Sound recording, 36:05 minutes

Meditation Among Us (Kitty Records), 1977
LP
Courtesy of Clifford E. Allen

Toshiro Kuwabara
Meeting Milford Graves with Aquirax Aida and Toshi Tsuchitori, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Kaoru Abe, Toshi Tsuchitori, Milford Graves on Piano, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves Recording with Producer Aquirax Aida, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves Recording with Aquirax Aida, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves Recording, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Jazz Magazine, Vol. 1, 1977
Publication
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves with Mototeru Tagaki, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Jazz Magazine, Vol. 2, 1977
Publication
Courtesy of Yuzo Sakarumoto

Tour flyer of *Revelation for Free*, 1978

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves and talking drums, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves and talking drums, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves at Chi practice with Toshi Tsuchitori, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves practices martial arts with Toshinori Kondo and Toshi Tsuchitori, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara
Milford Graves visiting Japanese acupuncture, 1977
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

En 1977, Milford Graves hizo su primer viaje a Japón invitado por el influyente productor y crítico musical Aquirax Aida. Tal vez más conocido por producir a artistas japoneses de free jazz, como Kaoru Abe, Aida promocionaba a menudo giras de artistas occidentales en Japón, entre ellos Milford Graves y Derek Bailey. Graves pasó casi un mes en Japón y se unió a Abe y también Toshi Tsuchitori, Takagi Mototeru y Kondo Toshinori para crear la obra maestra *Meditation Among Us* (Meditación entre nosotros), grabada en julio de 1977 y lanzada más tarde el mismo año. *Meditation Among Us* suena aquí e incluye una de las pocas ocasiones en las que, en una sola pista, Graves toca el piano además de la batería.

El tiempo que Graves pasó en Japón también fue conmemorado por un largo artículo en dos volúmenes de escritos y documentación en *Jazz Magazine*, números que hoy son increíblemente difíciles de encontrar. Los dos volúmenes que se presentan aquí se consideran un registro seminal de los happenings del free jazz, con textos de Graves, Tsuchitori y Aida detallando su colaboración única y sus meditaciones sobre las filosofías fundamentales y el arte marcial “Yara” de Graves. El tiempo que Graves pasó en Japón fue formidable, ayudándole a establecer relaciones y amistades duraderas, especialmente con Tsuchitori, el único músico del grupo original que sigue vivo.

Mientras gran parte del viaje de Graves consistió en conciertos y sesiones de grabación, se tomó el tiempo de aprender sobre el entorno y profundizar en sus pasiones, visitando a acupunturistas japoneses para observar y discutir sus técnicas y practicar otras formas de artes marciales complementarias, como el Tai Chi.

Following the creation of *Meditation Among Us* (1977), Graves continued to explore his musical connection with Japanese experimental percussionist Toshi Tsuchitori. Across several decades, their collaboration manifested in a series of performances in which they worked through the notion that music is an energetic force. On view here is a selection of documentary photographs from a 1993 tour for which they notably performed at Osaka International Theater and the Ginza Saison Theater.

Flyer for Milford Graves and Toshi Tsuchitori at
Tokyo Saison Theater, Japan, 1993
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Yoshio Ishii
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Tokyo, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Yoshio Ishii
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Osaka, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Lois Graves
Costume, 1969
Various fabrics

Yoshio Ishii
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Osaka, 1993
Color photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Yoshio Ishii
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Osaka, 1993
Color photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

MUSIC, No. 2, 1998
Magazine
Courtesy of Yuzo Sakarumoto

Eimei Uchiyama
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama
Milford Graves in Gujo, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama
Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo, 1993
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

VITRINE 10

Después de la creación de *Meditation Among Us* (Meditación entre nosotros, 1977), Graves siguió explorando su conexión musical con el percusionista experimental japonés Toshi Tsuchitori. A lo largo de varias décadas su colaboración manifestó una serie de actuaciones en las que trabajaron la noción de que la música es una fuerza energética. Aquí se muestra una selección de fotografías documentales de una gira de 1993 para la cual actuaron notablemente en el Teatro Internacional de Osaka y el teatro Ginza Saison.

On Milford Graves's first trip to Japan in 1977, he also encountered the formidable dance improviser Min Tanaka. Tanaka's work had taken a radical turn from his ballet and modern dance training to striking semi-nude outdoor improvisations that forged an entirely unique dance form. Tanaka speaks of the "huge shock" of seeing Graves perform a solo concert, describing that "at every moment, variability ceaselessly seeks to materialize itself as hope." Graves next attended a Tanaka performance at New York's Clocktower in 1978, and the two began a decades-long collaboration in 1979 at the Paul Robeson House in Bennington, Vermont. Tanaka's attunement to the furthest reaches of musical improvisation also led him to collaborate with British guitarist Derek Bailey. Though vastly different improvisers, Tanaka, Graves, and Bailey formed MMD (Min, Milford, Derek), one of the legendary groups in free improvisation history, with Tanaka's dancing as a visceral conduit for the musicians. Tanaka organized a 1981 MMD tour of Japan, and the group then played its final shows in 1982 at New York's Japan Society. Tanaka and Graves continued a deep collaboration, as seen here in black-and-white images of the first Hakushu Festival in 1988, as well as color photographs taken a decade later in 1998, again at Hakushu.

The audio featured here is a special performance by Graves and Tanaka at Osaka Namba Technical High School on November 13, 1981, for students with mental and physical disabilities. Through improvisation in movement and sound, the performance inspired connection to the fundamental sensations of rhythm—a connection that transcends the verbal toward an embodied, kinesthetic, and shared sense of what it is to be human. As Tanaka has recently stated, "by being present in the world with the whole body," Graves conveys "the history of the swarm of life."

Milford Graves and Min Tanaka performing at Osaka Namba Technical High School, November 13, 1981
Sound recording, 42:48 minutes
Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Photographer unknown
Milford Graves and Min Tanaka, 1988
Reproduction of black and white photograph
Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Min Tanaka
Bodyprint, 1981
Publication
Courtesy of Allyson Spellacy

Photographer unknown
Milford Graves performing in Hakushi, 1998
Reproduction of two-colored photographs
Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Min Tanaka
Bodyprint, 1981
Publication
Courtesy of Zack Fuller

Photographer unknown
Milford Graves, Min Tanaka, and Derek Bailey in New York, 1982
Black and white photograph
Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Reproduction of flyer for Milford Graves and Min Tanaka event, Tokyo, 1998
Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Hakushu catalogue
Courtesy of Allyson Spellacy

MMD Japan Society Concert Postcard, 1982
Selection of black and white photographs
Courtesy of the Japan Society

Photographer unknown
Milford Graves performing in Hakushi, 1998
Reproduction of two-colored black and white photograph
Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

MMD Japan Society Concert Program, 1982
Selection of black and white photographs
Courtesy of the Japan Society

Durante el primer viaje a Japón de Milton Graves, en 1977, también conoció al formidable improvisador de danza Min Tanaka. La obra de Tanaka había dado un giro radical a su preparación en ballet y danza moderna, hacia unas impresionantes improvisaciones semidesnudas al aire libre que forjaron una forma única de danza. Tanaka habla del “enorme impacto” de ver a Graves actuar en un concierto en solitario, describiendo como “en cada momento la variabilidad trata incesantemente de materializarse como esperanza”. Graves asistió luego a una actuación de Tanaka en la Clocktower de Nueva York en 1978, y en 1979 ambos empezaron una colaboración de décadas e la Paul Robeson House de Bennington, Vermont. La sintonía de Tanaka con los confines de la improvisación también le llevaron a colaborar con el guitarrista británico Derek Bailey. Aunque improvisadores inmensamente distintos, Tanaka, Graves y Bailey formaron MMD (Min, Milford, Derek), uno de los grupos legendarios en la historia de la improvisación libre, donde la danza de Tanaka servía como un conducto visceral para los músicos. En 1981 Tanaka organizó una gira de MMD en Japón, y en 1982 el grupo hizo sus últimas representaciones en la Sociedad Japonesa de Nueva York. Tanaka y Graves continuaron una colaboración profunda, como se puede observar en estas imágenes en blanco y negro del primer Festival de Hakushu en 1988, además de fotografías en color tomadas una década más tarde, en 1998, también en Hakushu.

El audio que se presenta aquí es de una actuación especial de Graves y Tanaka en el Colegio Secundario Técnico Namba de Osaka el 13 de noviembre de 1981 para estudiantes con discapacidades físicas y mentales. A través de la improvisación de sonido y movimiento la actuación inspiró conexiones con las sensaciones fundamentales del ritmo (una conexión que trasciende lo verbal y hacia un sentimiento compartido de lo encarnado y kinestésico de lo que es ser humano. Como afirmó Tanaka recientemente, “al estar presentes en el mundo con todo el cuerpo”, Graves comunica “la historia del enjambre de la vida”.

Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency

Select Transcriptions



Photographer unknown, *Operation Greenthumb at George Washington Carver Botanical Garden*, c. 1970s. Color photograph.

Eating in the Garden, 1990, 5:02 minutes

Eating directly from the plant captures the true energy of the plant as it is still circling in the plant. A lot of fruit, but still intact with the plant as a whole.

This is Seven Tops. This plant is grown primarily for its leafy growth.

Now I think we'll try some parsley. Again, eating directly from the plant while it's still intact.

I don't know. A little dirt won't help, but—that is, it won't hurt, but I think this will develop my immune system. I don't have to stress it too much from the dirt.

I think that'll be it for right now. Come back later. Try out maybe some chrysanthemums, maybe a tomato, and maybe a green pepper. You don't need a lot. All you have to do is get that real true energy that's still circulating in the plant.

Now we eat a pole bean.

Uh, let's find a good one here. I think we'll try this one here. Big, nice, really big, nice. Mmm...Directly from the plant. Mm-hm.

Milford Graves Teaching at Bennington College, 1977, 1:02:41 minutes

—which was influenced by the title of the poster you see in the wall in the back.

There's one question I've always asked myself, and I've been asking this for, uh, at least over the last, I would say, maybe 17 years now: why do I do certain things? Why are we living? and I'm still asking myself that question.

I think one of the things that we do today is that we try to deal with different disciplines, to try to come to that one particular thing. You know, we go so many different paths to try, just to wind up at that one particular point. But some people will go out in that direction, in that direction and they'd be out in a whole lot of different directions at one time and they never meet.

Some people ask me, well, how did you do so many things—different things—at the same time? The only thing I can say is that, you know, you really have to discipline yourself and there's a lot of things like you're just gonna have to stop doing. And it's a job. I mean, you know, it's like, it's constantly going on, constantly going on.

And what I hope to do tonight is I hope to show you and tell you about a few things that I have been involved with for a little while now that I feel has been very successful and has been the key to a lot of things that, I have a lot of questions like this that I've always asked myself.

I'm getting answers now. A lot of things I did, I find, well, they weren't just happening. Some of the things I'm still trying to figure out, well, is it necessary to do these things or should I just get rid of them? I find that one of the worst things you can do—and this will put a lot of people uptight, and I've told a lot of students this in the past and they've completely given up—and that is, is that you can get yourself involved with a whole lot of different disciplines, but you must go beyond reading books and you must experience, I mean, really practically experience certain things.

I find that, well, Naty was here last week, Naty Kumar [name unclear], someone asked him a question about priesthood and then at one particular point, he said that he asked himself the question, well, people ask me, you know, am I from Africa? Am I from Africa? Am I African? See, a lot of people don't care if they ever even went to Africa. I know a lot of people that are saying that they're African, they are not African, they are from this particular country. I've talked to people who have been to places like India, you know, the Orient, Africa. And they've been there, but that's all. I mean, they don't, they don't go no place. They don't get involved with certain things.

But a long time ago, people used to tell me, well, you know, you really can't get really in tune with something unless you go to that particular place. I mean, as far as I'm concerned, if you wanna learn about jazz or black music as taught at Bennington College, I mean, you have to come to America to learn about this music. You can't listen to records. This is this, this was one of my major experiences in Japan with Japanese musicians. I thought they were technically equipped, but we had many discussions about that main ingredient that was missing. And because of [the] communication problem, you know, trying to find a word that would really fit, all we can do is just point inside. There was something missing inside. So we used to talk about many different things, you know, about Japanese culture, about American culture, about the history of America, history of Japan. I mean, we really got into it. It was almost impossible to talk about.

I wish those things was taped, but they were very private cause they were very sensitive type of conversations because Japanese musicians really wanted to play Black music from this country. I mean, they really wanted to play it. And if you told 'em that they didn't do something, if they didn't do something right, or if they made an error, which I do not find here in this country, that people get very defensive. In short, I mean, they had that respect, whatever you told 'em. Cause they felt as though that if you came from America, and they said that, well, I'm playing Black music from America. They felt that I would know more about Black

music than they would, so they really humbled themselves and they became very sensitive. But I tell you this though, whatever I told 'em, like say on a Tuesday night, I guarantee you the next night they would have it together because it was very simple. I mean, it never was like this or trying to do this because everything was just dropped, always ready to submit. They say, well, I don't know anything. You teach me.

The biggest thing they say right now is that they must come to America. That's the only way they will learn how to play jazz or Black music. There's no two ways about it. And I would have to say the same thing for people here practicing or studying anything of Japanese culture, you must go to Japan with something with me and a person was just discussing a little while ago and an automobile. See, I find it very necessary. If you are going to deal with African music, you must at least once in your life go to Africa. If you are going to deal with yoga or any of the various Indian disciplines, you must go to India. If you're gonna deal with Chinese, Japanese, any of those things, you must go there. And also of my experiences in Europe, I feel as though if you are really going to, you know, like study classical music, I feel that you must go to Europe. I felt the difference right away in Europe as from here. It was a whole different type of thing that was happening.

Now this is my personal feeling. A lot of people will debate with me on that.

So at this particular time, I would like to show you and tell you a few things that I use that I have learned from various cultures that I feel that has really helped me out.

And I must stress. One thing I do not believe in, or I suggest, do not do something just to be hip. Really feel it. I was listening, I was looking at TV last night and I really wasn't paying attention to it 'cause I was doing something else. But one thing, you know, caught my attention, uh, some kind of disease, you know, was attacking people on this ship. I don't know, maybe you've seen the picture

[laughs]

and the guy, one of the doctors became ill. He said—'cause he was ill, so he really felt very free and he was really admitting certain things—he said, you know, when I was in medical school, I only memorize[d] things. I never understood. See now, that's very true. I see a lot of people, they just memorize things. But it's the understanding of something that's very important.

I felt as though I was very successful in Japan because, first of all, there was a language problem. So most of the communication was through a certain kind of feeling and just watching each other. If you didn't, I would suggest that, you know, before you leave is to just look at some of the pictures and there is a picture of a person on there named [Watazumi] Doso [Roshi] [name unclear]. And this was a very strong experience I had with Doso because he speaks no English, very traditional Japanese. We was supposed to do a concert together. We did do the concert together, but it didn't work out as it was originally planned. It was originally planned that I would do the first part of the concert and he would do the second part of the concert with me.

Besides being a master of martial arts, he's also a master of the shakuhachi, which is a flute. He is a Zen priest also. He doesn't come out and make public appearances with anyone but himself. It's controversial among other Japanese because he's, I mean, very, very traditional Japanese. We were supposed to do this duo concert, the second part of the program with me playing drums, and he was to play shakuhachi and traditional Japanese drums.

It didn't work out. There was mixed feelings why it didn't work out. I felt as though that he was nervous cause there was a lot of pressure on him because this particular night, a lot of people came to the concert, people from the area of martial arts, people from the traditional medical field, and he did something he didn't want to do. The person who set this up talked him in to doing the concert with me. He really didn't want to do it, so he was fighting two things, that he did break a promise to himself by making a public appearance

with someone else. And number two is that he had all of these particular people, traditional people from Japan watching this. So he decided at the last minute not to do it.

But it was very interesting because I've been around different people from Japan here who are, say they're masters of this, masters of that. To be honest, it really surprised me when I seen him extremely nervous on the stage and, like, I was in the state of shock because he is noted to be a master of breathing technique. And when I was in his house, I mean, he was really doing some fantastic techniques, breathing wise, on the shakuhachi as well as certain kind of sounds. And because of this pressure on him on the stage, everything collapsed. He was definitely nervous breathing because all of this controlled breathing just, I mean, it just fell apart because after he did do his martial art movements, he came to the side on the stage and we both looked at each other in his eyes. 'Cause I was sitting down. And at this particular time, I didn't know that we were not going to do this duo thing, because I was still waiting to find what was happening. I was waiting to be given the signal to come out on the stage. And he looked at me and I looked at him and he looked to say like, I'm sorry, because he was breathing.

Like—

[heavy panting]

It was unbelievable. A master of this breathing.

But the main thing is wasn't physical, was the mind. It was the mind, the pressure.

One of my main impressions was, of Japan when I left, that to find the super, super, super, super people is pretty difficult. And I also find that a lot of people give themselves certain titles and say they can do this and do that, but really they can't.

The experience in FESTAC—there's pictures on the wall that took place in Lagos, Nigeria—was very strong. I would say because every country in Africa was there, including many countries in the Caribbean. The title of this festival was the World Black and African Festival. It was very strong.

I don't think it would be proper for me to name call right now, but I think if you are interested in the festival and what happened, and I think all you have to do is inquire around with certain writers that was there and find out really what happened. But there was one particular artist that [was] highly acclaimed to be an authority or really into African music. I mean, he's dead set into that. His music is definitely in tune with ancient concepts of Africa, but at the same time, this person performed, 90% of the Africans walked out on it.

So what I'm saying is that, you know, sometimes you have to go to certain areas and get with people who are really not even concerned about removing themselves from their own soil to come to another soil.

Someone was telling me a week ago that there's a South African position here now saying that jazz comes from South Africa, that the South Africans are the ones that's really doing it. I can't buy that at all.

And also, you'll find out if you're doing something right or if you're doing it wrong.

At this particular time, I would like to demonstrate a certain technique that I use that's been used a long, long, long time. I did not invent this technique. I've dealt with it. I find that it's very valuable. I'll do it and then I'll talk about it after. Also, on the board, in the back on the wall, you'll see a picture and under that picture it says puncture. It says African technique. For many years people have been photographing that so-called nail fetish, and they've been trying to describe it for a long time and talk about it for a long time, but they always

talk about it in a negative way. For some reason, it's always talking about evil spirits, you know? Every time somebody wants to, uh, you know, do something on a negative basis is to drive a nail and a piece of wooden sculpture or stick a needle in a dog.

I think it's well known among people who do practice or who have been studying acupuncture for a little while, who are, you know, with some of the inside people, so-called people that's honest and the people who are supposed to be happening that there's a big question mark if acupuncture is from China. Don't people say, well, acupuncture really is from India?

There are documents that states that ear acupuncture or the concept of dermal puncture, sticking needles in the body, were practiced in India 7,000 years ago, as opposed to the Chinese saying 5,000 years ago. Some people say that the Chinese say that acupuncture was first observed when a person who was suffering from a long, a long sickness was shot by an arrow by an enemy, and they noticed that the disease was cured.

They also said that there was people that were space people that brought acupuncture to China. They said, that's happening. You know, it's, it's a whole record.

But I will say also that dermal puncture or the art of sticking needles in the body to do negative or positive things was also practiced in Africa thousands and thousands and thousands of years ago. Again, I say we can read books and we can get, I mean, we can really get in all these arguments and debates and we can take this out of that side, but I find the thing to do is, like I said now, is you have to go these places. And once you go to these places, you will find out. And what I'm concerned about is who's doing it.

I think that's the main thing. Who's getting results?

There is a particular point on the body and I will only make reference by the Chinese names now because I think that if you want to do any further research is that this is a little bit more accessible to you now, the Chinese concept. There is a point in the body. Some people call it stomach point number 36, but it's not good to use numbers. It's best to use the Chinese name because this number system—one system can say it's 36, another system will say it's number 40. But regardless of which system you go to, all agree that the point's name is Zu San Li [足三里], which means walk three miles, which the Chinese used to use when they went on long marches.

Everybody would stick themselves. And another interesting thing is that if you see any of the better acupuncture films out of China, you will see that there's kids now. And with the equivalent equivalency to kindergarten, first grade in China now doing acupuncture, not playing with blocks, doing acupuncture.

I was told by a Canadian acupuncture who was very heavy into Chinese studies, very heavy, who's been all around, knows everybody, is that the Chinese are not worried about a nuclear attack now because they have acupuncture technique to reverse the effective radiation.

I told somebody that they said, ah, come on, get off of that. It's hard to believe also that you can have your heart hanging out of your body, eating an orange and keeping the conversation.

[class laughs]

Very difficult to believe that. Very difficult. There's some heavy things happening. They're not letting off, they're not giving you everything.

See, but somehow we always get this surface stuff. See, we really get this surface information. Also, a friend of mine said, you know, I finally learned the secrets of the drummers from Ghana, the master drummers, how

they can play all night. He said, all they do is eat kola nuts all night.

[laughs]

But it's more than kola nuts. What about the hands?

See, you don't see all the secrets. You just see somebody come out the says, you don't know what I did before I came up here. You don't know what I did. Now I may do something. You may try, you may hurt yourself. See, nobody let you see all the secrets.

I see people get so possessed. They be, they be hitting a drum and when it's over, the hands are all broken up, bleeding.

It's like I see people now, they study in oriental martial arts and they got all these big knuckles and these big callouses. They've lost their whole sensation of feeling. And then when they get old, they're gonna develop all type of arthritis. Their hands are gonna be all screwed up 'cause they don't do that over there.

The people that's really doing it, forget it. There's a person in the picture there named [name unclear] who's a master of Hapkido, known in known in Japan, but not out of Japan. He has two books that he's written so far. One on breathing technique and other one is on the history of martial arts. And we had some very, I mean, right-to-the-point conversations. I would ask him a certain question. And for anybody who has ever or will anticipate practicing like Judo or Hapkido or any of those arts that, you know, you do a lot of mat work, the original concept of Hapkido as practiced by the masters. They never did those hard break falls when you come down. Blam! Blam!

That's unheard of. That was specifically set up, they said for the real upper class who used to have these fantastic dojos. Who, to them it great hitting the floor real hard, but the masters would never do that. One simple reason, suppose you have to fall on the street.

We got all this big rocks and glass down there. Splash! Very simple. And I looked at him and I said, well, in other words, it's just common sense. He said, that's the answer. If it doesn't make sense to you, don't do it.

See, but over here we do things, you know? Oh, oh, well that's the way they do it over there, because someone over here has told you that.

I see people over, I see people and I mean, let's make it out of a joke now so nobody gets uptight. I see people here giving body massages on this campus, that really scares me. I have to just do like this, oh, no. Why does everybody think shiatsu is easy? I've been told by people, even Ohashi [name unclear]—who's hip through Ohashi? Uh, she actually dojo in New York who gives these courses for like \$200, gives his certificate and everything else. I've heard them sit down and say, shiatsu's better than acupuncture. I would say it too, if I was able to teach Shiatsu, because legally in New York, you cannot teach shiatsu and make money. . So naturally he's gonna say, it's better. Don't worry. It's safe. Shiatsu is very dangerous. See, 'cause you may be setting up something that may take place five years from that particular time that you pressed the point. Maybe 10 years. May that manifest itself around the way.

Same thing with music. Very dangerous. Especially when you're not sensitive to it.

The way I was taught, especially as a drummer, I was always taught to do forms of what we call now shiatsu. Sometimes when I do a performance, I've heard people say, oh, well, he's flipped out, he's losing his mind, because I would hit on my body a certain way, either with my hands or my sticks. They say, wow, what's wrong with him?

See? But that's nothing compared to what I do before the set. That's what I say. See, you only see—you will only see a person that's involved with certain kind of things at maybe the second or third stage. You usually don't see the first stage, cause the first stage usually takes place in privacy.

Bill Dixon told me something to share. He said he has a feeling that now is the time to do certain things and I'm in total agreement. And I feel now that because of so many forces, anti-forces, out here that's trying to stop certain good things, that it is necessary to teach more or to expose more, or to let people know certain things. Especially if I'm gonna take that responsibility and people will accept me as a teacher.

So what I will do right now, I will needle my Zu San Li.

People say how your legs so strong, what about your arms? But there's certain things you can do. You don't always have to needle, but if you really want to get down to certain kind of electric lines, then you do that. Sometimes you know what you do if you go for acupuncture treatment and the guy wants to needle? You say, but doc, needle yourself first. I'm a little skeptical of that. I feel more confident if you needle yourself and he says, nah, well, I don't think I should do that. Uh, I don't have time for that right now, don't let him needle me. Don't. There's too many guys out here taking a 100 hour course now, forget it. I've talked to a guy that studied in Taiwan for six years and he's scared of acupuncture. He is afraid of acupuncture. He studied it, he's afraid of it. You know, to make me afraid of acupuncture, not wanna practice it. That's why the people who are really trained, they say, do it on yourself first. You must feel a sensation.

If you want to come a little closer just for this particular part and then go back, it's fine with me.

[students crowd around]

And I also have good news cause Bill told me that I can work on him right after me.

[laughing]

There's a point that make you, that will make you look 30 years younger.

[more laughter]

These needles were sterilized by boiling and then put in alcohol so it's not water or anything.

[Aside, to a student] Will you hold that for me?

You only have to take my word. It's very difficult to needle yourself under these conditions.

Most people would do this.

If you see the pictures on the wall, you will see the same point being needle Zu San Li. We needle each other. I just didn't have the other pictures. Uh, he knew what point and on there what we were doing. We were discussing techniques cause there's three actual points that you needle. This is all according to what your concept is.

If it's dealing with the concept of the bone, the nerve, or the muscle. This is a much more difficult technique here because I'm closer to the bone. Once you get closer to the nerve, if you, you look out on the angle coming in here, then you're dealing in the, in the muscle that's a little bit more safer.

This is one of the techniques. Zu San Li, walk three miles. Now you can deal. You don't really see something. It starts to work.

This is when you're in health. No problem with me now, but I'm in health. So what I'm doing is just that. I'm making sure that everything starts to working out. So there's nothing, there's no kind of blockages, but I don't have to do this on the concert. You do this before I can leave. This is only one of the techniques.

You get it in about so much. Half an inch is good. You can go an inch if you want.

Do I hear someone, a volunteer?

[laughs]

No, we won't. We'll do it. We'll do it.

[more laughter]

Now, this is not an acupuncture session. I just want to give you an idea of some of the things. Could we, maybe we can take our seats now. Okay. Um, bring it in a second.

I've only come up here to do lecture demonstration, so please, DeMar [name unclear], don't run up to me talking about my back hurts or this or that.

[laughs]

No, seriously, it just takes too long to go through all of this right now. So, and I don't wanna turn it into no acupuncture succession, but as I was saying... certain people ask me certain things, they say, well, should I lift weights? Should I do more running? And like, All I want to do is show you that some of the things that I do, that I find that works and some of the things that people have been doing for a long time. But you see, the problem is that everybody doesn't tell you about themselves.

There is a picture over to the left, your left, that picture and all those words and so on. I find it necessary that no longer can I leave it up to a critic or just anybody to say what I'm playing. I'm tired of the word *avant garde*, new music, you know.

I feel that what I am truly involved with the kind of music is called Bābi. Bābi. Which, from a traditional point of drumming, the ba— is a drum syllable on mnemonic that has the kind of power to stimulate the respiratory system. The bi— is a sound that stimulates the circulatory system, which many people have said in the medical field, or you can check it out yourself, that the two very important systems in our body is the respiratory and circulatory system.

And I've been playing this all the time that I've went back and listened to tapes and tapes and tapes, and as long as I can remember that has been the two primary tones that I have used and I've built off of that. The ba— and the bi—,

The frequency when I'm going in here is all based off—see, that's another thing, that I had a big discussion with Master, his name is Master [name unclear], who was the person on the picture there with me too, a master acupuncturist. And the one thing we talked about, we couldn't really talk about, but we had to just motion each other with feeling, was that the one important thing when you do needles, just not sticking a needle in. You see, when you are very sensitive. That's why anybody from the Orient who comes with this

title of Master of Martial Arts and Master of Acupuncture, and I see his fingers and everything is all ripped apart and beat up, and he's jamming his hand through iron balls and sand and all this stuff, you see and has lost sensitivity in here—I don't think you have good acupuncture technique because, first of all, what you do is you are going into areas that are giving off very strong electrical fields and because of the fact that this is metal, you can feel a charge come up through this needle into your fingertips and you must work with that energy so that the technique is very important. There's techniques where a guy just go—shoop!—and stab it right in it. I think that's bad technique. Many of the great acupuncturists do not believe in that technique, neither. That you must feel energy and you be moving around. You can't see everything that's really happening and that same way you coming out. See, most of the great acupuncturists was always musicians. You never separated the two. That's why some of the greatest acupuncturists, musicians can become some of the greatest acupuncturists. The certain sensitivity you have, to me, it's just like music. 'Cause you can, you can just feel everything going on, but you gotta be sensitive. You can hear tones, everything, there's no such one technique—you go in, you do this circle movement, a clockwise or counterclockwise. There's none of that. There was never no separation. All the great pulse readers, I don't care if they came out of China, they came out of India, they came out of Africa, any of the places. But all the great pulse readers was always musicians.

In other words, pulse read is a sense of feeling pulse. There's all different techniques they use. They were always trained in music.

Before I forget, one person asked me, he says, what was this stuff I was burning? This is moxa, wormwood, *Artemisia vulgaris*. This is Japanese. Chinese have a certain type, see the Chinese, but they always say they got a little of extra, something extra going on.

But this is the Japanese moxa and I find the Japanese moxa to be better for wrapping around the needle head. It holds better than most of the Chinese moxa that is being sold here. This moxa you cannot get here. I got this from Japan. And another thing that I find, I don't care where I've been or who I've met, is that you can go address yourself as such and such a person. That doesn't get you crossed up. Don't get you across. If you can do it, that's what gets you across.

I think we had a discussion last week in class about that, right? See, I don't be trying to put you down when I say don't, don't tell me about the words. Do it. Do it. I'm just trying to get you used to something. People respect that a little bit more, fine. Sometimes there's no words at all exchanged. The person who's needing me, there was no words cause he couldn't speak English. There was no words. They introduced him, said he's an acupuncture. We sat in the room and the first thing he just said, Ah. Ahh. So...put it in? Ah. Next minute he says, bring him to my hospital. That's the hospital there. Next thing, call my teacher. Who is the other person? Call him next thing. Anything you want to know, I will tell you. And it was more than just words. A lot of personal things. Personal type of, well, so-called techniques. That's really close.

But that's the whole thing. It's that: can you do? That's what they looking for. They want to feel a certain kind of energy thing. Do you have a certain kind of feel? Do you understand what energy is about? Can you manipulate? That's what they, somebody else can stick in there saying who? And that's all.

This was the main thing with the musicians. They was very sensitive towards that, that they knew that this was very important, which a lot of people here, they just play. They think they can get the notes down. They can get these rhythms and just do it.

And I'm not saying this because this person is present, you see, but I have never heard anyone play a trumpet like Bill Dixon has—no one. You see, because there's a certain understanding he has on the trumpet. You see, and this may be the first time Bill has heard this, and it's the first time you were probably, I know this is the first time.

I didn't have to come to Bennington. I could have did something else. I think the time Bill, you asked me, I was working in the laboratory. I was running a laboratory for a veterinarian doing clinical work. I was doing my number, but I felt as though that it was very important, you see, to be around a person in which for me, like I feel as though Bill don't ever have to teach me anything about sound or anything.

See, some people may say, well, that's very mystical. But see, I can feel a person and understand why people do certain things. But that's the important thing to me, that this, I'm around a certain kind of vibration. That is very important. That's what I mean about you have to go to certain areas. Don't worry about records or reading a book.

You must be around a certain kind of set. See if you can communicate with a person. If you debate with a person, what happens if you respect certain people—you see? See if you can function around these people. That's what is important. Another thing in Japan that is probably well known in Japan right now—but they would never say nothing to me about it because it was very sensitive—I went to a dojo there. I was taken there by the Hapkido master. From my understanding, it was closed to foreigners. No foreigners were allowed. After 15 minutes of watching a class, the master swordman came into me with a swore in one hand and took his left hand. I was sitting in, like, a lotus type of position, and he came and he smacked me and took a step back with the sword shaking like this.

I've never had an experience like that in my life. Never had an experience in my life like that.

It's two things that could not have taken place for me to challenge him. I think I would've lost. Very simple. I was in the area that was in a wooded area. I didn't know where I was. I was just following some people. Second thing, there was about 40 students in there. Practicing with swords. It was a three-story dojo that was very elaborate and when I went in, I said, wow.

I said, this place is heavy. So it wasn't no attack. Now forget that.

Second thing is don't panic. Don't panic. So I was very cool. And when it was over, it was very strange. You know what they said? Come upstairs and here these people sitting around the table and there was a party in my arm and testing, testing, but he was not jabbing when he did that. Very sensitive. It.

I'm just gonna give you that little taste, and I'm not gonna go into detail about it, but it was very sensitive why he did that.

I've heard about these things.

Of course, you can't really feel it like I did. You just have to imagine that taking place, and it wasn't just no little, you know, anybody from around the corner doing it. This was a very heavy set, a very heavy set.

Now I'm glad that it didn't go too far, you know, whereas on my part, I got hurt, but I am glad that it did happen because it taught me something.

Taught me something about all these things you see in the movies. You read about 'em, these fantastic magazines about who's over here and who's the master. Listen, the master that I taught that, in other words, I met a whole new crew, a whole new crew, people I never even heard about, but I think I'm, I think I'm hip enough now before I went to know, when I see something to die, I don't question myself.

The same thing when I went to Africa. I've seen people, I've been playing for African dances that has come to this country. I've been playing for people that has been, I mean, strict students of African dance for years.

And when I went to African at the Festa, people was coming from out of nowhere doing some things that were just unbelievable with their bodies. Just unbelievable.

I think at this particular time—I mean, you know, you can get a little loose. I don't want to just confine you to like sit there and say like, listen, but I would like you just to hear a little bit of a record that will be released in November. On this record, it was recorded in Japan, with three Japanese musicians and one Korean. It's alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, trumpet, another drummer, and myself. This was recorded after we had finished playing nine concerts.

See, the problem is everybody's not ready to go into certain kind of training.

I know one thing, it's not about shooting dope or getting yourself totally blind off of alcohol and trying to reach a certain level. You're gonna reach, you're gonna reach a level. But what kind of level? See what I'm trying, what I'm trying to do, I hope I'm getting across. There are certain things that you do.

I've seen people go tape their hands up and everything else before they play like a kula drum. You don't have to do that. There are certain herbal solutions that has been used for, I don't know how long, that before you go, you just soak your hands and they make 'em beautiful, makes 'em soft.

They got medicines over here they use now when they go for like Kungfu training and stuff, they call bone medicine. It makes your bones strong. It make your skin soft. We got the same place right here in America.

[puts on record]

Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency

Visitor Audio Interpretations

Visitor name (optional): Tania Colette B.
Date: February 9, 2022

New York Art Quartet

New York Art Quartet (ESP), 1964

Sound recording, 43:29 minutes

Duetting horns dance slyly over a steady plucking bass and Graves' rapid circlets of tins and crashes. The percussion rolls, taps, and whispers, frequently changing course mid-rhythm as saxophone and trombone carry on a breezy, wailing dialogue. In time, a tangent: the horns break from melody and flutter out of sync as the percussion speeds and stutters, the rhythm running ahead and falling behind before landing back where it began. Here, percussion, bass, and brass come together again, greeting each other with a friendly squeak.

Milford Graves

Meditation Among Us, 1977

Sound recording, 36:05 minutes

Meditation Among Us works in two movements. The first movement is driven by tight, chaotic patterns of percussion and brass instruments: a throng of snares and hi-hats sets a frenzied rhythm, with horns wailing and wriggling in joyful conversation with the beat. Graves interjects throughout with vocalizations that range from raspy and guttural to nasal and melodic. In the second movement, piano is the leading percussive instrument. Graves's keystrokes are swooping and ornate, accented with wobbly brass interjections, the occasional crash of a hi-hat, and more grunting vocalizations. In time, the piano descends into a spikier, hard-edged rhythm, as sustained, wailing horns from the first movement return in earnest. The album ends with an ascending piano flourish.

Milford Graves and Andrew Cyrille

Dialogue of the Drums (IPS), 1974

Sound recording, 49:11 minutes

Sound in *Dialogue of the Drums* is produced by a wide assortment of percussive instruments—gongs, bongos, balafon, agogo bells, osi drums, temple blocks—each with its own aural range. Some beats are tiny, some are wooden, some echo, some buzz, some jingle, some sound airy, some sound wet. The performance runs in loose cycles: a beat starts simple, then grows denser and more crowded, Graves and Cyrille moving between percussive techniques, time signatures, and instruments mid-rhythm until a sustained, crashing climax...then the steady beat returns. "The new, free, creative, black drumming definitely has a beginning, and that was it!" exclaims Graves during one of these transitions. Other, more guttural vocalizations pop up throughout the performance—Graves [and Cyrille?] frequently whoop, holler, cry, and grunt in conversation with their instruments. Eventually, the audience joins in. First, Graves calls out a pattern of vocal sounds, and the audience, both children and adults, calls back. He then leads the group into collective noisemaking, joining in with a frenetic drum pattern as audience, instrument, and musician all shout together. The performance ends with a single smash of a drum.

Visitor name (optional): Caroline Ellen Liou

Date: March 6, 2022

New York Art Quartet

New York Art Quartet (ESP), 1964

Sound recording, 43:29 minutes

A lone beam of light pierces through the long shadows of the night, and as if an alarm had just set off, the whole city starts to wake up, still groggy with sleep. A flock of bedraggled pigeons scatters through the morning sky, still streaked with the pink of dawn. In the distance, one car sputters down the Brooklyn Bridge. The smell of butter frying in a pan fills the room, followed by the soft crack of two eggshells in succession. As you roll up your socks and tie your shoelaces, you hear the neighbor's kids run down the stairs, slamming the door behind them. You enter the kitchen to see slightly burnt eggs being flipped over and walk over to the corner, where the coffee is glugging away, to pour yourself a cup. There is a quiet lull, before quickly scarfing down breakfast and scraping the plate clean from the last of the eggs. A jingle of the keys, and you're out the door.

Milford Graves

Meditation Among Us, 1977

Sound recording, 36:05 minutes

Upstairs, there is pandemonium. Two babies scream together, then apart, while their rattles are shaken as hard as they can be shaken. Doors bang open and shut as tiny fists pound themselves against the floor. There is no discernible rhythm nor moment of rest; only chaos reigns. This tantrum continues for a good long while—long after they should have exhausted themselves—until a breeze comes sweeping in, like a breath of fresh air. A welcome respite, the wind feels positively magical, trilling and delicate and whirling in circles. The magic quickly turns into mania, however; the babies have caught on and want to join in on the fun, too. The joy in their laughter is infectious, but they are insistent on smashing the shutters open and shut as many times as possible and with as much force as possible. One baby gurgles in the corner and stops, surprised, having just discovered his own mouth. Elated, he blows bubbles with more spit than air, while his companion descends back into his original tantrum, rolling around and around at dizzying speed. Finally, the madness slows down to one or two wails, like the long and drawn-out buzz of a fly—sharp and insistent—circling around the room, heavy and dying.

Milford Graves and Andrew Cyrille

Dialogue of the Drums (IPS), 1974

Sound recording, 49:11 minutes

Footsteps run towards you in a steady beat—bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum!—coming closer and closer until, at the last second, it circles around and retreats into the distance. Over the treetops, a bird screeches. Drops of water begin to fall, splattering onto broad, flat monstera leaves all around and dripping down vines and landing with a pop! A thunderstorm brews above; static crackles in the air. A bolt of lightning flashes ahead and the sky is lit up. It starts to pour and, suddenly, everyone is rushing back to their homes and trying to find shelter, away from the torrential downpour. Under an alcove of a craggy rock, the rain seems to subside. As it ebbs, drops of rainwater glisten here and there, catching the light just so—sliding down the shimmering threads of a spiderweb, or collecting into shallow pools perfectly shaped like “o”s—and the pitter-patter of the rain is beautiful once more. Everything is soaked.