

# ART OF IMPROVISERS



THE ART AND ARCHIVES  
OF SOME OF  
THE PIONEERS OF  
FREE IMPROVISATION  
IN LONDON

In Art of Improvisers Group Show, at Cafe Oto's Project Space, from 7 to 17 of May 2015, we presented the art and archives of some of the pioneers of free improvisation in London.

The exhibition featured content by musicians and artists Terry Day (artwork), Evan Parker (collages), Steve Beresford (archives), George Khan (clothes), David Toop (archives), Max Eastley (installation), Gina Southgate (paintings), a film by Anne Bean (*Taps*) and extracts of the upcoming film *Unpredictable* by Blanca Regina.

The programme included a talk with live painted timeline about the history of free improvisation in UK, with speakers Steve Beresford, Evan Parker and Terry Day. Gina Southgate and Blanca Regina were painting the timeline. There were also two workshops: *Material Studies* with Matthias Kispert and Blanca Regina and *Techniques in playing balloons and making pipes* with Terry Day.

Visual arts and music are intimately connected. Many musicians are also visual artists: that is what caught our attention. We wanted to know more about it. We focussed on these connections and the archives and exhibition looked at how one practice feeds into the other.

Free improvisation is present in everyday life, not just in the arts. In the exhibition we worked together, transforming the space and selecting the artwork, in many cases framing it. Its interesting how we and some of our ideas shift when the medium changes. We ourselves were transformed through the process of the encounter and from working with the artworks.

The point was to get together and to discover more about each others' practice, and the history and present day situation for free improvisation and art in London. I want to do more and do it better. Call it ambition or need. There has been so much unveiled.

This was a really interesting project that mixed professional artists with unknown artists, amateurs and academics. It all happened in an unknown space, shaped by each individual's contribution.

By Blanca Regina



**TERRY DAY**

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

*Interior 1*, oil on card, c. 1986  
*Interior 2*, oil on card, c. 1986

*Round Palette 1*, c. 90s

*Figures*, Oil on card, c. 1986

*Round Palette 2 (and 3 on the top)*, c. 1990

*Man with a Topcoat*, acrylic on plywood, 1987

*Cat Woman*, acrylic on wood, 1987

*White Acrylic 1*, c. 1986, acrylic on board

*White Acrylic 2*, c. 1986, acrylic on card

*White Acrylic 3*, c. 1986, acrylic card

# TERRY DAY



Selection of miniatures by Terry Day

**TERRY DAY** is an improviser, multi instrumentalist, lyricist, songwriter, visual artist and poet, a first generation pioneer improviser from the 60s. He formed a duo with Derek Bailey (late 60s / early 70s) and was a regular member of The Continuous Music Ensemble, People Band and, later on Alterations with Toop, Beresford & Pete Cusack. Since then he has collaborated with many musical luminaries, groups, dancers, painters, poets and performed in theatre.

Self taught musician in a family of musicians, he began improvising on the drums with his brother in 1955. By the early 60s he formed the Hardy Holman Day trio focusing in free improvisation. Later he became part of Kilburn & the Highroads band lead by Ian Dury. Sharing their interest in visual art and painting they both studied at Walthamstow School of Art and later at the Royal College of Art, London. As an art student in the 60s he was also a pioneer of Improvisation, Free Jazz & experimental music.

He now plays Bamboo Reed Flutes, drums, recorders, balloons and improvises with his Lyrics, Prose, Verse. Since 2000 he has been part of London Improvisers Orchestra (L.I.O.)

In recent years he has toured twice in Japan, Brazil, and he has also performed with the Malaga, Tokyo, & Madrid Improvising Orchestras. <http://www.terryday.co.uk>



Handmade, design and tailored by George Khan

# GEORGE KHAN



Handmade, design and tailored by George Khan

**GEORGE KHAN**, also sometimes credited as Nisam Ahmed Khan, is an artist and multiinstrumentalist who has been part of the British music scene since the late 60s. He principally plays saxophones and flute and is a long time member of the People Band.

He'd actually been active in music a lot longer, but didn't get his first credit on a recording until he was asked by his longtime friend, poet Pete Brown, into the lineup of what became the Battered Ornaments. Brown also credits Khan with steering him to a relatively unknown guitarist named Chris Spedding, who eventually also became the new leader and lead singer of the group in 1968.

Khan was best known as a reed man, and he played saxophone on that first album, *A Meal You Can Shake Hands with in the Dark*, but for the reconstituted group's second album, he also sang and played the flute, and by the time he joined Solid Gold Cadillac, he was playing keyboards also, and he subsequently played with Brown and his new group, Piblokto, on My Last Band. In the 70s he recorded with the Crazy World of Arthur Brown and Robert Wyatt.

## DAVID TOOP (archives)

ON THE WALL (left to right)

John Stevens,  
*painting*,  
date unknown

John Stevens,  
*After Francis Bacon*,  
date unknown

David Toop,  
*Swelling/Willing Vessel and The  
Howler Monkeys/The Rain/The  
Willing Vessel*

David Toop,  
LMC poster

Posters,  
Little Theatre Club,  
Unity Theatre, Soho Poly,  
Filmmakers Coop, London  
Musicians Collective

ON THE TABLE  
(left to right, clockwise)

Paul Burwell,  
*Increasing Accelerate*,  
early 1970s

Music/Context Festival poster,  
1978

David Toop,  
pages from *Decomposition As  
Music Process*, 1972

David Toop,  
*Shell Hat*, 1973.

David Toop,  
*Shell Hat performance*, Victoria  
& Albert Music, c. 1975

David Toop,  
Air Gallery concert poster  
paste-up, 1978



# DAVID TOOP



Photo of David Toop by Nadjib Le Fleurier

**DAVID TOOP** is a composer/musician, author and curator based in London with experience in many fields of sound art and music. He has performed with artists ranging from John Zorn, Evan Parker and Bob Cobbing to Akio Suzuki, Elaine Mitchener, Scanner and Max Eastley.

He has published five books, including *Rap Attack*, *Ocean of Sound*, *Haunted Weather*, and *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of the Listener*. Since his first album, released on Brian Eno's *Obscure* label in 1975, he has recorded nine solo albums, including *Screen Ceremonies*, *Black Chamber* and *Sound Body*, and many collaborations.

As a critic has written for numerous publications, including *The Wire*, *The Face*, *Leonardo Music Journal* and *Bookforum*. Exhibitions he has curated include *Sonic Boom* at the Hayward Gallery, London, *Playing John Cage* at Arnolfini, Bristol, and *Blow Up* at Flat-Time House, London. His opera *–Star-shaped Biscuit–* was performed as an Aldeburgh Faster Than Sound project in September 2012 and his collaborative work *–Who will go mad with me –* was developed and performed with Alasdair Roberts, Sylvia Hallett and Luke Fowler at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in November 2013.

Currently writing *Into the Maelstrom: Improvisation, Music and the Dream of Freedom*, he is also the co-creator of Sculpture events with artist Rie Nakajima. <http://davidtoopblog.com>

## STEVE BERESFORD

(Clockwise)

Steve Beresford and David Toop, photo by Caroline Forbes

Lol Coxhill and Steve Beresford, photo by Roberto Masotti

Whirled Music (Max Eastley, David Toop, Paul Burwell, Steve Beresford), Manchester 1984, photo by John Gooding

**4A** Eugene Chadbourne, Steve Beresford, Toshinori Kondo at the LMC

**4B** Derek Bailey, photo by Caroline Forbes

**4C** Roger Turner and Steve Beresford near the LMC, Environmental Music Festival, 1978, photo by John Kieffer

**4D** Hugh Davies at the LMC, c. 1978, photo by Paul Lovens

**5A** Max Eastley, David Toop, Paul Burwell, Steve Beresford in Zagreb in 1979, photo by Ognjen Alujevic

**5B** Paul Burwell, 70s, photo by Roberto Masotti

Whirled Music (Max Eastley, David Toop, Paul Burwell, Steve Beresford), Gerard Ruy, John



Kieffer, Steve Beresford, Tristan Honsinger, Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, Berlin 1978, photo by Paul Lovens.

**8A** Terry Day, Peter Cusack, Paul Burwell at the LMC, photo by Hetty Church

**8B** The Four Pullovers (Nigel Coombes, Steve Beresford, Terry Day. Not shown: Roger Smith) at the LMC, photo by Andrea Tiffen

**8C** Steve Beresford's instruments, photo by Roberto Masotti

**8D** Alterations (David Toop, Steve Beresford, Peter Cusack. Not shown: Terry Day) at the LMC, photo by Annabel Nicolson

**9A** Whirled Music (Max Eastley, David Toop, Paul Burwell, Steve Beresford), Manchester 1984, photo by John Gooding

**9B** Whirled Music (Max Eastley, David Toop, Paul Burwell, Steve Beresford), photo by Caroline Forbes

# STEVE BERESFORD



Toys and Instruments from Steve Beresford

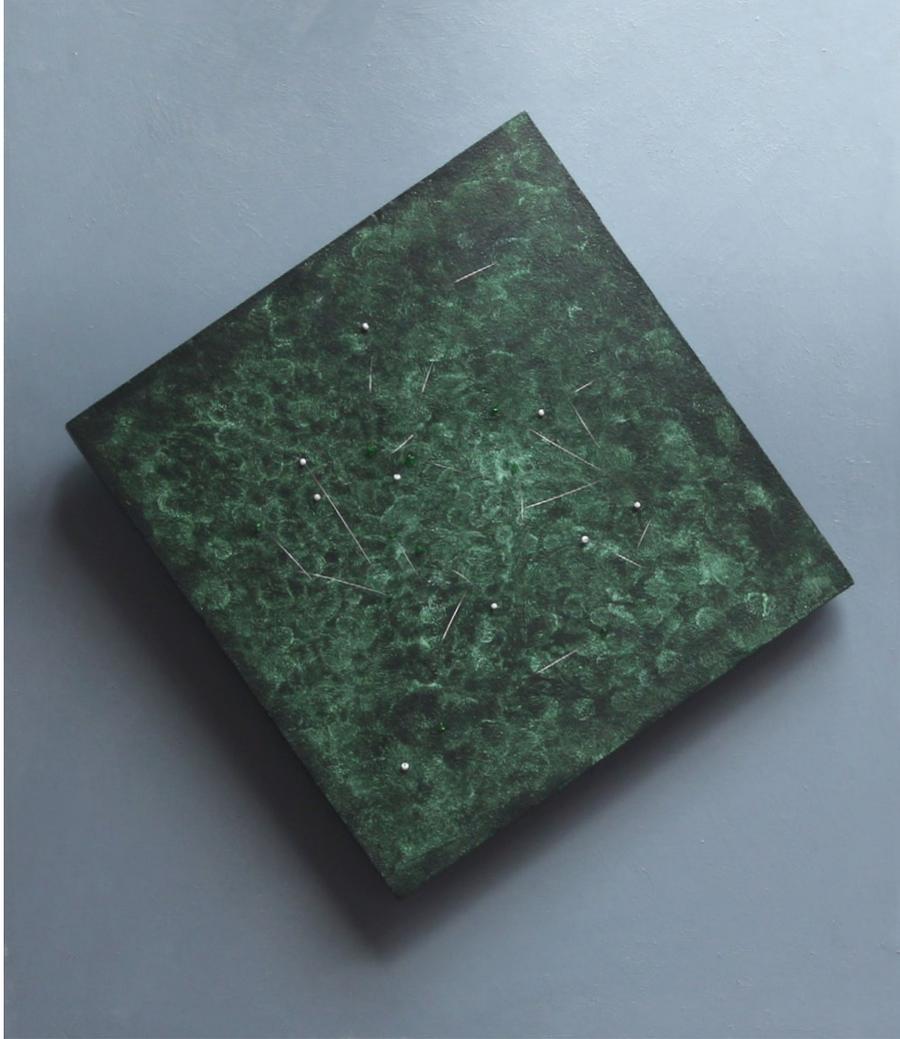
**STEVE BERESFORD** is internationally known as a free improviser on piano and electronics, Steve Beresford has also composed scores for feature films and for numerous TV shows and commercials.

Steve has worked with hundreds of people, including Derek Bailey, The Slits, Han Bennink, Christine Tobin, Ivor Cutler, Prince Far-I, Vic Reeves, Alan Hacker, Ray Davies, Ilan Volkov, David Toop, Najma Akhtar, Evan Parker, Adrian Sherwood, The Flying Lizards, Stewart Lee, Otomo Yoshihide and John Zorn.

He was born in Wellington, Shropshire in 1950. In 1974 he moved to London, playing piano with improvisers like Derek Bailey and also trumpet with the notorious Portsmouth Sinfonia, which included Brian Eno and Gavin Bryars. He has had a long association with Swiss-American artist/musician Christian Marclay, performing realisations of Marclay's *Screen Play*, *Ephemera*, *Graffiti Composition*, *Shuffle*, *Pianorama* and *Everyday*, sometimes solo and sometimes with groups.

Recently, Steve played at the launch of the DVD *Taking The Dog For A Walk*, a feature-length documentary film directed by Antoine Prum. Subtitled *Conversations With British Improvisers*, the film features a number of players, including Steve playing and talking.

His latest recording is the LP *Will It Float*, by a group including Ståle Liavik Solberg, John Edwards, John Russell and Beresford on electronics. [www.efi.group.shef.ac.uk/mberes.html](http://www.efi.group.shef.ac.uk/mberes.html)



Max Eastley

# MAX EASTLEY

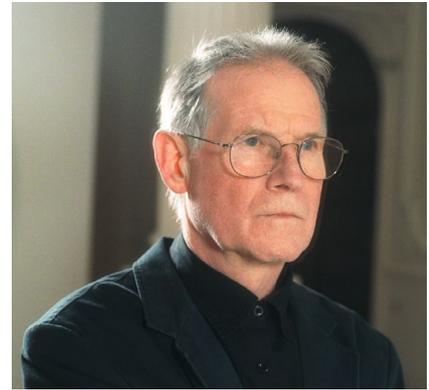


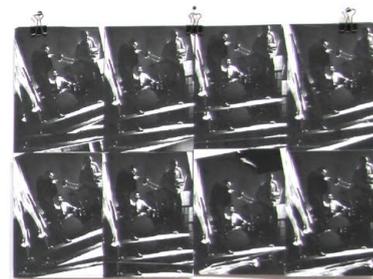
Photo: Ivan Jones

**MAX EASTLEY** is an internationally recognized artist who combines kinetic sculpture and sound into a unique art form. His sculptures exist on the border between the natural environment and human intervention and use the driving forces of electricity, wind, water and ice. He has exhibited both interior and exterior works internationally. His work is represented in the permanent collection of the Centre for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany.

Since 2003 he has been an artist with the Cape Farewell Climate Change Project <http://www.capefarewell.com>, for whom he has created a number of installations, compositions and performances. From 2010 to 2013 he was an Arts and Humanities Research Council Senior Researcher at Oxford Brookes University, investigating Aeolian phenomena through artistic practice and historical research [www.maxeastley.co.uk](http://www.maxeastley.co.uk). He is also currently one of the artists involved in a project, Audible Forces, touring festivals in the UK, using the wind as an energy source.

His largest solo exhibition in 2013 was at the Water Tower (Wasserturm) in Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin: a cavernous, labyrinthine space inside which he installed ten acoustic sculptures. In 2014 he had a solo exhibition at the Teatroinscatola in Rome and took a residency in Bonn as the City Sound Artist, during which he created an Aeolian Installation at the Botanical Gardens. He is well known as a musician and has played many solo concerts and also played with numerous other musicians such as David Toop, Evan Parker, Steve Beresford, Alex Kolkowski and Rhodri Davies. <http://www.maxeastley.co.uk>

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**EVAN PARKER** CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

*NO MUSIC*, postcard collage 2015; *F\*\*k the Sheds* for Henri Lowther; *NYAT*, postcard collage;  
*Some like it ... quite warm* for Tony Curtis after Cornell

# EVAN PARKER



(S)he rote, mixed media

**EVAN PARKER** is a British free-improvising saxophone player from the European free jazz scene. Recording and performing prolifically with many collaborators, Parker is a pivotal figure in the development of European free jazz and free improvisation, and has pioneered or substantially expanded an array of extended techniques.

While free improvisation has been Parker's main area of activity over the last three decades, he has also found time for other musical pursuits: he has played in 'popular' contexts with Annette Peacock, Scott Walker and the Charlie Watts big band; he has performed notated pieces by Gavin Bryars, Michael Nyman and Frederic Rzewski; he has written knowledgeably about various ethnic musics in *Resonance magazine*. A relatively new field of interest for Parker is improvising with live electronics, a dialogue he first documented on the 1990 Hall of Mirrors CD with Walter Prati. Later experiments with electronics in the context of larger ensembles have included the *Synergetics - Phonomanie III* project at Ullrichsberg in 1993 and concerts by the new EP2 (Evan Parker Electronic Project) in Berlin, Nancy and at the 1995 Stockholm Electronic Music Festival where Parker's regular trio improvised with real-time electronics processed by Prati, Marco Vecchi and Phillip Wachsmann. "Each of the acoustic instrumentalists has an electronic 'shadow' who tracks him and feeds a modified version of his output back to the real-time flow of the music." <http://evanparker.com>

## GINA SOUTHGATE

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Photo of Gina Southgate in performance with WITS at Lewisham Art House, January 1999, by Denis Austin

John Stevens and Derek Bailey painted live at LMC festival Conway Hall 1992, Acrylic, graphite, oil pastel on board

Stephan Jaworzin and Alan Wilkinson painted live at the Red Rose Club for the CD *In the Sentimental mood*, 1996, acrylic mono-printed collage and oil pastel and graphite on board

CD cover *In the Sentimental mood*, digital printing, 1996

CD cover paintings of Alan Wilkinson *Practice* from originals by Gina Southgate

Steve Beresford and Okkyang Lee live painting at *Unpredictable Fundraiser*, 19th March at Cafe Oto, 2015 London



# GINA SOUTHGATE



John Butcher, Steve Beresford and David Toop, 2015

**GINA SOUTHGATE** is an artist who, through a growing interest in music and the aesthetic of musical instruments, began to paint at gigs. She is well known on the London free music and jazz scene where she has painted and performed live at gigs for 25 years.

She works with the frisson of the music observing the relationship between the musician and instrument and tries to capture the energy and essence of the gig in the real time. Sometimes she works solely with sound and ignore the visual content producing abstract imagery. In performance situations I use my materials and surfaces sonically.

Throughout 2012 and currently she resident artist on the monthly Jazz In the Round series hosted by Jez Nelson at The Cockpit theatre. In November 2013 to celebrate 25 years of painting at gigs she curated a successful exhibition and launch gig at the Rich Mix. It featured people whose work and its 'product' relates to the diversity that exists within jazz. The exhibition comprised paintings, drawings, posters, cover art, graphics and ephemera that glimpsed the music's broad subgenres. It included Andy Sheppard of Lowlightphoto, Swiftyand Paul Bradshaw as Stereophonic supply co., Treader label and Ashley Wales.

The area of her work resulting in representational live gig imagery has flourished again since having an ongoing exhibition the new Vortex in Dalston. It has become a long term home to her work and enables her to create a changing showcase of current gig paintings. <http://artistginasouthgate.weebly.com/>

# FILMS



## TAPS

Improvisations with Paul Burwell  
initiated by Anne Bean

Paul was an artist whose radical, passionate and collective practice since the 60s, sparked multifarious, challenging works and, as one of the pioneers of free improvisation, fused music, film, dance, poetry and performance art, choosing to collaborate with musicians and artists alike throughout his prolific practice. This project is an exploration of what legacy is in a practice based on innovation and improvisation and, particularly in Paul's wide range of connections and concerns The TAPS DVD is a composite of over 80 contributors.

"This is not the biography of an artist, but... how inspiration can pour (like the gift of tongues) from one into many." David Toop, *The Wire*



## UNPREDICTABLE (in process)

UNPREDICTABLE is a feature film that evaluates the work of groundbreaking musician and artist Terry Day, bringing together some of the founding members of the UK free improvised music scene such as Steve Beresford, Evan Parker, David Toop, Charlie Hart, George Khan and Mike Figgis. The film reflects on their lasting influence and uncovers previously unknown aspects of Terry Day's artistic output.

Directed by Blanca Regina

Editors: Blanca Regina

and Pierre Bouvier Patron

Sound Design: Matthias Kispert and Syd Kemp

Soundtrack includes music by Terry Day, London

Improvisers Orchestra, Alterations and more

artists TBC/ Crew includes: Elisa Fonta and Mikel

Armendia Iriarte.

# PERFORMANCES, TALKS & WORKSHOPS



Terry Day, Evan Parker, Steve Beresford,  
photo by Rene Strgar



## ROUND TABLE AND Q&A

'A timeline with diverse viewpoints, and overview of free improvisation and artists involved 60s up to today.'

Speakers: Terry Day, Evan Parker, Steve Beresford.

Drawing the timeline: Gina Southgate and Blanca Regina



Terry Day's techniques for playing balloons and self-made pipes



The Material Studies Group was formed in 2012 by Blanca Regina, Matthias Kispert with the mission to explore the sounds within the matter of everyday objects in playful and irreverent ways.

This is usually done in workshops that invite participants to engage in collective improvisation and afterwards discuss their experiences of the process.

# ART OF IMPROVISERS

7TH MAY UNTIL 17TH MAY 2015  
PROJECT SPACE CAFE OTO

THE ART AND ARCHIVES  
OF SOME OF THE PIONEERS OF  
FREE IMPROVISATION  
IN LONDON

We would like to thank every participating artist, and also Cafe Oto Project Space who gave us this opportunity to work together and get to know more about this subject. Also thanks to the Cafe Oto crew for their support. To our closest friends and families.

For working in the exhibition space and side by side: Pierre Bouvier Patron, Bea Urruñuela, Mikel Armendia Iriarte and Rene Strgar. Also, for his work on all the designs from the other side, via the Internet: Tomi Osuna Plotz.