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Transcription, Recording, and Authority in 'Classic' Minimalism

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Abstract

This article considers several prominent pieces of minimalism in their movement from primary sound recording to secondary transcription. In place of the score-based formalism of much musicological scholarship on minimalism, I draw on my own archival work and interviews to consider the frequency of transcriptions of minimalism, as well as the politico-historical aspects of minimalism's development that are elided when the distinction between score and transcription is not taken into account. I argue that defining minimalism in relation to material practices of composing, writing, performing, and listening – rather than to formal features like gradual process, long duration, and diatonicism – helps in defining minimalism as a cohesive field of musical production.

Many of the most prominent pieces of minimalist music from the 1960s and 1970s were not originally planned as, or performed from, scores. The composers who would come to be known as minimalists rejected what Tony Conrad later called the 'authoritarian trappings of the score', instead developing a non-coercive model of authorship that prioritized collaborative rehearsals recorded to magnetic tape in place of writing documents to hand off as delegation to other performers.[1] Performing their own music, and recording it to tape rather than to paper, were both central to the minimalist critique of art music authorship, as traditionally represented by the composer, hunched over a desk, inscribing marks on paper. In several prominent cases examined below, the 'scores' used for contemporary performance and analysis are in fact transcriptions created decades later by performers and scholars eager to engage minimalism as documented art music, often at the request of composers eager to declare sole propriety. Proper attention has not been paid to the authorial and political distinction between scores and transcriptions in historiography on minimalism. In this article, I rely on my own archival work and interviews with transcribers of minimalist works to argue that the absence of scores, and the retroactive creation of transcriptions, draws attention to the authorial politics of writing and listening that led to the music we now call minimalism.

I use the term 'minimalism' – and moreover, 'classic minimalism' – because rather than supplement, complicate, or problematize the historical veracity of this label, I am interested in the material practices that have long led critics, listeners, and historians to provide the style

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1 Tony Conrad, 'LYssophobia: On Four Violins', in Liner notes to *Early Minimalism Volume 1* (Table of the Elements CD AS-33, 1997).

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with its discursive weight. As Ross Cole writes, drawing on Benjamin Piekut, the grouping of Young, Riley, Reich, and Glass ('the big four') is 'not self-evident, but itself a performative act requiring intellectual labor'.[2] This work has typically occurred through formalist criteria, as in the recent *Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*. In their introduction, the book's editors define the style through a Wittgensteinian set of 'family similarities', including harmonic stasis, drone, repetition, gradual processes, static instrumentation, a steady beat, metamusic (a fascinating element left entirely unexplored in the volume), the use of pure tunings, and the audibility of structures.[3] The 'family similarities' definition is explicitly aimed at opening up the style beyond the 'big four'; because of this, when the contributors to the volume attempt to move furthest afield, it requires constant reference back to the stylistic techniques popularized by those same composers. Thus while the big four have perhaps receded as the central points of study and analysis, they have become hegemonic gatekeepers, as any new claim of a composer or piece as 'minimalist' requires reference back to the formalist techniques popularized by the 'big four'. Relying on formalist techniques popularized by the big four, and then using those techniques as definitional criteria to expand the definition beyond them, has led to questions of the viability of the term generally. As Jonathan Bernard, one of the *Companion's* contributors, remarks in his chapter, 'there is less certainty now than ever before about just what minimalism actually is'.[4]

While I agree with the *Ashgate* editors' taxonomy of minimalist sounds and techniques, I would suggest that they are the formal effects of an absent practical cause: a redistribution of the authorial relationship to writing and listening, which I tie together in this article through the concept of transcription. I argue that the redistribution of the composerly relationship to listening, writing, and performing marks the novel political and stylistic intervention of what we typically refer to – with or without dissent – as minimalism. Here my understanding of politics, and a politics of authorship, is drawn from the philosopher Jacques Rancière, whose value for my article is outlined below. Throughout, I articulate the authorial–political distinction between an originating score and a retroactive transcription, highlighting how the gap between the two can help in developing a clearer definition of minimalism through its unique authorial function.

My argument will proceed as follows. First, I outline my reasons for borrowing from the historiographical and political thought of Jacques Rancière, rather than turning to the strong existing literature on musical ontology. Next, I build upon scholarship on Steve Reich's *Drumming* (1971) to clarify my conceptual activation of 'transcription' as the movement from a primary, listened-to magnetic tape recording to subsequent, looked-at marks on paper. Next, I compare two influential groups of musicians in relation to whom the composers who would come to be called minimalist positioned themselves in the 1960s, creating an authorial

2 Ross Cole, '"Sound Effects (O.K., Music)": Steve Reich and the Visual Arts in New York City, 1966–1968', *Twentieth-Century Music* 11/2 (2014), 219.

3 Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll Ap Siôn, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 4–6.

4 Jonathan Bernard, 'Minimalism and Pop', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 353.

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position that would become definitive of what Kyle Gann and others call 'Downtown' music. I then move on to three case studies that draw extensively on my interviews with composer-transcribers of minimalism. The first focuses on composer and clarinetist Evan Ziporyn, whose ideas on the relationship between minimalism and transcription were an initial impetus for this research. Ziporyn's critically reflexive transcription practice in pieces such as Brian Eno's *Music for Airports* (with Bang on a Can) and Terry Riley's *Poppy Nogood* also helped me in theorizing the potential relationships between a primary, canonic recording and its eventual written documentation. Second, I track Steve Reich's paradoxical explorations in documenting his music as he developed perhaps the best-known minimalist piece, *Music for 18 Musicians* (1974–6).[5] Here I draw together my interviews with the composer Marc Mellits (who transcribed the piece for its 1996 publication by Boosey & Hawkes) and again with Ziporyn (as he performed on the 1998 Nonesuch CD),[6] as well as documents from Reich's archive at the Paul Sacher Stiftung. My goal is not to challenge Reich's status as an author, but rather to highlight the changing conception of musical authorship that his practice helped actualize. Third, I discuss transcriptions of La Monte Young's music by the composer and pianist Michael Harrison and the composer C. C. Hennix. I argue that Young's practice reframes and strengthens musical authorship through problematizing its limits, all while confusing the material, authorial act of writing with a devotional form of transcription as a legalistic declaration of propriety.

Rancièrian politics and historiography

Despite my interest in the status of documents of minimalist music, this article is not so much concerned with musical ontology as with the politics of authorship. That is, I do not intend to provide a specific historical sketch to add to Lydia Goehr's analytic of the history of the 'work' concept, nor do I want to valorize the performance of minimalism in place of a dominating score in following Nicholas Cook (though I am drawing on and critical of what he calls the 'music-as-writing' paradigm).[7] It is to evade these prominent models of musical ontology that I rely in this article on the thought of Jacques Rancière. While Jairo Moreno and Gavin Steingo have recently introduced some of Rancière's concepts into musicological discourse, their reading is concerned with directly mapping Rancière's more recent 'regimes of art' onto the history of music in a way that at times feels decidedly un-Rancièrian.[8] Instead, I draw on Rancière's earlier political and historiographical writing to present the egalitarian force enacted in minimalist musical practices, against what Rancière might call the 'policing' practices of Western art music discourse. The police is not a term of 'disparagement', as Samuel Chambers writes; instead, the police simply designates 'the way things are' – the 'consensual'

5 Steve Reich, *Music for 18 Musicians* (ECM 1–1129, 1978).

6 Steve Reich, *Music for 18 Musicians* (Nonesuch CD 79448–2, 1998)

7 Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) and Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

8 See Jairo Moreno and Gavin Steingo, 'Rancière's Equal Music', *Contemporary Music Review* 31/5–6 (2012).

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view which creates a direct link between sensory perception and the making sense of it.[9] In this context, what Cook accurately labels the 'music-as-writing' paradigm stood as a strong police presence (i.e., 'the way things are', rather than the direct application of institutional power or force) when the young minimalists began their compositional careers.[10] Further, when music scholars analyse the 'scores' of minimalist works without fully accounting historically for their contingent status, the 'police' norms of musicology do damage to the political and authorial history of what we now call minimalist music. In contrast to the police, Rancière presents a definition of politics as a disruption of sensibility, the redistribution of what is given in sensation, through the disruptive force of equality. 'The police' – here, the discourse of 'music-as-writing' as exemplified by their teachers' generation – Rancière says, 'provide politics with its spaces and subjects'.[11] Political events can only ever occur in relation to a 'policing' logic that orders sensation and sense-making under the logic of 'the way things are'. Rancière writes, in contrast to his teacher Louis Althusser, that the primary intervention of the police into public space is to reassert the obviousness of what there is and what there is not, by declaring 'Move along! There is nothing to see here!'[12] Politics is always aesthetic in that the introduction of a new element of visibility, or a new subject, or the new recognition of a noise as instead reasoned sound or discourse, always occurs through aesthetic reorientation. This is the political aspect of my turn to Rancière.

Rancière's political concepts make little sense, however, without the context of his early historiographical work. Early in his career, Rancière made an extended journey into nineteenth-century French workers' archives. This research led to his seminal *Proletarian Nights* (1974), as well as the collective journal *Les Révoltes Logiques* (1974–85).[13] In turning to workers' writings, Rancière found concrete evidence to dispute the historical narrative used in labour sociology which insisted that the early labour movement was led by the most skilled workers and artisans, or moreover, that workers were too illiterate and too tired after a long day's work to engage in discourse and argument about their status. Through archives of workers' letters, poetry, and journals, Rancière showed that the dominant tradespeople involved in pre-1848 workers' strikes and agitation – such as shoemakers and tailors – can only be understood as atop a hierarchy as a result of a retroactive assumption: 'we have a tendency to project onto artisanal practice the image of bourgeois luxury . . . Thus we project the image of Parisian fashion onto the professionals of the clothing trade.' By turning to the words of the workers themselves, rather than a scholarly 'myth of the artisan', Rancière shows that, in fact, 'it was not professional pride that fuelled the militant ideas of the shoemakers.

9 Samuel Chambers, *The Lessons of Rancière* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 65ff.

10 Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 2.

11 Jacques Rancière, *The Method of Equality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), 114.

12 Jacques Rancière, eighth thesis from the 'Ten Theses on Politics', *Theory & Event* 5/3 (2001).

13 Jacques Rancière, *Proletarian Nights: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (London: Verso, 2012). Rancière's contributions to *Les Révoltes Logiques* are collected in English in Jacques Rancière, *Staging the People: The Proletarian and His Double* (London: Verso, 2011) and Jacques Rancière, *The Intellectual and His People: Staging the People, Volume 2* (New York: Verso, 2012). For further context on the collective, see also Kristin Ross, *May 68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 124–35.

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If the trade produced so many activists and dreamers, it is more likely because of the extent of forced leisure-time, and the fact that the material and symbolic rewards of the trade were so very insignificant'.[14]

To be sure, there is no one-to-one methodological correlation to map between nineteenth-century workers' discourse and the material practices of minimalism in the 1960s and 1970s. What's important is Rancière's historical method. While the terminology was not yet in place in his early work on labour archives, his method is to supplement the 'police' background he is analysing with concrete thought from the archives that disrupts facile historical assumptions used to uphold inegalitarian conceptions. Recognizing and articulating the minimalist revolt against a score-based Western art music conception of authorship is necessary to contextualize the material practices enacted and, most importantly, how those practices led to the sound of minimalism. Much as the proleptical casting of tailors as purveyors of bourgeois luxury misses the fact that dreams of revolution result from work dissatisfaction and the excess free time associated with contingent labour, a history of minimalism that casts these musicians as writers of scores to be handed off to performers and analysts entirely misses the networks of labour, authority, and mutual aid that produced the sound of minimalism. The composers involved set out to disarticulate the connections implied between art music and mastery, the score and authority, composing and power. While this is of course not unique to the minimalist composers, there has been a consistent failure to fully account for the radical position of the 'big four' (and beyond) minimalist composers in the relationship between their material practices of working and composing, their rejection of the models of authority put forward by their teachers, and the resultant sound of the music that they created. In short, I think that the absent cause tying together the music we label 'minimalist' is a rejection of the model of art music authority they inherited, and their decision, almost across the board early on, to redistribute priority from scores towards performance and recording. The music they developed resulted from this combined material and political position. Below I articulate this point by focusing on transcriptions of minimalist works. The necessity of transcription points, first of all, to one very simple fact: there were initially no complete scores of the works examined below – a state of things that, in some minor but profound ways, troubled their position as art music.

Trans-scribing minimalism

The minimalists' complex relationship to the score has been often noted, but rarely directly thematized. Keith Potter's comments on some pieces as transcriptions, but does not give the issue any conceptual weight when he turns towards analysis of the works in question. He writes that the 'score' for La Monte Young's' *the day of the antler* 'was actually transcribed not for performance but in order to apply for a Guggenheim Fellowship'.[15] That the score is in

14 Jacques Rancière, 'The Myth of the Artisan: Critical Reflections on a Category of Social History', *International Labor and Working Class History* 24 (1983), 2.

15 Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 74.

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Marian Zazeela's calligraphy and that the piece's authorship has been long-contested by Tony Conrad and John Cale, both of whom appear on the tape that Young/Zazeela transcribed, does not trouble Potter's analysis. He writes that the score is an opportunity to consider what 'Young has written down and how notation might be used to analyse the music.' This pair of comments highlights that Potter was clearly aware of the historical and authorial problems potentially highlighted by the transcription, but that, even still, the score is analysable as an 'illustration' of what Young was doing at that point.[16] Potter's approach to Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* is similar. He recognizes that the piece is a transcription, writing, '[n]o complete score authenticated by the composer existed until 1996, when Marc Mellits completed what is basically a transcription of the 1978 recording'.[17] Again, however, any potential political or historical impact of the distance between the original piece (composed to tape during rehearsal, with sketched directions to members of Reich's ensemble, but no full score), and the eventual transcription that he analyses in the following pages, is downplayed.[18] Further, as will become clear below, to call Mellits's score a direct transcription is to downplay his role in the creative process. A recent article that analysed *Music for 18* at length with score excerpts did not mention that the score is a transcription – perhaps because the published score does not explicitly either.[19]

Sumanth Gopinath and Kerry O'Brien have both written on Steve Reich the transcriber in relation to his 1971 composition *Drumming*.[20] Gopinath labels *Drumming*'s opening construction of the complete rhythm the 'transcription moment', productively suggesting an analytic resonance between the composed music and its ethnographic origins – that is, in relation to listening and writing. He argues that this moment marks the subjectivization of

16 Much more recently, Timothy Morton has discussed *the day of the antler*, along with some of Young's other works, as exemplary of the 'Age of Asymmetry' in the arts. Since *day of the antler* has never been officially released, Morton is surely relying on Potter's presentation of the score when he writes, 'And so he produced *15 VIII 65: Day of the Antler* . . . This astonishing title is evidently a hypertitle, full of objects'. Morton highlights Zazeela's calligraphy, which he calls an 'adjunct to the sonic space' that turns 'script into the legible arabesque it already is'. That is, while Zazeela's calligraphy is made central to understanding the music, for Morton, the piece's importance is specifically in the relationship between the document and a sound (perhaps imagined, for Morton) that he claims Young produced. See Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 170.

17 Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 199.

18 Robert Fink does not note at all, in his extended analysis of *Music for 18 Musicians*, that the score excerpts he is working from were not written by the composer whose authority is implicitly referenced in the analyses. Fink is, however, aware of the problem; when I presented an earlier version of this article at the Society for Minimalist Music conference in Helsinki, Finland in September 2015, Fink noted that, when he was writing the dissertation from which *Repeating Ourselves* is drawn, the first transcriptions of minimalist pieces were being published and that he made the decision not to include scores of these pieces, as he viewed them as ontologically based in the recordings, rather than their new transcriptions. See Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

19 Marcelle Pierson, 'Voice, Technē, and *Jouissance* in *Music for 18 Musicians*', *Twentieth-Century Music* 13/1 (2016).

20 Reich's relationship to Ghanaian music, and the broader 1970s turn to ethnography among composers, has been examined in a number of publications. See Sumanth Gopinath, 'Contraband Children: The Politics of Race and Liberation in the Music of Steve Reich, 1965–1966' (DPhil diss., Yale University 2005); and Martin Scherzinger 'Curious Intersections, Uncommon Magic: Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain*', *Current Musicology* 79/80 (2005).

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the 'ethnographer-composer-protagonist' who discovers not a new external music, but his own music through transcribing the music of another culture – here, that of the Ewe people of Ghana.[21] Reich's concern for transcription and authority is evident in his engagement with Ghanaian music, both studying first hand in Accra, and through his reading of A. M. Jones's seminal *Studies in African Music*.[22] According to Gopinath, 'in the act of transcription, Reich demonstrates a compositional "mastery" over his own materials' – an authorial mastery that is complicated in *Drumming* by the 'the tension between Reich's authority as a composer and his lack of authority as a performer'.[23]

Kerry O'Brien develops Gopinath's concerns, focusing on the material practice of studying Ewe music as it played out in *Drumming*: 'Reich's transcription drafts, now held at the Paul Sacher Foundation, suggest that the composer's transcription experience was not masterful, but rather initially disorienting'.[24] The network created between Reich's earlier study in Ghana and the eventual composition of *Drumming* is expanded in O'Brien's article outward from Gopinath's 'transcription moment', into a 'moment of transcription and disorientation'. O'Brien (an accomplished percussionist herself) argues that, in writing the piece, Reich makes the leap from, first, his own practice of listening to and transcribing his drumming lessons from tape, to, second, the disorienting ambiguity of the opening construction in *Drumming*: 'If audience members were asked to transcribe this revised single-note opening of *Drumming*', she suggests, 'they would likely make a mistake similar to Reich's own transcription error in Ghana.' O'Brien proposes that the goal was to maintain the disorienting effect for his listeners in keeping with Reich's 'deploy[ment] of ambiguous meters and non-coinciding downbeats'.[25] O'Brien thus finds in Reich's listening the practice from which his writing results, as well as the way that the two interact to produce the possibility of the audience joining Reich in that zone of disorientation and ambiguity that takes place in prioritizing listening over writing.

While O'Brien and Gopinath both highlight the importance of transcription in reading *Drumming*, the concept functions as a descriptor for a moment in a single piece, rather than any broader claim about the relationship between minimalism and transcription. Further, the focus is on Reich as a transcriber of the music of another culture, rather than drawing on the important role of transcription of minimalist pieces from recordings.[26] Gopinath's and O'Brien's claims can actually be broadened, using transcription to highlight a

21 Sumanth Gopinath, '"A Composer Looks East": Steve Reich and Discourse on Non-Western Music', *The Glendora Review: African Quarterly on the Arts* 3/3–4 (2004), 141.

22 A. M. Jones, *Studies in African Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

23 Gopinath, 'A Composer Looks East', 138.

24 Kerry O'Brien, 'Hearing Disorientation in Steve Reich's *Drumming* (1971)', *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung* 27 (April 2014), 37.

25 O'Brien, 'Hearing Disorientation', 40.

26 Something similar could be said of Glenn Claude Lemieux's dissertation, which provides a full transcription of Glass's *Music in 12 Parts* alongside Lemieux's own critical commentary on creating the score. Nevertheless, Lemieux does not explicitly dwell on the relationship between minimalism and transcription. See Glenn Claude Lemieux, 'Construction, Reconstruction, and Deconstruction: *Music in 12 Parts* by Philip Glass' (DPhil diss., University of Iowa, 2000).

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contingent, unstable, and constantly renegotiated relationship between listening and writing in minimalism. Building upon their contributions, and filling in the gap in Potter's analyses, my conceptual use of 'transcription' draws on the very literal and always doubled meaning of its two constituent terms. To trans-scribe is, first, to move from one medium to another, and second, it is the art of a scribe whose writing does not guarantee proprietary claim to the sounds recorded, specifically in that the scribe writes down something that already exists (on tape, in the air, in the eardrum). In short, a scribe is not an author, and the secondary gains derived from authorship should not be mapped onto a scribe without careful attention to the relationship between document and transcription.

As such, I want to focus on transcription in its authorial and political distinction from the score. First, the minimalist transcriptions examined below involve movement from a primary magnetic tape recording, which many of the composers involved recognize as records of the compositional process, to a secondary written document. Second, these transcriptions, unlike scores, were not the prescriptive documents that authorized the initial performances, and thus do not attest, in the traditional sense, to the authority of the proper name at the top of the page. These two criteria place transcriptions in contrast with scores, the prescriptive nature of which unify Western art music as founded on documents – a criteria which historians and performers frequently insist minimalism meets, despite its originating critique of that tradition. In short, the aspect of the score that I am concerned with is what we could call, following Hayden White, 'the content of the form' of the documents of musical authorship – not so much *what* they tell us (the notes put to paper), as *that* or *how* they tell us (delegating instructions for performers), and how this written telling, as one generative moment in constituting the distinction between 'art' and 'popular' musics, was definitively rejected by the minimalists in their early work.[27]

Examining the influence of two earlier groups of musicians helps to clarify the networks of priority between performing, writing, and listening in relation to which the minimalists responded as students. First, the position to which they were negatively responding is represented by the two stylistic factions that Steve Reich was probably the first to collapse into one position when he wrote that, in both Cagean chance and serial music, 'the compositional process and the sounding music have no audible connection'.[28] In his article 'The Composer as Specialist', Milton Babbitt argues for an idealized, even utopian, compositional practice in which the formerly necessary evil of a listening audience has been excised. Brian Harker has recently defended Babbitt and his much-maligned article, writing 'after enduring years of fractious relations with unsympathetic musicians and the general public, Babbitt [in the article] wearily proposes a ceasefire, agreeing in essence to no longer inflict his music on public audiences if society would simply grant him the academic resources and protection to pursue his professional interests unmolested'.[29] While critiques of the article often focus

27 See Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987).

28 Steve Reich, 'Music as a Gradual Process', in *Writings on Music, 1965–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35.

29 Brian Harker, 'Milton Babbitt Encounters Academia (and Vice Versa)', *American Music* 26/3 (Fall 2008), 366.

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on the title given to the article for its popular publication in *High Fidelity*, 'Who Cares If You Listen?', I find Babbitt's original title more compelling, as the point is specifically about arguing for an asocial image of the specialist composer, isolated from not only a particular listening audience but also the very idea of audiences and the danger of them potentially misunderstanding. It is worth remembering Babbitt's climactic assertion, for the impact of this perspective as a (negative) influence on the minimalists can hardly be overstated:

> I dare suggest that the composer would do himself and his music an immediate and eventual service by total, resolute, and voluntary withdrawal from this public world to one of private performance and electronic media, with its very real possibility of complete elimination of the public and social aspects of musical composition.[30]

While none of the minimalists directly studied with Babbitt, he is surely emblematic of a certain figure during the student years of the cohort in question: Babbitt's ethos is shared with the 'maniacs' and 'creeps' that Philip Glass found dominating Paris while he was studying with Nadia Boulanger,[31] or the 'armchair composers' that Young criticizes for creating 'totally theoretical works that exist only on paper'.[32] Indeed, Edward Strickland notes 'Reich seems to have been temperamentally unattracted to atonality from the start, though he felt obliged to explore it.' Strickland importantly continues that Reich 'was equally out of sympathy with Cageian aleatorics and the sometimes vaudevillean theatricality it engendered'.[33]

Alongside the serial tradition – of which I have chosen Babbitt as the representative American figure of the late 1950s – Reich includes Cage as a symmetrical model of this problem of authority derived from the score. Benjamin Piekut has provided perhaps the best summary of the problem as Reich understood it in New York of the mid-1960s, writing that Cage's 'score for *Variations V* . . . was created *after* its first performance in 1965'. Cage saw this gesture as an important step in the dematerialization of the 'score' – and many historians have followed him – but Piekut fundamentally disagrees: 'It hasn't done so at all. Cage still expected someone else to perform his work.' That is, Cage's work may have once again reoriented the score-performance binary on which so much of the musicological conception of the 'work' relies (as Goehr's book shows through various periods in history), but the real authorial problem that many in the 1960s attacked was the position of authority implied by the economy of delegation instituted by the score. Further, focusing on historical method and the archive, Piekut writes, 'Cage's choice to score even an unscored event like *Variations V* sets

30 Milton Babbitt, 'The Composer as Specialist (1958)', in *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 48–54.

31 Philip Glass, quoted in Edward Strickland, *American Composers: Dialogues on Contemporary Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 8. I should note that, in quoting Glass, Strickland is making much the same comparison that I am (how musics of the 'non-Western world' 'liberated' the minimalists from the paired tyranny of 1950s serialism and aleatory) though to different ends. Jeremy Grimshaw cites the often repeated quote to Sheryl Garratt, 'Fun with Monotony',*The Face* (July 1986), 37. See Jeremy Grimshaw, 'High, "Low," and the Plastic Arts: Philip Glass and the Symphony in the Age of Postproduction', *The Musical Quarterly* (Autumn, 2002), 504.

32 William Duckworth, *Talking Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1995), 248.

33 Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins* (Bloomington: Indiana, 1993), 188.

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off a chain reaction of paper: music with a title is listed on a program, and that program ends up in several different archives. Then there is the score, its autograph, sketches, facsimiles, and final printed copy housed at hundreds of libraries around the world.'[34] Thus, while Cage writing the score after its performance may superficially resemble my own concern for transcriptions in minimalism, the political intent from which the gesture derived is quite different, though there will be resonances with La Monte Young's practice below.

In contrast to these armchair composers, creeps, and vaudevillians were the scholars and musicians who influenced the minimalists in their prioritization of performance and recording to magnetic tape, as well as releasing commercial albums, in place of inscribing notes on paper. These include early ethnomusicology seminars that several of the minimalists took as graduate students; the 1957 album by Ali Akbar Khan that introduced La Monte Young and Tony Conrad to Hindustani music;[35] Steve Reich's 1962 discovery of A. M. Jones's transcriptions of African drumming;[36] Philip Glass's 1965 work as translator-transcriber between Ravi Shankar and Western studio musicians;[37] Reich's 1970 trip to Ghana to study drumming at the University of Accra; Young's, Marian Zazeela's, and Terry Riley's study, beginning in the early 1970s, with Pandit Pran Nath;[38] and so on. In place of the armchair creeps and their dream of composition without listeners, here were musicians who performed their own music with no concern for writing, and scholars whose practice was to produce documents of study from their listening. Reich makes this contrast particularly clear in his conversation with Edward Strickland:

> [I heard Coltrane live] probably more [than fifty times]. Here [in New York] at the Five Spot, the Blue Note, the Half Note, then Jazz Workshop in San Francisco. I'd go five or six or seven times during each of his stints, and he was playing a lot then. When I was at Mills College from 1961 to '63, most of the graduate students were writing pieces which they didn't play, which one could doubt whether they *heard* in their heads, and which were so enormously complex that they made the page virtually black, but you wondered if they'd ever be performed. And at night I went

34 Benjamin Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 17–18. The composer Ned Sublette has similarly remarked 'Cage's work may have radically undermined the function of the score, but the position of the score in his work was primary . . . All of Cage's work was scored, that I can recall. And it was not only scored; the scores were published by C.F. Peters and dutifully purchased by university libraries everywhere, where we bookish young composition students imbibed them'. Ned Sublette, quoted in Tim Lawrence, 'Pluralism, Minor Deviations, and Radical Change: The Challenge to Experimental Music in Downtown New York, 1971–85', in *Tomorrow is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*, ed. Benjamin Piekut (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 73.

35 Barry Shank, *The Political Force of Musical Beauty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 112–17.

36 Along with O'Brien and Gopinath above, see also Steve Reich 'Gahu – A Dance of the Ewe Tribe in Ghana (1971)', in *Writings on Music*, 55–63.

37 See, among others, Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, 204–5; Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 257–60; Philip Glass, *Words Without Music* (New York: Liverlight, 2015), 129–35; David Chapman, 'Collaboration, Presence, and Community: The Philip Glass Ensemble, 1966–1976' (DPhil diss., Washington University, 2013), 4.

38 See Jeremy Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 103–13.

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> to hear John Coltrane, who picks up his saxophone and *plays* and the music comes *out*. It was almost a moral dilemma. It would've been almost immoral not to follow in Coltrane's direction because of the musical honesty and authenticity involved.[39]

Each of these methods of documenting music articulates a possible relationship between writing and performing music in the 1960s. Whether a composer interacts with their compositions as sound or as inscribed instructions for other performers produces different requirements for documentation – and subsequently different relationships between composer and performer, and between musicians and listeners. For Kyle Gann, the minimalists become the first Downtown composers in that they 'do not feel that the meaning of a piece of music can be entirely captured by notation, and they often develop pieces in rehearsal rather than by trying to notate every nuance for an ensemble of complete and possibly unsympathetic strangers' as is the case in Uptown music.[40] At its core, the Downtown ethos contends that 'it is not the composer's responsibility to make [their music] available for analysis – [rather] it is his or her responsibility to bring it to performance'.[41]

Indeed, Gann has focused much of his career on transcribing minimalist and postminimalist works as a means of convincing other scholars within his discipline of the fact that 'the music is worth analysing'.[42] His transcription of Dennis Johnson's *November* is particularly notable in its dual role both as supplementary intervention into the early history of minimalism and as the practical introduction of a new piece of music.[43] Gann's interest began in 1992 when La Monte Young gave him a 'hiss-filled, barely audible surviving recording . . . made on reel-to-reel by [Terry] Jennings and Johnson'.[44] The piece was originally performed by Johnson in 1959, but was known only anecdotally through Young's claim about its influence on *The Well-Tuned Piano* as a semi-improvisatory, long duration work for solo piano.[45] Years later, after tracking down the enigmatic composer, Gann received a letter from Johnson that attached 'the complete "score," if that is the correct term'. Johnson further wrote that, 'the recording must stand as the primary ~~definition~~ example of the piece'. Elsewhere Gann writes, 'the score he sent me was made after the fact, in an attempt to set down what he had performed several years earlier'.[46]

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39 Strickland, *American Composers*, 38. The influence of jazz performance on at least three of the 'big four' – Young, Riley, and Reich – has been extensively noted in their interviews and plays a major role in this move away from the score, and is a topic that demands more extensive and specialized focus.

40 Kyle Gann, 'Breaking the Chain Letter: An Essay on Downtown Music' (February 2012), www.kylegann.com/downtown.html.

41 Kyle Gann, 'Getting Off the Assembly Line' (blog 25 January 2010). www.artsjournal.com/postclassic/2010/01/getting˙off˙the˙assembly˙line.html.

42 Gann, 'Getting off the Assembly Line'.

43 In 2013, the record label Irritable Hedgehog released a full performance of *November* – on four CDs – by pianist Andy Lee (IHM 007M, 2013).

44 Kyle Gann, 'Remembering *November*', *PostClassic* (blog 7 October 2007), www.artsjournal.com/postclassic/2007/10/remembering˙november.html.

45 Kyle Gann, 'Reconstructing November', *American Music* 28/4 (2010), 481.

46 Gann, 'Reconstructing November', 483.

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While Gann argues that '*November* is a beautiful, sensitively written work, enjoyable both to play and to listen to',[47] the reason that he began the transcription, and that the work caught his attention, is that it was presumed to have a specific historical importance in 'exhibit[ing] an early use of many features that would become common in minimalism, some of them perhaps found here for the first time'.[48] These include the use of diatonic tonality (as Young's earlier *Trio for Strings* [1958] was twelve-tone[49]), extreme duration, harmonic stasis, and motivic repetition. In recent texts such as the *Ashgate Research Companion*, *November* has already taken its place in the list of potential 'first' minimalist pieces,[50] which range from *November* to Young's *Trio* to *In C* and, in what Tony Conrad calls 'the big bang of minimalism', the drones of the Theatre of Eternal Music.[51] This list of potential firsts, of course, depends on what aspect of minimalism a listener or historian considers a sufficiently novel break from the supposed continuity that came before. Importantly, each of the four pieces reveals an entirely different relationship between composing and writing: the *Trio* is the only one that functioned as a traditional score, while *November* was transcribed from tape (four decades later, after almost complete invisibility), the score for *In C* was printed on the back of a record sleeve (eliminating the private and distinct circulation typically assumed of art music and recordings), and the Theatre of Eternal Music, at least as Conrad recognizes it, never used scores at all.[52] Nevertheless, in discussing these pieces, musicologists typically focus on analysing and labelling criteria such as duration, stasis, diatonic tonality, and repetition – that is, they focus on the formalist taxonomy of 'family similarities' that can be identified and labelled on paper.

I contend that the confusion over defining minimalism can be traced, at least in part, to the inability to locate a first piece of minimalism that sets the terms for what in the music is considered the most vital break with what came before. Further, these historians have been hard pressed to decide what minimalism's novel contribution is because of the absence of clear documents which can be catalogued, ordered, and analysed to locate priority. A more contextually complete understanding of minimalism as a style can come from considering the sounding 'family similarities' as means taken up towards a more important end: redistributing the relationships between the material practices of composing, writing, performing, and listening. That is, the 'family similarities' are the workable, practical results of an absent cause: the movement away from a delegating, originating score and the authorial politics it inscribes.

47 Gann, 'Reconstructing November', 490.

48 Gann, 'Reconstructing November', 489.

49 See Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 34–40, and Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line*, 33–6.

50 See Potter, Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn, *The Ashgate Research Companion*, 4.

51 Conrad, 'an EARful: FOUR VIOLINS and EARLY MINIMALISM', in Liner notes to *Early Minimalism, Volume 1* (Table of the Elements. CD AS-33, 1997), 4.

52 'The solution was to dispense with the score, and thereby with the authoritarian trappings of composition, but to retain cultural production in music as an activity … In keeping with the technology of the early 1960s, the score was replaced by the tape recorder. This, then, was a total displacement of the composer's role, from progenitor of the sound to groundskeeper at its gravesite'. See Conrad, 'LYssophobia: on FOUR VIOLINS', 18–20.

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Case study one: Evan Ziporyn on the record-transcription relationship in minimalism

The authorial and political relationships manifested between minimalist recordings (whether commercial releases or archival tapes) and their transcriptions has long fascinated one of the dominant thinkers of minimalist performance practice – the composer and clarinettist Evan Ziporyn. Indeed, it was Ziporyn who first pointed out to me, when I visited him at MIT in September 2014, the parallel between minimalism's transcription-based performance practice and the fact that many of the minimalists took early seminars in ethnomusicology as students in the 1950s. When I spoke with Ziporyn again by Skype in August 2015, he told me that his awareness of the complex relationship between minimalist recordings and their written documentation goes back at least fifteen years to when he, Michael Gordon, Julie Wolfe, and David Lang were each transcribing their own sections of Brian Eno's *Music for Airports* for Bang on a Can's 1998 recording.[53] In that case, he told me, 'what was actually culturally meaningful was [the 1978] recording, so our version should be a version of that recording. Because there was a cultural attachment. That is the piece that is meaningful. Not any possible version but that version.'[54]

Cecilia Sun has defended Eno's 'anti-auratic' politics against Bang on a Can's 'reactionary' transcription, which she considers a 'regressive' recreation of history in their own image. Ironically, this binary drives her to criticisms that might typically be read as a reactionary defence of the traditional composer. Sun distrusts the live performance of *Music for Airports*, claiming that 'Bang on a Can violates the basic point [of the piece] ... by dragging it into the concert hall.'[55] Much the same, their collective and collaborative modes of authorship trouble Sun, who claims that in 'sharing credit for the first movement with Robert Wyatt and Rhett Davies', Bang on a Can 'further undermines the integrity of the piece *as a whole*'.[56] This critique is particularly confusing as Wyatt and Davies are credited as co-authors on the original LP as pianist and engineer, respectively, which suggests that their contributions have always been recognized as part of the 'whole'. Both of these concerns – the performative and the collaborative – centre on Sun's presumed access to authorial intention, which continues when she attacks Ziporyn for having 'moved *Music for Airports* far away from Eno's original desire to create music with no personality'.[57] In all, Sun accuses Bang on a Can of using 'acts of performance to assert their own version of post-war music history' and 'impos[ing] some legibility on the messiness of post-historic music historiography' by consistently asserting their 'reactionary ideologies of control, formal legibility, and complexity'.[58]

53 Bang on a Can, *Music for Airports – Brian Eno* (Point Music, 1998). In 2007, Bang on a Can's label Cantaloupe Music released *Music for Airports (Live)*. Both of these are in addition to Brian Eno's original LP, *Ambient 1: Music for Airports* (EG/Polydor, 1978). See also Eric Tamm, *Brian Eno: His Music and the Vertical Color of Sound* (Boston: Faber & Faber, 1989).

54 Author's first conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Boston, MA, 17 September 2014).

55 Cecilia Sun, 'Resisting the Airport: Bang on a Can Performs Brian Eno', *Musicology Australia* 29 (2007), 151.

56 Sun, 'Resisting the Airport', 152 (my emphasis).

57 Sun, 'Resisting the Airport', 155.

58 Sun, 'Resisting the Airport', 156–8.

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Sun's fear of Bang on a Can's 'reactionary' effort to bring a studio piece into the concert hall seems misplaced to me, particularly when undertaken through a theory of politics premised on binaries of a good 'anti-auratic' intention vs. a bad 'reactionary' position. Eno's piece, created entirely in studio to tape by someone who largely considers himself a non-musician, became as fundamental to Ziporyn's (and Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe's) music education as were any more traditional score-based pieces of art music. In the case of *Music for Airports*, though, the engagement with the work was always entirely mediated by *listening* and never by reading – that the transcribers, as part of their practice, felt compelled to create a document of the music is not inherently negative or reactionary. Most importantly, as I will continue to show below, despite Sun's deeply intention-oriented concerns, Bang on a Can's transcription is more the norm than the exception within its minimalist lineage: transcription is essentially the only way that any such minimalist work has survived beyond the initial recording. Ziporyn, at least, is very aware of the potential paradoxes and challenges involved in undertaking this task; when I asked him if transcription risked destroying the openness of these works, he responded that it's certainly a 'danger', but that transcription, for many, is simply another form of 'one's personal process of getting to know this music, right?' He clarified that, at least in his work transcribing these recordings as documents, he includes a 'very clear qualification that it represents *that* version' – *that* recording, to which a meaningful cultural bond has been forged through years of attentive listening.

Ziporyn had the same concerns as he approached a more recent project transcribing Terry Riley's *Poppy Nogood* for live performance. As with *Music for Airports*, Ziporyn's attachment is to the canonic recording on the B-side of the 1968 album *A Rainbow in Curved Air*.[59] Keith Potter writes that the piece is 'the most important of Riley's saxophone improvisations' and specifies that it uses electric organ and soprano saxophone, both played through the 'time-lag accumulator' delay system that Riley had designed and built for him by a technician at French National Radio when he was working on his score for Ken Dewey's play *The Gift* in 1964.[60] The time-lag accumulator consists of two tape machines strung together by one piece of tape: one machine records (listens, writes), while the other plays (performs), creating a delay that builds up noise before earlier layers fade away. *Poppy* itself was likely first performed in early 1967, and Potter quotes Riley's assertion that he 'used to play [it] in various forms at concerts for four or five years'.[61] Indeed, Riley told Edward Strickland in 1991 that he 'felt the only way I could develop *Poppy Nogood and His Phantom Band* was to [learn to] play

59 *Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band* (21:40) first appeared as the B-side of the *A Rainbow in Curved Air* LP (Columbia Masterworks, 1969), and was recorded in studio, as the back of the record claims that 'the spatially separated mirror images were adapted for studio recording by Glenn Kolotkin and resemble the sound Terry gets in his all-night concerts'. In 2000, a 2-CD set called *You're Nogood* was released, with the second CD featuring a (62:25) recording of *Poppy Nogood* recorded November 17, 1967 at the Philadelphia Art School. The CD *Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band 'All Night Flight'* (Elision Fields, 2006) divides a 22 March 1968 performance at SUNY Buffalo into five tracks: 'Purple', 'Modal', 'Fire', 'Strobe', and 'Ecstasy'.

60 See Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 105; Robert Carl, *Terry Riley's In C* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 36; Johann Girard, *Répétitions: L'Esthétique Musicale de Terry Riley, Steve Reich, et Philip Glass* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne nouvelle, 2010), 44; Duckworth, *Talking Music*, 266; and Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, 149.

61 Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 128–9.

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the saxophone myself, because I didn't want to tell the saxophone player to do this or do that'.[62] The work was thus inherently non-coercive and non-delegating; Riley took up a new instrument and created the work himself in live performance specifically because he did not want to tell a player what to do. I would contend that *Poppy Nogood* results as much from this self-conscious construction of a non-coercive form of authority as it does any individual set of formal characteristics.

When Ziporyn asked for sketches to work from, Riley sent the score of his earlier piece *Dorian Reeds*, telling Ziporyn that the two were 'really similar'. Ziporyn told me, 'It has *nothing* to do with the recording [of *Poppy Nogood*] so then I started trying to figure it out. And I still don't know what Terry considers to be the piece.' Central to transcribing the piece was working out the delay length on the recording, which led to his discovery that there were two different speeds – an impossibility on the time-lag accumulator, on which the physical distance between the two tape players determines the delay length: 'So I asked Terry and he said "Oh [the opening is] from another performance." And it became clear that the actual recorded version is a studio-made piece based on live performances and stuff he did in the studio.' Aware of this multiplicity of forms and the open nature of the piece, Ziporyn described to me his understanding of *Poppy*:

> The question is: *What is Poppy Nogood*? And I'm not sure. There are things like modal shifts at various points, there are certain gestures that come back – but is there something concrete that's *Poppy Nogood*? Or is it more like Indian raga? And what does that have to do with someone who wants to play it? So what we did up in Toronto [at a live performance in September 2014] was an exact mapping of what [Riley] did [on the record]: it starts with [the loop], and it eventually moves over to just us playing live with real time delays and a drone that I made. And then by the end it kind of morphs back to his recording. So the idea is that it will kind of emerge from the recording [and return] … But I can also see it turning into a completely notated piece as a transcription for any set of instruments. Or it could be done as a soloist with live delays. Or it could be done as an ensemble with click tracks and without delays. We're trying to think of a way to do it with like a dozen saxophonists.[63]

Nothing, Ziporyn tells me, distinguishes a performance of *Poppy Nogood* other than Terry Riley sitting down and saying, I am now going to play *Poppy Nogood*. *Poppy* – both ontologically and authorially – is little more than a declaration preceding performance. Ziporyn refuses to stabilize it any more than that, while struggling with the fact that he does not have the necessary authority to declare *Poppy Nogood*. For him, critically and thoughtfully engaging the piece requires a transcription that balances ownership on the part of the performer with making the work recognizable to audiences by drawing from the canonic (studio-made) recording. As noted above by O'Brien in relation to Reich's score for

62 Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, 116.

63 Author's first conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Boston, MA, 17 September 2014).

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Drumming, Ziporyn is conscious of creating a parallel between his own listening to *Poppy* and what he will be giving to audiences. Nevertheless, he was not interested in creating his own piece titled, for example, *After Poppy Nogood*.[64] Ziporyn's performances are nearer to the tradition of the cover in popular music than a traditional performance of a work of Western art music, in which the very form of the score suggests proprietary and authorized directions specifically intended for the open 'reading' of the music, physically separate from, but reinforcing the authorial powers of, its original author. Indeed, it becomes a cover necessarily in that, like most (but of course not all) contemporary popular songs, it lacks an originating score-document that authorizes performances, but focuses instead on openly adapting music from record into recognizable, though idiomatic, live performance.

Bang on a Can's *Music for Airports* and Ziporyn's *Poppy Nogood* represent two possible ways of hearing the primary recording when writing a transcription: the former in which a work made specifically in studio is transcribed as closely as possible, while still maintaining artistic licence to develop the work in live performance; the latter in which the recording captures an improvisation, such that a person who wants to study and perform the piece respects the openness of the work while concretizing their own performance enough to make it recognizable for audiences.[65] Neither piece is a reactionary desecration of intention; both reveal an acute awareness of not only the ontological ambiguity of the piece when framed as 'art music' but also the network of authorial positioning within which minimalism exists, into which the composer-transcriber now enters. Ziporyn and his colleagues in Bang on a Can recognized, long before musicologists did, minimalism's problematic position as art music in its prioritization of the audio recording, creating not a dead end or a political trap, but a new criterion that must be worked with and responded to as productively as possible.

Case study two: Steve Reich as writer

Steve Reich seems to have been acutely aware of the potential relationships between a composition and its written representation in the early years of his career. Letters exchanged in early 1968, and now housed in Reich's archives at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, between Reich and Larry Austin, the editor of *Source* magazine, show that Austin wrote to Reich to ask about publishing *Reed Phase* in issue three of his new magazine. Reich agreed, but when Austin told

64 This issue came up in relation to Ziporyn's 2014 collaboration with the cellist Maya Beiser, *Uncovered*, and the legal grey areas involved in art music transcription of rock songs. Discussing another (unnamed) composer's recent, precise arrangement of a rock classic, Ziporyn told me, with much shock: 'But he just *claimed authorship of it!* And no one is gonna stop him. My project with Maya [Beiser], with the rock tunes, a lot of those are pretty pure arrangements where I could have easily said, they're far enough from the original, that it could've been "Ode to Wish You Were Here" by Evan Ziporyn. Or variations on "Wish You Were Here." Or not even that, and nobody would have done anything about it. It's the Wild West out there. As the years go by, I just didn't want to deal with that. It's the karma of it'. Author's first conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Boston, MA, 17 September 2014).

65 While Ziporyn and the rest of the ensemble claim to portray the Eno recording as closely as possible, the Bang on a Can recordings allow textural and dynamic build-ups to shape to the piece for live performance, and Ziporyn's section notably includes additional instruments and some improvisation. See Bang on a Can, *Music for Airports* and *Music for Airports (Live)* (Cantaloupe Music CA21045, 2007).

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Reich that *Source* was publishing the score professionally re-autographed, rather than in his own hand, Reich insisted that the graphic aspect of a score – his handwriting – is important in being idiomatic of his working process. Austin declined the request and told Reich that *Source* would have the score set, reassuring Reich that he will like the professionally copied score. Austin must have changed his perspective on printing handwritten scores – perhaps convinced by Reich himself – as a 1971 issue of *Source* includes Reich's handwritten scores of *Pendulum Music*, *Four Organs*, and *Four Log Drums*.[66] Similarly, many of Reich's 1970s concert announcements featured score samples printed alongside the standard concert information. One of particular note, from an April 1973 concert with the Laura Dean Dance Company at New York University, featured Reich's *Clapping Music* and *Phase Patterns* each represented – in Reich's hand – by a single bar at the halfway point in their phases; Dean's four dances are similarly transcribed as choreographic diagrams, reflecting a shared interest in dealing with the visualization of authorial prescription within ensembles that, at least initially, might have struck audiences as having eschewed such delegation (see Figure 1). The artistic appreciation of Reich's scores reached a high point during his series of concerts in May 1973 at New York's John Weber Gallery, where Reich's handwritten scores were hung on exhibit for two weeks as works of visual art. The graphic layout and handwritten form a composer uses in a score were thus a major part of Reich's practice as a composer during these years, though generally these scores were used as evidence of his work to other composers, as promotional material for posters and advertisements, or as pieces of visual art in themselves.

Another possible relationship between composing, performing, and writing is evident across two decades if we consider *Music for 18 Musicians*. The piece was developed to tape in rehearsal with Reich's ensemble between 1974 and 1976, before he toured it for ten years with the same performers. Ziporyn argues that Reich and his ensemble 'wouldn't have been able to [create *Music for 18*] if they had been writing it down'. The piece results from a trade-off, as what Ziporyn calls Reich's 'guided rehearsal process' made it nearly impossible to write the piece down.[67] For Ziporyn, the piece could not have developed as it did with the intermediary of a full score; returning to Gann's comment above, Reich's initial concern was to get the piece to audiences, via his ensemble, and not to analysts or other performers. Reich himself has noted that even the parts, where they exist, are largely mnemonic devices for the performers who helped develop them: 'in the late '70s, my music began to start to be played by other people. And everybody said, "We want to do 'Music for Eighteen Musicians'." And I said, "Well, there's a little problem. There's no score." "Well, you've got parts." "Yeah, but you don't know what the parts are like".'[68]

In 1996, the piece had not been played live in ten years and only existed as the 1976 ECM recording, of which both Reich and his publisher wanted a direct, note-for-note

66 See Steve Reich, 'Music as a Gradual Process', *Source: Music of the Avant-Garde* 10 (1971), 30–9.

67 Author's second conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Skype, 13 August 2015).

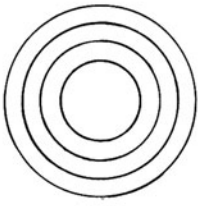
68 Gabrielle Zuckerman, 'An Interview with Steve Reich', *American Public Media* (July 2002), http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/interview˙reich.html.

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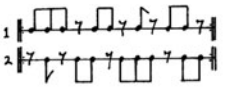
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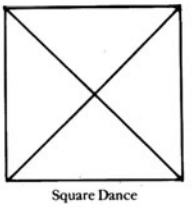
Circle Dance



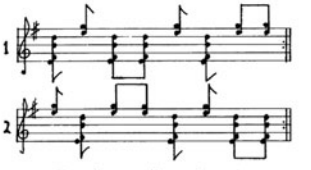
Clapping Music (Walking Dance)



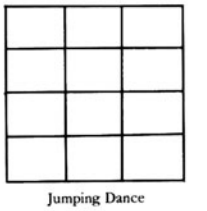
Walking Dance



Square Dance



Phase Patterns (Square Dance)



Jumping Dance

DANCERS:

Janis Beaver John Brewer Judy Clark Barbara Chenven
Laura Dean Bekka Eastman Karen Jackson Diane Johnson
Kathy Johnson Cathy Kerr Edward Marsan Lee Wasserwald

MUSICIANS:

Steve Chambers Russ Hartenberger Jim Preiss Steve Reich

Friday, April 27 Saturday, April 28
8:30 p.m. Admission $1.50

Figure 1 Programme for 'Laura Dean and Dance Company and Steve Reich and Musicians'. Loeb Student Center at New York University, 27 April 1973. Steve Reich Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation.

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transcription.[69] Following two unsuccessful attempts by French copyists, Boosey & Hawkes hired Mellits, then a graduate student at Cornell, to create a performance score to help bring the piece to Gann's 'possibly unsympathetic strangers'. When we spoke in Brooklyn in September 2014, Mellits told me about the long process involved in his work for Boosey & Hawkes and Reich:

> [Reich] said, 'write [the ECM recording] out, straight notation'. And I said 'that isn't the piece', but he insisted so I did it that way. So I came up with this score that was 450 pages long – seriously. And it wasn't the piece. I remember calling him up and saying, 'Steve, it's all ready, but it isn't the piece. I hate it. It destroys this work of genius that you created. Basically I have an exact [450 page] copy of the recording with every 1/8th note, and every breath [written down]'.[70]

Much like Bang on a Can approaching *Music for Airports*, Reich and Boosey & Hawkes seem to have said: the 1976 ECM recording is the piece – transcribe it. Each of these composer-transcribers grew up listening to commercial recordings such as the ECM LP of *Music for 18*, Eno's *Music for Airports* record, and Riley's *A Rainbow in Curved Air* backed with *Poppy Nogood*. Engaging with this music exclusively through listening created an entirely different relationship to the tradition of studying art music through scores.[71] The record's canonic status, and the piece's potential as what Mellits called a 'money maker', accounts for why Boosey & Hawkes was willing to pay him to create his 450-page long realization, even after two failed attempts by French copyists.[72] Mellits continues:

> So I asked [Reich] numerous times, 'Can we change it?' And he didn't want to do it. And I said, 'Look let me show you a version of notation I came up with' and he said 'Fine, [but] I don't want to do it that way.' He was pretty insistent. So I drove to his house in Vermont and I showed him what I was doing and as soon as he looked at it, he was like 'This is so much better. This is the piece.' So then we had to go back and convince Boosey & Hawkes to pay me again to do it all over. But they knew the piece was – from the publisher's standpoint they knew it was a money-maker. So I went back and took the same score and did it with my new notation and cut the score in half, maybe less than half, and had a new score that was more flexible and would breathe with the piece. It wasn't the recording, it had options.[73]

This story conflicts with Reich's own account, in which he claims that after Mellits's original 'great score and parts', were completed, composer and transcriber both agreed, 'that's not the piece!' Aspects of Reich's story do suggest, however, Mellits's central role in rethinking

69 In the Zuckerman interview, Reich claims that Linda Golding said, 'several times', 'We really have to make a score for "Music for Eighteen Musicians"'. See Zuckerman, 'An Interview with Steve Reich'.

70 Author's conversation with Marc Mellits (Brooklyn, NY, 11 September 2014).

71 David Grubbs's excellent *Records Ruin the Landscape* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) examines the role of recordings in the post-Cagean avant-garde, including their role (from the 1960s on) in displacing the score.

72 Author's conversation with Marc Mellits (Brooklyn, NY, 11 September 2014).

73 Author's conversation with Marc Mellits (Brooklyn, NY, 11 September 2014).

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how the piece could be written out, particularly when Reich tells Zuckerman about the use of floating bars, 'which was a thing around in the '60s which you would never think of being used in my music, but which worked beautifully'. Mellits told me, 'I could never have made the new score if I didn't make the old score first. I needed to see it all written out, note for note [from the 1976 Steve Reich and Musicians recording], to then be able to condense it properly . . . I had to figure out the piece first, before coming up with the best way to write it all down.'[74] Most importantly for Mellits, the score 'wasn't the recording'. It had 'options' and could encourage an open, collaborative performance that 'breathes' – a term that Reich also uses, noting the importance of developing an alternate notation 'to maintain the freedom of the breath'.[75] Nevertheless, Mellits holds no properly authorial relation to *Music for 18 Musicians* – despite the fact that it was him and not Reich who created the document that authorizes future performance, including having convinced Reich of the propriety of one version of writing it in opposition to another, inappropriate one.[76] While Mellits has neither the ability nor the desire to challenge Reich's authorship, the important fact remains that this is a sharp departure from the discourse and norms of authorship in Western art music and should thus be taken into account as a novel aspect of minimalist composition.[77] Very simply, the piece did not begin from the score that many scholars such as Potter and Marcelle Pierson analyse; while this is not to suggest that the elements of the analyses are incorrect, these readings risk effacing the material practices within which minimalism developed in favour of a timeless formalism.

The complexity of *Music for 18*'s written status is heightened in a story Ziporyn told me about the October 1996 recording session for the Nonesuch release – the first to be made after, though not directly from, Mellits's transcribed score. Taking advantage of studio technology to keep the performers together, Reich had insisted on recording the piece to a click track. To continue in Ziporyn's words:

74 Author's correspondence with Marc Mellits, (email 4 April 2016).

75 Zuckerman, 'An Interview with Steve Reich'.

76 I must note here that Reich himself attempted to create a score, getting from the Pulse through Section VII before giving up – whether it was for lack of time, lack of need, or frustration with its inaccuracy is unknown.

77 The minimalists are, of course, not entirely unique in having departed from the division of labour typical of art music practice, from composer to performer to listener, or in their challenge to the score as originating document. Eric Drott, to take one prominent example, has written on the way that Vieri Tosatti acted as 'ghostwriter' for Giacinto Scelsi throughout much of the composer's career. See Eric Drott, 'Class, Ideology, and *il caso Scelsi*', *The Musical Quarterly* 89/1 (Spring 2006). Similarly Evan Ziproyn talked in our first conversation about the dispute between Viktor Globokar and Karlheinz Stockhausen over the status of Globokar's contributions to *Aus den Sieben Tagen*. See Martin Iddon, 'The Haus that Karlheinz Built: Composition, Authority, and Control at the 1968 Darmstadt Festival', *Musical Quarterly* 87/1 (2004), 94. See also Jonathan Goldman, '"How I Became a Composer": An Interview with Vinko Globokar', *Tempo* 68 (267). Goldman similarly points to the dispute between David Tudor and John Cage over Tudor's realization of *Variations II*. See James Pritchett, 'David Tudor as Composer/Performer in *Variations II*', *Leonardo Music Journal* 14 (2004). Other cases could be listed as well – my point is not to claim that minimalism is unique, or to cover an exhaustive account of 1960s disputes over authorship; rather, it is to show that these disputes are frequently recurring in minimalism to the point of being historically deserving of attention.

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> The idea of taking a piece that you had actually played in performance dozens of times and putting a click on it just killed it. And Jim Preiss [from Reich's ensemble] actually went to Steve and said, 'We have to dump the click. This is not working, this is not the organic way to play the piece. This piece has to breathe, we have to play it the way we normally play it.' And Steve listened to him. And, you know, then we recorded the piece without the click the next day. Which meant fluctuations in the tempo, which was more like the real piece. And at the end Steve made no bones about the fact that Jim had saved the recording. At the post-recording party, [there was] a toast to Jim Preiss for saving the piece and big hugs and everything.[78]

Similarly, Ziporyn mentioned an 'interesting moment' in the studio as, when disputes arose over number of repeats, interrelationship of parts, and so on, original performers in the ensemble defended their mode of performing while Reich pointed to the new score that Mellits created and insisted that *this* was the correct way to play the piece.

> He was doing this odd thing where, as we tried to reconstruct *Music for 18* – the Steve Reich group, they hadn't played it in a while – *they were doing that by listening to recordings with Steve and then Steve referring to Marc's transcription.* And we would get into some weird conflicts about this. Steve would go, 'no no see it says here you do this ten times' or whatever, and people would go 'no we never did it like that . . . we never counted, we didn't have a set number of times'. The people in the group were mainly, probably, two-thirds the people who had done the [1976] ECM recording. That's a guess. They'd say 'what the hell are you talking about?' They were all pretty honest with each other. They didn't pull any punches. 'It wasn't like this, we never counted.' There were variations on that, but there was already this good-natured conflict over what the piece is. The ensemble felt, what we do is the piece, we own it. So, I was aware that there was this conflict, and I thought it was interesting that Steve was referring to this document that he hadn't made [*laughs*] while talking to the people with whom he had made the piece and going 'no see it's right here [on the page]'.[79]

That is, Reich used a document that he did not write as foundational authority in a dispute against the memories of the ensemble that he formed to enable him to compose in rehearsal rather than on paper – which, Ziporyn thinks, made the piece possible. It further seems clear from Ziporyn's story that he understands the transcription more in line with Mellits's narrative than Reich's – that is, that the existing, published transcription was more a product of Mellits's labour, and less a collaborative effort between Reich and Mellits.

78 Author's second conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Skype, 13 August 2015).

79 Author's second conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Skype, 13 August 2015). While I do not think that it undercuts Ziporyn's reliability as a source, some fact-checking on one claim shows a minor discrepancy. Only six people on the 1996 recording were also on the 1976 one: Steve Reich, Russell Hartenberger, Jim Preiss, Bob Becker, Jay Clayton, and Rebecca Armstrong. The number is nearer one-third than two-thirds, though I think it is fair to assume that the original performers carried such strong weight in these disputes that Ziporyn's memory increased their physical number.

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What is the authorial status of a piece that was developed with collaborative input in rehearsal from a stable ensemble, that was performed exclusively by that group for a decade, and that was eventually only transcribed for publication by another composer hired to do so? While the answer is far from simple, it is clear that the process of composing *Music for 18 Musicians* was not in keeping with the division of labour and line of transmission standardized within modernist composition, in which a composer writes, a performer reads and performs, and an audience listens. Neither Mellits nor any of the performers in Steve Reich and Musicians would challenge Reich's authorship of *Music for 18 Musicians*; Ziporyn says that this is unlike the dispute between La Monte Young and Tony Conrad over authorial propriety – 'no one questions that Steve was the auteur in any sense'.[80]

Across these events, we can trace Reich's changing conception of the relationship between composition and its documentation, between authority and authorization. Unlike Mellits's *Music for 18 Musicians* transcription, his early works did not take the form of scores prepared and published by a composer to hand off to 'unsympathetic strangers'. Indeed, Reich told Cole Gagne and Tracy Caras that he 'spent a long time' preparing his first published scores for Universal Editions in 1980 – pieces like *Pendulum Music*, *Phase Patterns*, *Four Organs*, and *Music for Pieces of Wood* – and that he was uncertain about creating scores for his more recent work as he wanted to maintain performance rights for his ensemble: 'A composer can't make money from selling printed music; the only money one can make is from performance royalties.'[81] Reich took part in a generational critique of traditional authorship that had an incredible impact on art music, though the source of its efficacy has been elided in scholarship that focuses on formalist analysis. While Reich initially defends the value of a composer's distinctive graphic layout, the scores later seem to take on a role as primarily visual reminders – whether on a poster or in a gallery – that, despite his role as a performer in his ensemble (one lacking the traditional authority of the soloist composer-performer, as Gopinath noted above), he was the singular composer of the anti-authorial music they performed. Original parts surely existed for each performer as brief mnemonics with vague instructions; the problem is that there was never a 'score' and that the scores reproduced for analysis in musicological texts were not 'authored' by Reich. This compositional and authorial complexity insists upon concrete examination of the minimalist mode of authorship, that is, the reinvented relationship between listening, composing, performing, and writing that Reich and his fellow minimalists enacted.

Case study three: La Monte Young and his secretaries

The minimalist relationship to authority and authorization takes an authoritarian turn if we consider transcriptions of La Monte Young's music. Like Cage above, Young and his commentators have frequently highlighted the importance of Young's score-based,

80 Author's second conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Skype, 13 August 2015).

81 Cole Gagne and Tracy Caras, *Soundpieces: Interviews with American Composers* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press: 1982), 314.

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anti-authorship gestures. Henry Flynt, whom Piekut calls a 'composer and anti-art activist',[82] has written that Young's *Compositions 1961* are important in that 'from the point of view of the conventional explanation of the existence of abstractions, Young's was introducing time travel at the level of whether given abstractions existed or not' by dating some of the compositions on days that had not yet come to pass.[83] Young continued this line of thought during his dispute with Tony Conrad over the authorial propriety of the music performed by the Theatre of Eternal Music. Clearly laying out how he understands the historical position of his work, Young told the *New York Times*, 'maybe nobody since John Cage has done more than I did to expand the boundaries, the limits of what is considered composition'.[84]

Jeremy Grimshaw has argued that, because Young's pieces dismiss succession and eventualities in favour of an 'Eternal' music, all the material is present at the outset, obviating the need for traditional notation. Grimshaw calls upon a helpful analogy: 'once a piece of static music had started, the score would relate to the performance only in the way that a blueprint would relate to a building already built'.[85] While I agree with Grimshaw's sentiment, the analogy misleads in keeping with the score/transcription relationship I have been arguing for throughout: regardless of its ontological status after construction is completed, the blueprint was presumably used as directions to construct the building, which is not the case for several transcriptions of Young's music. Young's scores, more than those of many other composers, are documents that produce what Rancière calls 'history-as-chronicle': the writing of the 'history of illustrious figures with the aid of the "documents" of their secretaries, archivists, and ambassadors – in short, with the documents of the illustrious figures' officials'. Rancière's claim is not that historians should leave behind these illustrious figures; rather he insists, tongue firmly in cheek in his choice of words, that we remain aware when we are making history by relying exclusively on 'the very traces those memorable men chose to leave'.[86]

A few examples draw attention not only to the constitutive absence of writing in Young's compositional practice but also to the delegated, archival–secretarial role that transcription of his music plays in Young's production of 'disciples'. In a 24-hour festival of Young's music broadcast in 1984 on WKCR in New York, the composer C. C. Hennix discusses the process of 'scoring' (i.e., transcribing by computer) Young's piece for bowed gong, which Young and Zazeela frequently performed as part of Theatre of Eternal Music concerts:[87]

82 Piekut, *Experimentalism Otherwise*, 65–101.

83 Henry Flynt, 'La Monte Young in New York, 1960–1962', in *Sound and Light: La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela*, ed. William Duckworth and Richard Fleming (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1996), 61. For more on the *Compositions 1961*, see Branden Joseph, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts After Cage* (New York: Zone Books 2008), 111; Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line*, 82; and Liz Kotz, *Words to Be Looked at: Language in 1960s Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 80.

84 Peter Margasak, 'Amid the Drone, a Feud Over Who Composed It; La Monte Young and Tony Conrad Differ over the Idea of Authorship in their Minimalist Music', *New York Times* (13 August 2000), 149.

85 Grimshaw, *Draw a Straight Line*, 92.

86 Jacques Rancière, *The Figures of History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 21–2.

87 La Monte Young/Marian Zazeela, *31 VII 69 10:26 – 10:49 PM / 23 VIII 64 2:50:45 – 3:11 AM the Volga Delta* (Edition X 1079, 1969). Like all of Young's official releases, the LP is long out of print, though was Young and Zazeela's first official release and is generally referred to by the much simpler name *The Black Record*. The gong piece takes up the

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> How do you score something like this? You don't score it in the sense that you prescribe how the strokes of the bow are going to hit the rim of the gong. Because it's a totally different concept of composition. So what you do here is you perform the piece and then you analyse the piece by digital means, by a computer, and then you have the computer write out what it found in its analysis. And back in 1970 when La Monte visited me in Stockholm this was not a well-known technique. Computers were quite slow . . . [But] we decided it was worthwhile to try to write this out and I think we ended up with something like 2000 pages of printout for just the 20-minute version that is on the record. That's the version that was scored. And I have never seen a score like this ever before.[88]

The marathon's host, Brooke Wentz, notes the frequency with which the piece was performed throughout the late 1960s, and asks Hennix, 'have they performed it ever since you scored it?' Hennix responds: 'No. Never. I don't think you can expect it will be performed again.' Hennix's response highlights the odd relationship between some minimalist pieces and their transcription: a transcription can often mean the piece is complete, or has reached its final form and need no longer be performed – at least by the composer-performer. This is particularly true of Young; to return to Grimshaw's blueprint metaphor, Young's scores more accurately stand in relation to a blueprint of an already-made, freely built building, in which a student of the builder is employed to map it as a means of devotional study.

Young similarly enlisted help in creating a score for *The Well-Tuned Piano*. In 1996, Young told William Duckworth, 'I've written down the main themes and the chordal areas *after* the fact of composing them and improvising them at the piano.' He continues, 'the way *I've written them down* is I've had my disciple in the *Well-Tuned Piano*, Sarmad Michael Harrison, notate them, either while I'm practicing or from tapes'.[89] Young so severs the traditional relation between composing and writing that it barely registers as strange when Young says, in essence, *The way I wrote this down is I had somebody else write it down*. Delegation and discipleship are so central to his practice that Young has convinced himself of the existence of his labour in that of others; it maps directly onto the relationship of the secretary or archivist that we typically naturalize within the history of Rancière's 'illustrious figures'. Indeed, Young told Cole Gagne that he finds 'it very slow and time-consuming to write out through-composed works', and that he thus prefers to 'realize [pieces] in the course of rehearsing and performing' and only really likes 'to write down broad, powerful, theoretical constructs'.[90] When I spoke to Harrison in November 2015, he unintentionally affirmed this latter claim when he broke

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second side, from a 23 August 1964 performance that occurred on 'the volga delta' as it is labelled in Angus MacLise's calendar *YEAR*. Often in concert programmes, the piece is listed as 'Gong Contests' as at the Pocket Theatre in October and November, 1964. See Jill Johnston, 'Music: La Monte Young', *The Village Voice* (19 November 1964).

88 C. C. Hennix, quoted in La Monte Young's 49th birthday marathon broadcast on WKCR, New York (21 October 1984). Tapes available at the British Library, Michael Gerzon collection, C236/643–648.

89 Duckworth, *Talking Music,* 248 (my emphasis).

90 Cole Gagne, *Soundpieces 2: Interviews with American Composers* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1993), 475. Like Reich, this claim should be read in relation to Young's own early relationship with jazz bands and performance. See, for example, Gagne, *Soundpieces*, 490.

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down the process of writing and transcribing *The Well-Tuned Piano* as Young's 'composition and tuning assistant':

> [La Monte] developed the piece by memory. He rarely if ever sat down and wrote out sketches . . . [Instead, he] would do a whole series of private concerts before the public concerts. And he would get on this routine where we would do a [private] concert on Sunday night, at the same time as the public concerts, which were Sundays at 6, and then he would rest Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday night we would have a tape playback, in the concert space, with big speakers – it was like listening to the concert, and I would sit there and write down all of the sections, a time score basically, so with the exact time each section was coming. So we had that as reference, and that was a way for him to listen back to what he was doing, and to see how he was doing it, and also to be learning new material as he was developing it. And then he would practice Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night, and have the concert Sunday. And then rest again Monday and Tuesday. So this was a week-long cycle.[91]

Harrison, like Mellits, would never challenge the authorship of the person whose work he transcribed, and even referred to his time working with Young in the 1980s as 'the most seminal musical experience of my life'.[92] Like Dennis Johnson's uncertainty as to whether or not 'score' was the correct term for the transcribed sketch he sent to Kyle Gann, Harrison is unsure that calling his large document a 'score' is entirely accurate, as so few people have access to it and no unsympathetic stranger would be able to mount a performance from it. Harrison instead called the document a 'catalogue' of the piece's chordal areas and themes, tracking their development by date; it remains little more than a retroactive document from which, combined with tape recordings, Harrison could reconstruct the piece with extensive preparation. Again, not a blueprint of a building already built, but a building built without blueprint, but transcribed later as marks on paper by an archivist, secretary, or disciple.

Harrison did the same for a later piece that is often anecdotally referred to as one of Young's only scored pieces for other performers:

> after the *Well-Tuned Piano* finished, I did work a bit more . . . with La Monte because he did a piece for the Kronos Quartet called *Kronos Christalla* and so I basically transcribed that for him. He sat at a synthesizer and he'd play notes with a stopwatch, and we would time them, and I would write them all down. And that became the score, and I proofread it as it was being engraved.[93]

To these transcriptions, we could also add the Theatre of Eternal Music piece mentioned in briefly in my introduction. As I noted there, Keith Potter uses as evidence of Young's

91 Author's conversation with Michael Harrison (Skype, 9 November 2015).

92 Author's conversation with Michael Harrison (Skype, 9 November 2015). It should be mentioned that none of my interviewees, including Tony Conrad, ever spoke negatively of Young or his work, even despite offering withering critiques of some of his specific actions. Everyone he has worked with has a deep respect for Young as a thinker and artist, despite some raising concerns with his working practice and philosophy of authority.

93 Author's conversation with Michael Harrison (Skype, 9 November 2015).

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compositional style during the mid-1960s, a piece that by most accounts was created collaboratively with John Cale, Tony Conrad, and Marian Zazeela, and was indeed written out from tape in Marian Zazeela's calligraphy.[94] The scores for all of these pieces are thus disruptions of the traditional notion of the score, as they exist only retroactively, were not written down by the person whose name appears at the top, and (with the notable exception of *Kronos Christalla*) were not intended to be performed from. Instead, for Young they function as legalistic declarations of his priority and contributions, created both for historical posterity and as devotional labour in the production of disciplines whose work becomes indistinguishable from Young's own.

Conclusion: minimalist authorship

Examples of prominent minimalist transcriptions could continue: Kyle Gann's of Elodie Lauten, Harold Budd, and others; Mary Jane Leech's reconstructions of Julius Eastman's music;[95] Claude Lemieux's transcription of Glass's *Music in 12 Parts*;[96] and presumably many more. Indeed, it's notable that Terry Riley's *In C* (1964) is one of the few early pieces of minimalism to have been performed entirely and always from score and potentially by strangers – though that score was given to listeners on the back of the original Columbia LP, suggesting that listeners follow along and learn the piece themselves, separated from any structural secrecy as to what was producing the joyful, collective music.[97] The predominance of minimalist pieces that did not have scores until their transcription is not a coincidence – it is central to these composers' non-coercive (or at least not coercive through delegating documents) mode of authorship. Reflecting broadly on the recurring role of transcription in minimalism, Ziporyn put it simply: 'I don't think [the original minimalists], at the time, were thinking … that somebody else would be wanting to play their music.' As such, the collaborative compositional method undertaken by many of the early minimalists 'make issues of nice, neat Western ideas of authorship a bit complicated and can lead to personal problems'.[98] This further points to the frequency of inter-authorial dispute within minimalism that Branden Joseph has highlighted: those between Young and Conrad, Reich and Glass, Reich and Terry Riley, Glenn Branca and Rhys Chatham, and so on.[99] These disputes are typically about who did what first, or who influenced whom; it is much harder to prove priority

94 See Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, 74–6.

95 See www.mjleach.com/EastmanScores.htm (accessed 20 September 2017).

96 Lemieux, 'Construction, Reconstruction, Deconstruction'.

97 Edward Strickland also highlights transcription when he writes that Riley's *Keyboard Study No. 2* was 'the first example of *transcribed* modular composition' in that it was the first to have made the jump from tape loop to writing. See Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, 177.

98 Author's first conversation with Evan Ziporyn (Boston, MA, 17 September 2014).

99 See Branden, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate*, 37. For art historians like James Meyer, minimalism in the visual arts was always 'a debate, an argument'. James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 3. My dissertation takes off from Joseph's claim, and examines each of those disputes at length. Patrick Nickleson, 'The Names of Minimalism: Authorship and the Historiography of Dispute in New York Minimalism, 1960–1982' (DPhil diss., University of Toronto, 2017).

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when music is worked out publicly, in rehearsal and to tape, rather than through the private, authoritative documents of 'memorable men'. It is up for debate whether music performed by the composers, who did not publish (or even create) scores, and with no concern for posterity, should even fall under the umbrella of 'Western art music', as typically understood.

This is the fascinating paradox of the mid-1960s critique of authorship generally. These transcriptions – secondary documents of a primary tape recording – have much to tell us about the minimalist redistribution of composing, performing, listening, and writing. Indeed, they define minimalist authorship in its rejection of the score as primary ontological site of a sounding work; that audiences, performers, and particularly musicologists have often failed to recognize the political import of this rejection, and the different authorial and historical status of transcriptions contributes to our confusion over how to define minimalism: we repeatedly turn to formalist analyses of scores that are not the end product of this compositional style. Some scores, such as those for Reich's works early in his career, or for Young's *Well-Tuned Piano*, became works of visual art without being used as prescriptions for 'unsympathetic strangers'. Riley's *Poppy Nogood* and many of Young's works were, in very different ways, declarations of authorship – though for Riley, that seems to have been a contingent declaration, aware of its own shaky foundations, while for Young it was legalistic and colonizing. Similarly, *Poppy Nogood* and *Music for 18 Musicians* were ontological displacements by composer-transcribers working with the same attentiveness and care as the original composers. In the case of Young's bowed gong piece, Hennix's score suggests the pursuit of a technical challenge with no concern for eventual use.

Minimalism fundamentally redistributed the relationship between performing, listening, and writing that constitutes what authorship is in Western art music. This was not work done exclusively by 'minimalist' music or its composers, but turning to authorial and political claims in place of formalist and sounding ones clarifies the historical grouping 'minimalism'. And further, as I hope to have shown, this political response to authorship had its concrete sounding effects, which have been accounted for well by several decades of scholarship. The problem is simply that the relationship has often been inverted, with the cause made invisible in favour of a (shared) formalism without (common) motivation. The interesting question is not whether any of these transcriptions is a testament to or denigration of a well-known auteur. Instead it is more productive to consider how this music, its discourse and sounding processes, were the result of non-notated, anti-authorial modes of composition that sought the means, as Rancière writes, to 'thwart its own powers'.[100] These transcriptions reveal the redistributions of the authorial relationship to composing and documenting music. Seen this way minimalism was a politics of listening and writing long before it became an analysable aesthetic, style, or technique.

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