# GAY GUERRILLA

## JULIUS EASTMAN AND HIS MUSIC

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CHAPTER SEVEN

# A FLEXIBLE MUSICAL IDENTITY

## Julius Eastman in New York City, 1976–90

Ryan Dohoney

In a press release announcing a performance at The Kitchen in 1981, Julius Eastman provided a succinct autobiography:

> I have sung, played, and written music for a very long time, and the end is not in sight. I sang as a boy soprano and I still sing as a boy soprano 30 years later. I have played the old masters on the pianoforte and have appreciated their help and guidance. But now music is only one of my attributes. I could be a Dancer, Choreographer, Painter or any other kind of artist if I so wished; but right thought, speech and action are now my main concerns. No other thing is as important or as useful. Right thought, Right Speech, Right action, Right music.[1]

Eastman's self-assessment evinces a broad engagement with creative and expressive culture as he practiced it up to that point in his life. Eastman's autobiography speaks to a widely distributed and multiply directed aesthetic practice, one that explored networks of thought, speech, and action cutting across genres, styles, and communities. Nowhere is this more evident than in Eastman's time in New York's downtown scene in the years 1976–90.[2]

Two examples from his performing repertoire in the 1970s demonstrate this plurality. Eastman had, in the early 1970s, become the chief performer



of Peter Maxwell Davies's theater piece *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, through performances with the Creative Associates and his recording with Maxwell Davies's ensemble the Fires of London.[3] This piece remained Eastman's claim to fame throughout the 1970s, and he sang it with other ensembles, including the Brooklyn Philharmonia under the direction of Lukas Foss, and the New York Philharmonic under Pierre Boulez. Yet at the same time, Eastman could also be heard singing avant-garde disco at The Kitchen. His recording with the group Dinosaur L, a loose dance music collective organized by composer-performer-producer Arthur Russell, extended the reach of Eastman's voice beyond high culture institutions to downtown's mostly gay dance clubs. Within Dinosaur L, Eastman's keyboard work was a powerful force, holding down the groove, as well as inflecting the songs with out-there improvisations on record. Eastman's voice, though, with its multi-octave range and expressive resonance, was his strongest contribution to Dinosaur L's music. Pushed into the front of the mix on remixes of the tracks "In the Corn Belt" and "Go Bang," Eastman's voice resonated in the cavernous discotheques of Manhattan such as the Paradise Garage and the Loft, as much as it was heard in the genteel trappings of Lincoln Center.

The aesthetic gulf separating the late-modernist theatricality of Maxwell Davies and the libidinal excess of Dinosaur L's mutant disco, may at first seem insurmountable. Stylistically, they have little to do with one another. However, what they do have in common is the voice of Julius Eastman. In this essay, I compose an account of the so-called downtown scene from forgotten performances, outrageous improvisations, and intimate collaborations all marked by the voice of Julius Eastman. My focus on Eastman and his collaborators gives a view on life in downtown New York City that accounts for a wider variety of social groups than has been included in narratives of its history.[4] In particular, Eastman shows how experimental music, the radical black tradition, and post-Stonewall gay sexuality were components in a cultural assemblage that is today usually celebrated for the creativity of mostly white punk rock, the minimalism of Philip Glass and Steve Reich, and the performance art of Laurie Anderson and Robert Wilson.

By recovering the voice of Julius Eastman, we can understand the multiplicity of associations that sustained vibrant musical communities in New York City, from the emergence of the gay liberation and black power movements in the 1960s, to the devastation of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s.[5] Eastman's communities performed a complex cultural shift in American musical life—the reworking of a high art/low art dichotomy acted out in an urban landscape marked by racial, ethnic, sexual, and political concerns.

This reworking was lived as the transformation of a state-funded high-modernism into a do-it-yourself scene hybridizing pop, improvisation, and experimental performance that has had, and continues to have, direct effects on musical lives in the twenty-first century. With the composer Mary Jane Leach having made a strong case for Julius Eastman as a composer through her collection of Eastman's recordings, I want to argue for Eastman's importance as a performer and nodal point for his varied communities in New York City's music scenes.

Downtown New York City was a primary geographical site of Eastman's musical practice from 1976, and this scene has, since the early 2000s, become a focus of music and cultural studies. As described by curators and scholars such as Marvin J. Taylor, Bernard Gendron, and Kyle Gann, the geographical area of Manhattan below Fourteenth Street was, from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, a teeming artists' colony.[6] Low rents and expansive lofts provided space for performances and studios, and the concentrated physical proximity of numerous artists working in distinct media provided unparalleled opportunities for collaboration. The musical genres and modes of performance fostered in the downtown scene include loft jazz, various types of musical performance art, disco, new wave, no wave, punk rock, experimental music of many kinds, and various fusions of all of the above. Important venues hosting this plethora of styles included experimental arts venues such as The Kitchen, Environ, and Experimental Intermedia Foundation. Dance clubs were also important sites and among them were venues such as The Loft, Paradise Garage, the Mudd Club, and Danceteria; there were also punk and new wave clubs such as CBGB and Max's Kansas City. Another key arts presenter, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, could be considered downtown's outpost across the East River.

Beginning with sociologist Samuel Gilmore in the 1980s, downtown has been contrasted with other sociocultural locations in New York City—the midtown of Lincoln Center, the Juilliard School, and Carnegie Hall, and the academic uptown of Columbia University, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center.[7] More recent writers, like Taylor and Gann, have strongly delineated the aesthetic and structural distinctions between downtown, midtown, and uptown—perhaps more than is necessary. Eastman's movement among these various sites troubles such firm demarcations, and also demonstrates how the diminishment of academic, philanthropic, and governmental funding sources for modernist and experimental music in the 1970s required practitioners to adapt modes of production and collectivity from pop and jazz to ensure their continued viability. Eastman's development of his musical networks in downtown culture gives a sense of how support systems changed and institutional hierarchies transformed, as well as what the personal costs were for those who wanted to live musically.



Five episodes in Eastman's life exemplify the varied communities in which he participated along with the mutability of his musical identity: first, Eastman's role in the experimental classical scene and the turn toward extended vocal techniques and theatrical performance; second, his role in the Brooklyn Philhamonia's Community Concert Series; third, his improvisational practice of melding experimental forms of sexuality with his improvisational practice; fourth, his borrowings from punk rock as a way of rethinking racial politics in the downtown scene; and, finally, Eastman's collaborations with composer-producer Arthur Russell, which served as a model for the coexistence of human and musical difference. Throughout what follows, I will also describe Eastman's performance aesthetic, one that was, as he described in the autobiography quoted above, concerned with "Right thought, Right Speech, Right action, Right music." This rightness was figured as a musical and political orientation inflected by his identity as a black gay man working in a mostly white, straight musical scene.[8] Even as I make an argument about the importance of Eastman to his collaborators, I also want to show how he held himself apart from them in important ways. As his friend Ned Sublette remarked to me in an interview, Eastman, "didn't run with anybody" and his participation in the downtown scene reflected an agonistic community whose tensions animated the aesthetic and human assemblies that formed within it.[9]

Eastman's first appearances as a professional musician in New York City began at the end of his Curtis days and continued sporadically until 1968, when he began working with the Creative Associates at the University at Buffalo. Eastman then began to perform regularly at major midtown venues.[10] His numerous concerts with the Creative Associates took place at Carnegie Recital Hall (now Weill Recital Hall) in a series called "Evenings for New Music." Like Cathy Berberian, with whom he shared a concert program in the early 1970s, Eastman was an important contributor to the vocal turn in late-modernist musical performance that began to treat human voices as dynamic, flexible instruments that allowed experimentation with timbre, resonance, and expression. Composer Ned Rorem remembers that Eastman was one of a handful of singers active in the 1970s "who could always do anything."[11]

This new vocal virtuosity was put to use in new forms of music theater that explored extended techniques, multimedia, and the radical

juxtaposition of musical styles. Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King* exemplifies these traits, especially with its campy lounge-music version of Handel's aria "Comfort Ye," extracted from *Messiah*, as well as the vocal multiphonics required of the singer. Eastman's performance aesthetic also drew from his interest in modernist gay theater, particularly the work of Jean Genet, whose play *The Blacks* he performed in while living in Buffalo.[12] In the early 1970s Eastman performed Hans Werner Henze's *El Cimarrón: The Diary of a Runaway Slave*, which marked his encounter with Marxist critiques of race that would affect his later sense of "right action." Explicit concern with sexuality and race marked his work as a performer, and became the basis for his compositional and improvisational aesthetic.

After leaving the Creative Associates and the S.E.M. Ensemble in 1975, Eastman relocated to New York.[13] The professional networks he had established in Buffalo ensured his continued presence in New York's musical life. Lukas Foss, who had left Buffalo to become music director of the Brooklyn Philharmonia, engaged him as a featured soloist and composer with the orchestra throughout the 1970s. On a more ad hoc basis, musicians and friends from Buffalo formed a collective that reassembled the experimental sensibility of the Creative Associates in the urban landscape of downtown. Musicians based around the performance and video venue The Kitchen became new collaborators. Eastman's status as a vocalist and his reputation as a performer preceded him, and he was actively sought out by other musicians as a hired gun. This was the case with Meredith Monk, who in an interview with me recalled:

> I knew I was going to be working on [the piece] *Dolmen Music*. I'm not sure if at the point that I met Julius that I knew the name of the piece. . . . Michael Byron and Rhys Chatham said if you want a bass, you've got to get Julius Eastman. I found out that he was doing a concert . . . at St. Mark's Church. . . . I loved him immediately . . . there was Julius in his leather vest and his keys hanging out of his jeans and his dreads. And I said, "I'm Meredith and I'm working on this piece, would you like to be in it?" and he said, "Oh, sure." You know Julius, "Of course, of course."[14]

The collaboration between Eastman and Monk resulted in the piece *Dolmen Music*, an important early ensemble composition for her, and one whose recording garnered much critical acclaim. Monk also recalled that Eastman gave her lessons in theory and counterpoint, and helped her hone her skills as a composer of large-scale works.



Eastman's work with Meredith Monk and Vocal Ensemble was only one of the many communities that he maintained in the late 1970s. His ties to Lukas Foss afforded him regular performances with the Brooklyn Philharmonia. Through Foss's support, he also became codirector of a new multicultural community initiative sponsored by the orchestra. Like many arts institutions in the 1970s, the Brooklyn Philharmonia, as it was then known, developed an outreach program featuring the music of nonwhite composers in hopes of building new audiences. Eastman, along with composer-conductor Tania León and composer Talib Hakim, organized a three-concert series for the 1977–78 season, performed in the then-predominantly black Brooklyn neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Boerum Hill. This Community Concert series, as it was called, was initially conceived as a series featuring only black composers, though it broadened its programming to "reach new audiences and feature the works of ethnic composers."[15] Consolidated Edison and Philip Morris provided seed funds that allowed the series to continue until the 1981–82 season, when it was merged with the Philharmonia's family concert series. Apart from his administrative duties, Eastman participated as conductor, pianist, vocalist, and featured composer in the series. His vocal performances on an early concert in the series were provocatively described as "weird incantatory chants" by critic Jon Ciner.[16]

The Community Concerts mobilized a long-established network of composers that had, since 1968, organized themselves as the Society of Black Composers.[17] Many of their members were featured on the concert series, including Hale Smith, Dorothy Rudd Moore, Omar Clay, Noel DaCosta, Carman Moore, Oliver Lake, and Arthur Cunningham. Writing soon after the society's organization, Carman Moore connected the aims of the group explicitly to the black radical tradition, noting especially the date of its formation. In one of his many articles for the *New York Times*, Moore stated that "suddenly the number of black American composers has become sizable, and, as testimony to this sudden blossoming (and certainly as an outgrowth of the Black Revolution), an organization called the Society of Black Composers was born in May, 1968."[18] Up to the time of the Community Concerts in the late 1970s, the society had mostly held its performances in venues in Harlem and Columbia University's McMillan Theater (now Miller Theater). Their increased presence in Brooklyn, with occasional Community Concerts at the East Village's Third Street Music School Settlement, shows a fluid mobility between uptown and downtown among other participants in New York musical life, one much less circumscribed by aesthetic divisions. Both

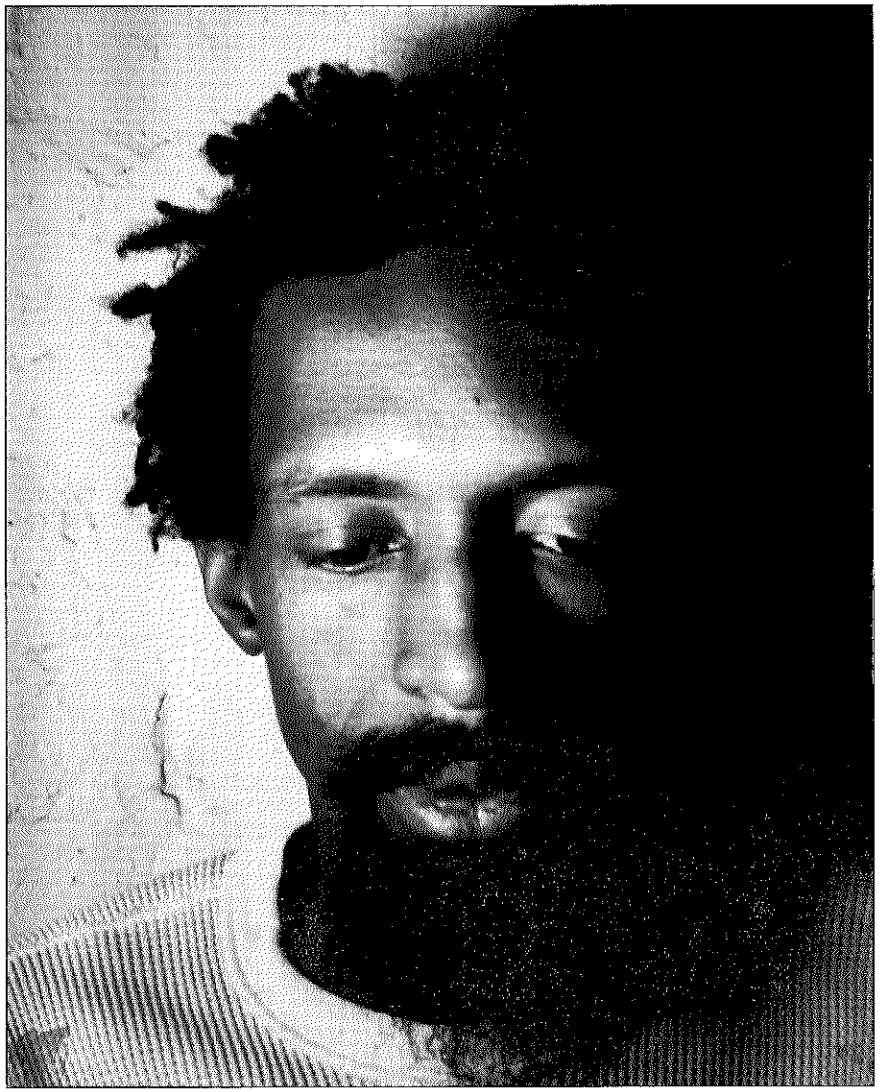
the Community Concerts and the Society of Black Composers offer alternate models for thinking about the relationship between downtown and uptown that work against rigid distinctions. The Society of Black Composers' activities and the Community Concert series show a more flexible community less concerned with the discursive, stylistic, and geographical categories of white downtown musicians.

As evinced by his "weird incantatory chants" and vocal improvisations displayed on the Brooklyn Community Concerts, Eastman was an active improviser drawing on both experimental music and jazz for his unique vocal displays. It was through his improvisations that he forged a connection with the politics of a depathologized post-Stonewall gay sexuality. He had long improvised as a pianist while living in Buffalo, and played in a jazz combo with his brother Gerry Eastman, an accomplished bassist and guitarist. Eastman's chamber music compositions from the early 1970s, such as *Stay On It*, *Joy Boy*, and *Femenine*, have sections requiring extensive improvisation among the players or are structured improvisations with some given musical material. While he continued working with brother Gerry in New York, Eastman mostly performed solo vocal and keyboard improvisations in the jazz and experimental music venues in the city.[19]

In the fall of 1976, Eastman performed an evening-length improvisation titled "Praise God from Whom All Devils Grow" at the Environ (Loft) space in SoHo.[20] This performance's title is an example of Eastman's aesthetic of blending the sacred and profane. He twists the hymn title "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" into something much more sinister, and reviews emphasized the more threatening aspects of his performance. Joseph Horowitz, a reviewer from the *New York Times*, reported "Eastman speaks of his music in terms of 'black forces'" and that his performance was "intense and astringent, often demonic."[21] His vocal improvisations also explicitly explored a transgressive gender-bending erotic sensibility. Part of the text Eastman improvised with was reported by Tom Johnson, former critic for the *Village Voice*: "Why don't you treat me like a real woman?" and "Open, open wider."[22] Johnson also compared Eastman to improvisers Cecil Taylor and Keith Jarrett, hearing similarities in their respective piano techniques.

The following December, Eastman performed another evening-length improvisation at composer Phill Niblock's Experimental Intermedia Foundation loft. That night, Eastman projected homemade Super 8 films simultaneously with his vocal and keyboard improvisations. This performance made explicit some of the more ambiguous erotic themes in the

Julius Eastman's childhood home, South Plains Street, Ithaca, New York. Photograph by Renée Levine Packer.



Portrait of Julius Eastman. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of R. Nemo Hill.



previous show at Environ. His text sung that evening alternated between romantic effusions and the enjoyment of what he euphemistically called "the right wrong." Ned Sublette recalls Eastman adding an intermedia element to the performance and improvising to his own Super 8 films showing close-up shots of dog waste on the street, intercut with shots of a long, slow pan up the body of a drag queen, whose face appears frozen in horror. Such juxtapositions of base materiality and the transgressively sexual, place Eastman in the company of other avant-garde gay artists active in downtown, namely, David Wojnarowicz and Jack Smith, whose art reveled in abjection, homoeroticism, shock, and camp. The juxtaposition of vocal improvisation and abject film imagery marks Eastman's particular contribution to downtown gay aesthetics.

Both of these improvised performances exemplify what I have identified in Eastman's work as an aesthetic of abjection. Eastman's performances transformed societal refuse (excrement, homosexuality, drag performance) into something highly valued, ritualized, and sacred. His critical engagement with abjection through his performance extended to his compositions, as well. One of the most salient examples is Eastman's multi-piano piece *Gay Guerrilla* from 1979. Toward the final third of the composition, Eastman's repetitive, ecstatic sound world coalesces into a canon pounding out the Lutheran chorale tune "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." *Gay Guerrilla*'s provocative title and overt quotation call to mind not only ecclesiastical tradition but also the lineage of European "old masters" he valued, including J. S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, and Giacomo Meyerbeer. *Gay Guerrilla* has been described by Kyle Gann as a type of manifesto, though one that gains its force not only through its sonic power but also from this musical borrowing and its reinterpretation as the sound of gay martyrdom. To borrow a description from historian of sexuality David Halperin, "Humiliation turns into defiance. Abjection discloses a secret grace that saves him from contempt."[23] The profane aspects of deviant sexuality are recuperated through a dynamic process of resignification and creative juxtaposition of musical signs.

While Eastman's improvisations explored the edges of sexual and political self-fashioning, his concern with race engaged the unlikely world of mostly white new wave. His relocation to the Bowery area of New York's downtown in the late 1970s exposed him to punk rock at nearby CBGB and he took from it an attitude toward the redefinition of hate speech that became a crucial component of his aesthetic of abjection. While living on the Bowery, Eastman shared a loft with the new wave band Su-Sin Schocks.

At a party hosted by the band and attended by Eastman and his friend Ned Sublette, the hosts played records, including Patti Smith's recently released "Rock N Roll Nigger" from her 1978 album *Easter*. Sublette recalls being put off by Smith's song and was surprised when Eastman took to it:

> It was at this party, that was the first time I heard "Rock N Roll Nigger," and I was actually appalled because I'm from the South. To hear a white person going "nigger nigger nigger nigger nigger nigger nigger" was to me just across the line. You just fuckin' didn't do that. I saw it as not too different from what it purported to lampoon. Julius loved it. It was a very important record for Julius. I remember the subject of the n-word came up and I said, this was often a little rhetorical device, you would say something and somebody would say it back to you confirming it. "So Patti Smith used it correctly?" "Patti Smith used it correctly."[24]

Smith had been, and continues to be, criticized for her song; however, it resonated with Eastman's own repurposing of hate speech, both racist and homophobic. Smith's use of the racist epithet attempted to transform it into a proud marker of otherness and artistry. Eastman was indeed so taken with her song that a portion of it, the rhythmic repetition of "nigger" in the song's bridge, became what Eastman called "the cantus firmus" in his work for ten cellos, *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*. The figure, the repetition of thirteen sixteenth notes followed by a dotted eighth, pervades the composition and does indeed provide the rushing, intense backdrop for aching and astringent melodies that emerge from the texture.[25]

Eastman often refunctioned hate speech in the titles of his instrumental compositions such as *Nigger Faggot* and *Evil Nigger*, part of the series of pieces that Sublette mentions in the excerpt above. Eastman elaborated on his politics of piece titles in a preconcert talk at Northwestern University in 1980. "And what I mean by 'niggers' is that thing which is fundamental, that person or thing that attains to a basicness, a fundamentalness, and eschews that thing which is superficial or, can we say, elegant. So that, a 'nigger' for me is that kind of thing which is, attains himself or herself to the ground of anything."[26]

For Eastman, such words had a "basicness" to them, and he spoke of his glorifying the words or the words glorifying him. Such an attempt at controlling meaning, of glorifying the abject, exemplified an attitude toward unequal power relations that cut across a number of musical practices that attempted to reverse value systems and redefine terms of condemnation.[27] Moreover, this approach to music and politics extended Eastman's use of abjection, attempting to transform historical oppression into strength. Yet



the actual efficacy of such an approach was often called into question, as Eastman's titles were occasionally omitted or altered on concert programs, as was the case at the premiere of *Nigger Faggot* on the Community Concert series. There it was simply listed as *NF*. The suppression of the titles of *Evil Nigger* and *Crazy Nigger*, as well as *Gay Guerrilla*, at his Northwestern University concert in 1980, prompted Eastman's explanation cited above. The tense race relations that had persisted on the Northwestern campus since the late 1960s provided a fraught situation for Eastman's music, and protests against his titles came from African-American students and faculty, precipitating the removal of the titles from the printed program. Audience reactions to Eastman's music indicate the limits of his recuperative aesthetic projects; they can, and did, fail. It is crucial that any historian dealing with these musical moments understand that attempts to salvage the abject may be doomed to such failure, that abjection's ability to be recuperated might always have a limit. There might always be a grace irredeemable, because the freight of history remains too strong.

While Eastman's compositional and improvisatory practices evinced a transgressive sensibility, his collaborative projects with the queer artists Meredith Monk and Arthur Russell provided new forms of progressive networks, inclusive of racial and sexual difference. In particular, his work with Arthur Russell brought together his personal constellation of interests, namely, the experimentalist, gay, and black aesthetics that he cultivated. Such aesthetic multiplicity, as I discussed earlier, had been part of his improvisational practice, and flourished within the multiethnic and pansexual collective mobilized by Russell. As his biographer Tim Lawrence has detailed, Russell was, like Eastman, a musical polymath. After studying composition with Charles Wuorinen at the Manhattan School of Music, Russell immersed himself in the downtown scene, serving for a time as music director for The Kitchen and working closely with Philip Glass. Much of Russell's work moved between genres, yet focused on disco as an important site for experimentation. While Eastman had not participated in making disco music before his work with Russell, he had long frequented dance clubs in both Buffalo and New York.[28]

Eastman and Russell met through Ned Sublette, and The Kitchen became the main setting for their work together. Initially, Russell enlisted Eastman as a conductor for his orchestral music. As director of the Community Concert series with the Brooklyn Philharmonia, Eastman could marshal a number of musicians. Many such performers were funded by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, a governmental

program that provided work for underemployed musicians in the city. Eastman enlisted members of the so-called Comprehensive Employment and Training Act Orchestra for a performance of Russell's mammoth piece titled *Instrumentals* in February of 1978. Besides their orchestral collaborations, Russell invited Eastman to participate in his disco-chamber-music performances as vocalist and organist. An early incarnation of the group, Dinosaur L, performed at The Kitchen in 1979. The performance was described as "an evening-length piece for trombone, 'cello, keyboards, electric bass and drums."[29] Though calling the performance a "piece" obscures the fact that Russell's music was largely a structured improvisation, and each musician brought his own musicality and style to the performance. The recording sessions for *24→24 Music* that followed are an example of the sort of experimental assemblages Russell and Eastman participated in. Russell's inclusion and advocacy of both human and musical difference allowed for radically individualistic performers like Eastman to bring their sonic identities to a performance and create a pluralist aesthetic, one also found in jazz and improvisational music of downtown.

Eastman in particular brought his amazing voice to Dinosaur L, contributing his experimental vocal techniques. From the unhinged utterance of the song "No Thank You," to the operatic energy of "In the Corn Belt," Eastman's voice emerged as a performance of erotic exuberance. Situated among the other musicians of Dinosaur L, Eastman also contributed his organ playing, keeping his improvisational style largely intact. Isolating Eastman's participation in Russell's work with Dinosaur L highlights an important moment in the creative practices of these musicians. Russell was an essential mediator for Eastman's voice, moving it from the largely experimental music scene into the dance music communities that moved to the sound of Dinosaur L's biggest hit "Go Bang." Through their collaboration, Eastman and Russell created a radically open community that afforded spaces for experimentation in the musical sites of downtown.

Ned Sublette recalls that Eastman was for him "the convergence of a lot of things."[30] As I've traced here, Eastman's convergences moved through a number of scenes, and he participated in diverse world-making explorations. Following Eastman from the Brooklyn Community Concerts to experimental music at The Kitchen, from improvisation at Environ to the avant-disco spun at the Paradise Garage, he has revealed a flexible musical identity that opened up new possibilities and musical relations. He practiced a type of musicianship that George Lewis has, in another context, described as "a form of boundary-blurring resistance to efforts to restrict



the mobility of black musicians."[31] With Eastman's voice as a guide, musical identity in the downtown scene is perhaps best thought of as outward-directed and capable of bringing together diverse networks, similar to what Tim Lawrence has described as "rhizomatic musicianship."[32] To no small extent, Eastman's life maps a counterhistory of downtown culture, one not bound to a history of style and genre, but one open to attachment, affect, and empathy. Indeed, the dizzying speed with which genres, styles, institutions, and performances were combined, networked, and reconfigured requires modes of inquiry and historiography sensitive to actors whose traces remain.

## Notes

Versions of this chapter were presented at the 2009 meeting of the American Musicological Society in Philadelphia, the 2009 Meeting of the Society for American Music, Columbia University, and Portland State University. I am grateful for the comments of those audiences, as well as the insightful suggestions of Walter Frisch, Bernard Gendron, Karen Henson, Tim Lawrence, and George E. Lewis.

1. Julius Eastman, press release for "Humanity and Not Spiritual Beings," January 30, 1981, The Kitchen clippings file, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The first piece, *Humanity*, was a vocal solo, perhaps largely improvised; the second piece, *Not Spiritual Beings*, is described as "a written work for Pianos and Instruments, based on nothing else than Harmony and Melody. Harmonies and Melodies that build step by step, conclude, and then begin again."

2. This date range indicates the years in which Eastman lived in New York City after leaving Buffalo and the Creative Associates. As the time line indicates, he was an active presence in the city's musical life prior to 1975, as a performer with the Creative Associates and as a solo pianist.

3. Eastman was a Creative Associate at the University at Buffalo from 1969 to 1975.

4. My methodology for this project draws on the microhistorical work of Carlo Ginzburg, as well as the sociology of association developed by Bruno Latour. The minoritarian and rhizomatic theory of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari has served as an important influence as well. For an introduction to Ginzburg's thought see his "Latitude, Slaves, and the Bible: An Experiment in Microhistory," *Critical Inquiry* 31 (Spring 2005): 665–83. See also Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). For the relevant work of Deleuze and Guattari, see especially their *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Pola (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). In addition, the ethical orientation of this project has largely been guided by the late work of Paul

Ricouer. In his ultimate philosophical reflection, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, he states, "I continue to be troubled by the unsettling spectacle offered by an excess of memory here, and an excess of forgetting elsewhere, to say nothing of the influence of commemorations and abuses of memory—and of forgetting." Such reflections on history and memory have profoundly shaped my attempts at thinking a history of cultural production in downtown New York City. See Ricouer, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), xv.

5. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner have advocated for modes of history and description that "promote radical aspirations of queer culture building; not just a safe zone for queer sex, but the changed possibilities of identity, intelligibility, publics, culture, and sex" that they have described as the production and maintenance of "queer counterpublics" as world-making projects. It is in this spirit that my work on Julius Eastman is also a political project. See Lauren Berland and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public" in Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone, 2002), 187–208; here 187 and 198, respectively.

6. See Marvin J. Taylor, "Playing the Cultural Field," in *The Downtown Book*, ed. Taylor (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 17–39; Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 227–316; Bernard Gendron, "The Downtown Music Scene" in Taylor, *The Downtown Book*, 41–66; Kyle Gann, *Music Downtown: Writings from the Village Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and Tim Lawrence, *Hold On to Your Dreams: Arthur Russell and the Downtown Music Scene, 1974–1992* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

7. Samuel Gilmore, "Schools of Activity and Innovation," *Sociological Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1988): 203–19.

8. I explore issues of race and sexuality in greater depth in my essay, "John Cage, Julius Eastman, and the Homosexual Ego," in *Tomorrow Is the Question: New Approaches to Experimental Music*, ed. Benjamin Piekut, 39–62 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014).

9. Ned Sublette, interview with the author, February 18, 2009.

10. Eastman graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in 1963 with a degree in composition.

11. Rorem writes, "The past years have seen a crop of American singers—not properly a recital singer—skilled to deal with current vocal concepts. These concepts stress words as sound no less than as sense, and inevitably enmesh the voice in a jungle of instrumental hues. The parent work is Boulez's *Le Marteau sans Maitre* (1954), and the spinoff interpreter in America is Bethany Beardslee, who could always do anything, as could Julius Eastman, Cathy Berberian, Jan de Gaetani, and Phyllis Bryn-Julson. The pieces are not songs, because they do not restrict themselves to piano and lyric poem. They are shows—narrational, terrifically up to date, yet still using texts from another time and place, like George Crumb with Lorca, David Del Tredici with Lewis Carroll, or, from abroad, Peter Maxwell Davies' *Mad King* and Henze's *Runaway Slave*. But these paragraphs were not meant to evaluate the decade of the 1970s." Ned Rorem, "The American Art Song 1900–1960, a Personal Appraisal," liner notes to *But Yesterday Is Not Today: The American Art Song, 1927–1972*, New World Records 80243, 1996.



12. Renée Levine Packer, *This Life of Sounds: Evenings for New Music in Buffalo* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 92.

13. Biographical information is derived from my interviews with Petr Kotik, Mary Jane Leach, Renée Levine Packer, Meredith Monk, Jeffery Nussbaum, and Ned Sublette conducted in 2008 and 2009. Eastman was a member of Kotik's group, the S.E.M. Ensemble, during his time living in Buffalo.

14. Meredith Monk, phone interview with the author, January 14, 2009.

15. Carol Lawson "Weekender Guide," *New York Times*, January 19, 1979, C1.

16. Quoted in Maurice Edwards, *How Music Grew in Brooklyn: A Biography of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 99.

17. Zita d'Azalia Allen, "Society of Black Composers in View," *New Amsterdam News*, June 7, 1969, 38.

18. Carman Moore, "Does a Black Mozart—or Stravinsky—Wait in the Wings?" *New York Times*, September 7, 1969.

19. Petr Kotik and Ned Sublette indicate that Eastman was an active jazz musician in Buffalo. Kotik, Sublette, interviews with the author.

20. The two reviews that give accounts of the performance do not give a title for the performance. However, Ned Sublette remembers the title as such. Ned Sublette, interview with the author, February 2, 2009.

21. Joseph Horowitz, "Julius Eastman Sings, Plays Piano at Environ," *New York Times*, October 12, 1976, 35.

22. Tom Johnson, *The Voice of New Music* (Paris: Editions 75, 1989), 144. Ned Sublette, interview.

23. David M. Halperin, *What Do Gay Men Want?* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 84.

24. Ned Sublette interview.

25. The first system of the score is reproduced in chapter 6.

26. Julius Eastman, Introduction to the Northwestern University concert, *Unjust Malaise*, New World Records, 80638, 2005.

27. Sublette suggests that Eastman had a cutting sense of humor that involved "laughing at power" and attempted to undo the traditions of subjection and violence done through racist and homophobic hate speech. This is certainly not an easy project to pull off, and philosophers and queer theorists have noted the continuing difficulty in repurposing hate speech. See Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 223–42, and Butler, *Excitable Speech* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

28. Ned Sublette interview.

29. The Kitchen press release announcing "Arthur Russell, 24→24 Music." Kitchen clippings file, New York Library for the Performing Arts.

30. Ned Sublette interview.

31. George E. Lewis, *A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and the American Experimental Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 370.

32. See Tim Lawrence, "Connecting with the Cosmic: Arthur Russell, Rhizomatic Musicianship, and the Downtown. Music Scene, 1973–92," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 3, no. 3 (November 2007): 1–84.