PAULINE OLIVEROS INTERVIEWS BERNARD RANDS

DECEMBER 27, 1978

PO: In the new work I notice that you are dealing with many different attitudes towards the moon as reflected in this kind of collection of different poets in their writings, and it seems to me that's a very interesting kind of thing to be doing. I wonder if this is new in your work or is something that you'v been interested in for a long time.

BR: It's not new. It's the first time I've set moon poems per se. But I am a great moon person in the sense that, well, first of all, against a Celtic background from which I emerged, there is a great significance in the moon for occurrent rituals articulating people's life and so on. No matter what scientific evidence we have to the contrary, those people still keep going back to it, because I try, it seems what happens in my case is that any new scientific proof/simply just becomes another aspect of a moon influence in certain ways. Now, it may be a dogged and tenacious holding to something that scientists would Nevertheless, that for me doesn't detract from the marvelous focal point that it's been for civilisation and pre-civilisation in articulating their lives in many ways from individual lives to huge collective society operations. Because the richness of the literature related to the moon, of course, is enormous.

PO: Enormous and fantastic. So I think that there must be some kind of attitude present in what you've just said underlying.

BR: There is because I suppose really what it is is the belief that intuition, however rationalized in its final manifestation, is the wellspring of the really human aspect, what we are. I find in my as a composer, no less now than ever, to try to find some kind of a rationalization, that is in terms of materials I use to build forms that are intelligible to other people.

Nevertheless, the ideas that I have about things come from deep inside, I don't know where they come from. I don't particularly want to know. I get worried when they don't come, to go searching around for them, but somewhere along the line it's in a wellspring that vibrates sympathetically from something externally and it generates it's own interpretation of what you see and so on.

PO: You say the moon is then the symbol of that activity?

BR. Yes. Just thinking of it as a physical object which we now know it to be, its many phases within its own cycle. I love cycles, things that come round and round again, and although they come round in a particular way and you can forecast that they will come, they never come in quite the same way. And even when there, let's say the moon itself is as it was the beginning of the previous cycle, there are so many other intermediary aspects that change it, clouds, our own attitude, where we are. So this looking at the same through many, many different layers and guises--and that I apply to musical material and that's the basis of what I'm working with.

PO: Could you say that there has been a change in say your present attitude as compared to earlier attitudes of your work, or have you held a consistent attitude?

BR: There are certain things that are consistent about which are probably limited by what I am, and the tendency/with all of course of us, I think, is that we work first of all to our limitations. In terms of artist, of course, is to try and seek something a little bit further that you were not before and try and push yourself in that direction. That's the one out there that you begin not knowing but you gradually discover. And so while certain things remain constant, attitudes do change and mine certainly have for just the sound of the music and certain influences that it had in earlier years which I don't regret for a moment. In

fact, that whole business of influence is a very important. I think people who worry about not being influenced have got more problems than the people who are willing to be influenced, becuase that way you find certain kinds of relationships and then you move away, you take certain things with you and you leave certain things behind. So traces of what were my influences, I think are still there; there is no question that there is a certain Euricism, Italianate, in the sense I think to sound that I have and retain. It feels right for me to think in those ways, and I do think that way. However, the challenge is also to find other forms to complement and something that I can develop it. I also now work on a much larger scale than I was before, feel like I can take on a huge mess of instruments or whatever the sound source.

PO: A larger union.

BR: I think so. It's difficult--I wonder how many people actually realize who have never been involved in music making in any way at all, either improvisatory or compositionally or combinations of those things just what it's like to, the question you started off with at the beginning, to maintain attention long enough to realize something that's a huge dream that took you maybe months to dream up and yet at the moment that you sit at the table you are working with tiny seconds of sound; what happens to all the rest that you don't want to lose and where do you put it in the meantime; there's no storage for it. That's an enormous--it's frightening sometimes, sometimes you come up with what you feel are very beautiful ideas and the desire to share at this point, and yet there's no way you can capture it all, even in one day or week. Sometimes it's restraintive to be drawing one little dot when you know that you may need four to get even close to it. And you probably find that in your work which increasingly has moved away from writing in that particular way gives you the more immediacy

and that way you are maybe able to capture huge waves of human sentiment.

PO: Yes and no, I think the problem is similar even though I've turned it around so to speak.

BR: The problem remains the same, no matter how you approach it or from where you come.

PO: But it's interesting, the points you bring up, because I think they're really central,

BR: There's an interesting--using scientific or other than purely musical discovery for a moment--it was interesting in a conversation recently with Diana Deutsch, who found that the attention span in lessons and the ability to reproduce after about 4 pitches in the way that they were normally structured in let's say the extreme serialism, even practiced musicians started to go wrong very quickly. Which says something about the way in which, the diversity and nonpolarity of the way sounds were used in that particular compositional process may be like some of the fundamental need for focus, whether it's a moon focus or some othe kind of symbol for it. But orally I think you have to supply those symbols, too, for all these things to recognise.

PO: Indeed. It may say something about the music or it may say something about the attention processes of the performers. It should be interesting to test that too, to go further. When did you become aware of your attitudes?

BR: That's very difficult--I mean, there are many ways to answer the question. And I can still recall how I felt as a child in relation to music, though at that time I probably wasn't conscious of feeling that way as such, I mean I wasn't outside of myself as much maybe as when one gets older. But I remember very clearly as an 8- or 9-year-old particularly, starting increasingly to get involved in professional music. By that I mean regular attendance to orchestra concerts and getting carried away with the kind of literature and musical thinking.

But even earlier I became acutely aware, and I remember very well through having piano lessons suddenly wondering how all this comes about, why do people do this and why am I sitting here and why do my parents want me to do this and what is it that feels good about it? Since that time I think I've always felt that there's something very special about being a musician. I don't mean that to be in any segregation sense from other people, but I mean there is something--I feel very lucky as a musician. I might be something else and be equally lucky, I don't know. But I'm very grateful that sound, the sound world is the world that makes sense of my life as opposed to other possibilities.

PO: How about your emotional relationships, your emotional state? Is that a consistent state or is that also a multiplicity range?

BR: I think maybe my outward manifestations of it are probably more even-keel than the inside manifestations are. And I don't know why that comes about. I suppose it could be attributed towards the certain kinds of attitude to what public behavior can be tolerated or what limits one sets for oneself in terms of relationships to other people. So that, for example, let's say if I'm churning about something and a totally unexpected visitor comes in, I'm not sure that I could have them share that actually. So you in a sense cut off, you put out something else which seems appropriate to welcoming that particular person or that set of events or whatever it is. And then in a sense you don't stop the other, it carries on inside, but there's a very--sometimes dualistic--but very multidimensional aspect of it. I feel passionately about music to the extent of my abilites which are very limited in many ways, certainly in performance, but if I don't feel we're getting to the extremes of where we can be, then I get upset. I don't mind that we all make mistakes in a given situation, and to that extent are unfaithful to a

text we may be interpreting. But that's not really an unfaithful thing, it's a mistake, it occurs and that can happen, but the real fidelity comes in the passion with which we embrace that piece and try to get people involved in it. It doesn't matter what the style is, the period.

PO: This sounds like a reference to your work as a conductor. How about when you are in the act of composing.

BR: That's a very mixed--I don't understand it. I've lain down and thought about it, walked around and thought about it. It's--it must be very difficult to live with, I mean for other people, because it's so fragile a thing. It's robust in one sense to do something, but you know that the moment that you either discover or are on the verge of discovering what it is you, it suddenly begins to blossom in front of you, it's very delicate and fragile. Anything can upset it and when it does then you lose it. No amount of calculation is going to put it right for me. You can set up all the frameworks and that's part of the job, you know, that's the technical part, what we've been discussing. I compulsively--I get all chilled ?

PO: So the ground is broken. And there's a lot going on.

BR: But I do also strange things. One of the things that I notice consistently over the years is that sometimes the moment when I do see my way clear toward what it is I want, I can't even be bothered to write it down. I get up immediately and go out and do other things. If I can then come back with the same conviction about it, then I can--but it's like the discovery is more important than the actual rendering of it, the final thing. That's a very self-satisfying thing, there's nothing wrong with that, it does satisfy the soul, whatever.

PO: So that's when you've reached the solution.

BR: Yeah. The rest is tedious. On the other hand, for me because of the nature of

my music, that's a necessary process, then, to go through to help someone else share, otherwise it just stays with me. Since I'm interested in sharing that way, then that other has to be gone through.

PO: In your interest in sharing and so on it sounds like you may have an underlying philosophy; is it a conscious philosophy?

BR: Again, I'm not able to articulate very clearly what it is. I mean, I know a number of components that have gone into it. I grew up in a Quaker family, an English Quaker family, and what was uppermost in the influence there was a pacifistic attitude to things, to people, to no violence, to keeping your temper, at least even if it was churning inside. And it's religious in a certain way in that sense. I grew up going to meetings for worship where I sat quietly an hour/and more and so on, not just thinking one's own thoughts, but through thinking one's thoughts and getting to other types of relationships, mystical, or whatever we wish to call them. Believing that,there is a particular Quaker phrase that says that of God in everyone, in every person, and I think that music speaks to that, all kinds of music. That's one of its goals, to reach, because if we mean, whatever we mean by God at least, I feel that music speaks back and forth to people in that way and brings out of them those things. I think what we say when we say that we hear a bad piece of music is that it somehow cheats the expectations; we go openheartedly and openmindedly and then suddenly something either through the thoughts that aren't being crystallized properly or through a fault of technical handling of them, and it collapses in front of you and you feel I think cheated by it. That's I think what we mean when we say, "I don't like that piece" or "that piece is not very good". It's somewhere, doesn't go anywhere because it doesn't ring bells.

PO: Is that philosophy public or is it private?

BR: Do you mean?

PO: Is that something that you are willing to say?

BR: Oh yes, that's why I say it to you. It's still the most, the cardinal premise in my life anyway, that to preserve a nonviolent attitude toward everything, though God knows, one can explore it ... different... but certainly on a political level and on a social level those kind of actions which go that way. Because, it seems to me, so much of the country too through what we can be and what music is.

PO: How did you, what skills are there that are central to your work. I know we are talking about both you as a composer and conductor, but maybe we can center on the composer.

BR: Well, if I can talk technically for a moment in terms of composing, I spend a lot of time trying to understand the nature of a certain area of the sound spectrum that we work in and it's my guess it's mainly that which is denotable by pitch and by the conventional notation systems. I've extended that range over the years into certain areas of noise and other areas of the spectrum and so on. It's understanding the nature and function of instruments and being able to arrange them in new realizations of themselves and of my ideas and musical ideas. All the conventional skills that have been associated with that kind of music I think is still very important for me, how one realizes the instrument, what are the instrumental functions in a particalur sound mass and a particular context and how it can be immaculately produced that way, and to go from that to others in which you know that there's going to be an element of struggle to realize every part of it which will give it a different balance and quality of nervousness and tension or instability and so on. Underneath all that is an understanding of harmony, of what sounds together and how to make a musical logic of what sounds. Again, I feel that the listeners, whoever they are, the thought I would

like to make is that I don't consider myself to be other than a listener. I am a listener, and in a sense, despite certain aspects, / especially training, I'm also a member of an audience because I go to concerts and all that. So I don't think we are separated in the way people would have us made out to be, cut off from people. There's a certain--when I'm working I very often get up from my table and what I've just written and realized; I would go over and over it again as a performer, as a conductor, I will sing it, I will walk around, I'll test my own degree of tolerance in relation to it. And if I can't stand it then I'm not likely to put it on other people (laughter). There's a certain testing--well now, of course one's limited in that to one's own limits, musical possibilities, to one's own tolerance. I think the important thing then--this is getting away from your original question but I think it's important on what goes from skill on the one hand to the environment on the other. That is, that when you are surrounded as we are in this place by composers who work very differently, that's always very good because even though you may be the object of tolerance sitting in your own room when you go outside you may bump into somebody who doesn't have those same measurements, right? (laughter) And that's fantastic.

PO: I agree with you. It's quite wonderful.

BR: Right. But for me it's/the one single exciting thing about being here; it's not the only thing, but...

PO: How did you acquire these skills that you were talking about?

BR: My basic training as a child and teenager and adult was the typical rigorous conventional one (mumble) I don't know to what extent any skill that I might have now is directly traceable to that. I suppose inevitably there is some because it's a form of discipline, it's a way of thinking where you focus in your mind on certain things. It helps to, I think, understand the

historical perspective, why certain things were done when they were done, and why they made sense to be done that way, and why they were almost perfect solutions at that time, but they're not necessarily any longer so; though there is a residue of what there were still present and what there were not. It's that aspect of continuity that interests me, I guess. No matter how new, how one might struggle, I'm interested in connections rather than differences. I like to see similarities. They can be abstruse sometimes; we cast one eye that way and one the other way, and when together two extraordinary different phenomena. But I think the ability to do that, and the ability to do it in a sound rather in gesture and theater and language and all huge admixture of all those things is terrific, to go on an enormous fantasy or starting point here and not knowing where you're going to take you. But to carry other people along with you and to also be redrawn into it yourself I think is fantastic. I practiced a lot of, I used to, for what it was worth, orchestrate music, pianos, and what kind. And I still like doing exercises, I still find that there's a certain discipline in solving problems, which may not have an immediate contextual use but the notion of solving a problem one way gives some, in a sense, a kind of model. You may at some point just need that model for an analogy to it.

PO: In the beginning we talked about the moon and the senses. Do you have particular models operating, conceptual models?

BR: Not fixed models as such. They tend to be mosaics of tiny models. The notion of cycling and recycling is the consistent feature. When you begin a piece and you determine a certain part of it I am constantly referring back to that part and listening to new ways of hearing it and how it might transform--transformation. Any other thing that is transformational by nature is a model for me (mumble)

PO: Now, let's take your composition as one part, part A, and conducting as part B and ask if you're aware of your own attention processes as a composer but as distinguished from your work, and the same thing about when you're performing as a conductor.

BR: I'll try to think of specific instances that will best illustrate. For example, when I'm reading my problem is not one of attention because I'm disinterested. I read a sentence, I read a paragraph, and by the time I've got there, what it's already done to me (laugter)..so I can actually put it down and leave it there. This is poor attention span.

PO: This is reading a book?

BR: Yeah. Reading a book, poem, or whatever.

PO: So you're triggered by the...

BR: Sometimes it's .... maybe, becuase the job demands that you concentrate on a text. That's what conducting is. And at that moment you bring not your fantasies to work but you bring the kind of emotional that you know went into it and the excitement of discovering those things and try and get that back into it because it's on the page right there and three hours with 7 or 8 more or less willing musicians and so on. To get them geared in such a way that they feel this energy back in the piece again from the printed page. At that moment you don't fantasize on it, you don't go into all that. You may later at home. No, it's not what I'm collecting perhaps it's when I'm doing other things. In that sense I suppose I tend to be very fragmentary in that way, a book in the bedroom half-read or a paragraph, then I'll go to something else. But that's because again I think my work is very much a collection of ideas from all over the place. I don't necessarily mean eclectic in the sense of from other people. Take this moon....the fact that you can put an

Italian poet next to a German in a certain way, and how did that come about? Well, because I write Quasimodo in one context and in another. Then you start to make the connections in your fantasy...

PO: So you're making a unified context for all this, diverse...

BR: I think that that's to make a kind of unity out of the diversity that exists. That is not a unity which is homogeneous, which just strangles everything, but to give it the possibility to relate. In a sense, well, the nicest human function is to create contexts in which seemingly diverse things make sense.

PO: We've switched back into content, which is very interesting. It's very hard to separate,or it has been, how you're attending to all that, is the interesting point.

BR: I think that I would have to separate in a way the technique of music-making Now, terms are very inadequate, but the actual final choices of what goes on and all the other things that I do because of a certain moment--the nature of music as I understand it, and that's one person's view of it, requires that you have to reject certain certain amount of things. You may have a different feeling that you may be, the impression I guess is that it's much more embracing and might tend to be selective in a certain way, eliminating certain things whereas let's say, from now on is perfectly happy to admit of things as they occur and deal with them. That's not to say they don't occur to me,too. They do occur, they do to everybody, they happen. You can accomodate them or you can reject them. I think there's no moral issue involved in this. That's the important thing; it's only when we get misled into thinking that's the case; it's purely a choice that you make. You admit some and you reject others and at other times you may have a completely reversed set of choices. But in music, in those qualities that I have talked about, the sounding together of elements,

and the forward movement in time, which is the only one which is possible I think, to find a logic and seek ones which is intelligible at least in part to anybody who's willing to share--now, that takes a, there are lots of things that go into that. There are many mysterious areas, there are cul-de-sacs and blind alleys, and you go up them because it's nice to go up there, but it doesn't go anywhere. It's like the labyrinth--by the time one reaches the end, and in that sense a piece is a conditioned environment, it doesn't matter what kind of piece it is, I mean a Mozart symphony in a sense is a conditioned environment conditioned by those particular sets of values sounds and qualities and so on--till I then, it finishes. And you can set up a room differently in sound space and so on. But I think the listeners need to realize that some of the sounds that they hear are but slight transformations of a realistic world that they already know. And I think that once they realize that, music is no longer some esoteric thing for a few. They'll at least respond--this thing inside us responds. And though they may at that time not understand all the musical logic that's gone into making it, so what. If they come away feeling that something happened that hadn't happened before, then they'll come back and find a little more. I'm very conscious of that when I'm working. That's an aim, how you actually achieve it. It's not one thing, it's not putting a chord here that relates to a chord there. I could take tonic thing, which will help, it will all help, but don't guarantee anything. At the end of saying all that, the honest to God truth is that I have no idea. (laughter)

PO: Let's move over to your conducting and ask the same question. For instance, when you are going to conduct a group of musicians, are you aware of the thinking processes of those musicians?

BR: Yes. I think one is that basically as another musician one is aware of what it

is to be involved in this phenomenon, and the more one works with other musicians, certain kinds of instrumental players under certain conditions, one becomes very aware of this particular thing: their attention span, what interests them, how they react to their instrument, to music. It's very important because the better in a sense, the more creative and imaginative musicians that there are the less concentration span they've got, it seems to me, for the same reason. They play a phrase and maybe their mind goes off in another one, but the next one in line on the page is something quite different. Then they get carried away with the quality of the instrument and their concentration on certain things. I suppose it's only because they practice so much and they work at certain things that they are able to develop what seemingly anyway from a public presentation point of view is a long attention span, though as you know very well in an orchestra, for example, all kinds of things are going on while those gorgeous sounds come from another section. But that's only on a superficial level. I think that what really is at the basis of this all is that those people have dedicated that amount of their lives, that amount of time, to providing a vehicle through which sounds can be emitted into that....in a way which ranges from highly stylized early music to today. That always impresses me, when I'm complimented by a musician, when I think if you were to tot up collectively the amount of hourly dedication that this lot put into to being what they are now, a vehicle capable of extraordinary things. Then lapses that occur because of conditions or whatever don't seem to matter.

PO: Let's go back; there's an interesting thing you said, a lot of interesting things you said. You talk about reading a book and finding yourself triggered off into all sorts of other thoughts. But what happens when you become, how will you become aware that that's what's happened or are your eyes still

following the print on the page?

BR: No, I usually give up at that point. I stop.

PO: You realize it; so you understand the switch.

BR: Yeah. No, I do, because it would be unfair to assume that any conclusions that I come to from a premies stated in the first paragraph are in fact the conclusions of the person who's...that it's important that I at a certain level come back and focus and actually understand what that person is telling, because if he spent his time doing it and it's a rich world for me to be involved in, then should translate through to the end.

PO: Is there anything you do as a conductor to enhance the attention of the musicians?

BR: I'm not a very good conductor so it's not...I really don't know, Pauline. I tend to talk to them when I'm working on a piece, say someone else's music, not as a conductor. I talk to them as a composer and get them to understand what it would mean to make that kind of whatever it is, that kind of shape or structure and so on, rather than--obviously one has to pay attention to the qualities of sound and quantities and so on and all that stuff, rhythmic (mumble). But to try and get them to understand how it relates--you know, that's one thing that's very important, when you're playing a piece of music and you're concentrating on a particular section, and I as a composer, I'm excluding (studying?) the score and also being a composer, am sensitive to other kinds of transformations which occur 10 minutes later. That's my job, and I often do--we'll play a section from here and I'll play a section from there side by side, leaving out a whole chunk in the middle. So now you see why that's that.

PO: So you're helping them to make connections?

BR: Yeah, so then they know they're making for that at some point, whatever things happen in the meantime.

PO: Let me go back now and just briefly to the very beginning of when you were talking. You mentioned the tension, and you mentioned as you were working, you mentioned about focusing on tiny parts and making notes, and then you spoke of a larger feeling of gathering material and that you weren't sure you wanted to know what that was, but that you didn't like it when it wasn't there. So that it seemed to me that you were aware of a couple of differet kinds of...

BR: Being aware of them, yeah. But having them predictably, I think, ultimately would be awful. It would take out the whole, all of what we've been talking about would be changed, because, okay 9:00 or three minutes past nine you could come in here and go to it and know what it was, and that will become just an occupation, wouldn't it? You would know what the wellsprings were, what they are, and go to it and do it. It's not knowing, and searching, and being excited by something that somebody else might find trivial at the moment, but you're willing to try and come listen, that it is exciting, that's much more.... I do know when I can't find it, which is pretty regularly (laugh). I also think

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(Side 2)

music and those extremely complex processes that go into making it. As a teacher one learns to talk fairly articulately more or less about other music. But I never get any practice to talking about what it is I do, and therefore I'm constantly looking for the words, and when immediately I've said a word, I know that it's nowhere near what I would like to commit. But I suppose in the end you have to, and it sounds cliches and it's been said many times, but it's so true. There is the music, that's me. And it is. I can't say anything else about it. I can show you what makes it tick technically in certain ways.

PO: All in all it seems it's bordering on the indecent to question a person about the process.

BR: And that's why, for example, I'd say now I'm in this current about say setting say a computer facility. I can give my uttermost energy to supporting

that notion and that idea, and yet I know the first thing that I would do with it would be some moonlike attempt at something which is.... It will help me find those sounds that make that beautiful sound world.

PO: While your attention is there... Paying attention to attention is a rather different matter. I think it's worthwhile--that's where my attention is these days, and it's come from the general work that I've been doing, trying to unravel a few things, but finding that it may be helpful to train new musicians and I think also for some composing, the whole spectrum...

BR: Thinking in terms of meditating...

PO: Meditation is one way of learning about a particular process that's available to all of us, I think, and probably is unfair. I should say that I have, in the paper I gave in Mexico I finally managed to articulate a theory which I hope is clear or at least is a starting point. I'll just draw you my little map. It's like this. This is my symbol, which is a very old one, you might recognize it, it's one which is used in different cultures, very universally good. For me the ~~water~~ outer circle is what I refer to as global attention, and the dot is focal attention. The organization of attention is--auditory attention (pause) (pause), auditory, visual, same thing.

If you go on to smell and taste..

BR: By somatic you mean...

PO: Body, /Proprioceptors, and bodily touch.

BR: You mean touch as opposed to smell and...

PO: But these are the main attention areas of concern as musicians. So the global attention expands in all directions in a global state. In the global attention state you're aware of--it's unlimited capacity. However, the details aren't clear and yet you can take in all... It can be directed internally so that you're global attention is all going towards your imagination. Or it can be all towards

the external world. That's like switching back and forth.

Your focal attention is the same thing. It can be focussed exactly on a detail, like a note, and you can be focussed on several things at once. But it's limited, the number is something like 7 ± 2. Your auditory attention may be goin internally in that sense. Both of them can happen simultaneously of course, and they do. It's just that more often that not people are not aware of this global state; they are locked into the focal state and think nothing else is happening. This focal attention also gets used up.

BR: I was going to ask you, when you said they happen simultaneously. Do we know that?

PO: Yeah, I think we know that that's going on. For instance, you can...

BR: I'm interested. I'm sure that psychologists have got all the answers and I don't know about them, but in my own thinking about is that they don't go on simultaneously but they, fast change forms switching from one to the other. Because even when you think of it for a moment, even in the global attention there are certain things that you focus on and then back again. It's just such a complex... almost the speed of light changing.

PO: Yes, it is very fast, it's on the order of milliseconds, things can take place. But the point is, I think, in meditation you become aware of that, of that global state. You gain access to it. Your meditation task may take up your focal attention, staying with something, which also develops that thing called attention span. So that's why it seems to be important, thing to work with, technique to work with. It's also interesting to trace it through these different modes because your focal attention can be used up say by one mode, one--well, if these are the modes, global and focal. In the auditory, in the visual or in somatic. The interesting thing is to find out what's appropriate to the task. For instance,

in learning a piece of music you may be using your focal attention note by note or phrase by phrase, and gradually you're able to chunk more and more details together, so it becomes units & eventually is assigned to this area so that your focal attention is freed up for a strategy.

BR: That's true, that's right.

PO: It seems to me that learning about these processes, because also the way you store, learn and store say for instance how a musician learns about notation, you learn looking at a note and storing it visually, and then your body responds with auditory electives (laughter). Some do, some musicians/can see the score in front of them, what is there or not, and follow it and play all the notes but not hear them very well. So it seems to me that knowing that is a very useful tool in development of musicians, and maybe of building new patterns to supplement or replace the ones that were stored. For instance, Steed Cowart is one of those ...

BR: I find myself that the degree of variation between pretty maximal state of accuracy and one of some atrocious, sometimes just shocking, I find myself in rehearsals...I've tried to find sometimes what constitutes or what governs those phases. And it may be certain aspects of attention. On the other hand you can set your mind, really focus and try, and things go wrong and they go by, and on other days you're seemingly not concentrating and pick them all up and know exactly what went where and what's wrong.

PO: One of the things that I think is that when you and I are both in the similar stage and responsible, you have more of a responsibility than I do, I think, to the department, but that you may assign big problems to this, say when you go to rehearsal or go to do your own work, you put aside giant problems. But nevertheless they are operating so that it takes up some of your capacity.

BR: It works in exactly the same way, maybe it's closely related to this, the business of tempo, too. But tempo I don't mean outwards, I mean one's temperament, what happens, you can churn inside and yet seemingly on the outside you're focusing on something else and it's quite calm and you seem to be logical about it all. And the interaction between that subsurface and the surface itself...

PO: Yes, it's very interesting. Also, just moving from one to the other can be a very interesting exercise in listening. But anyway, how to increase the capacity here is very interesting. A lot of my work in the last few years has really been about exposoing these processes so that you can work with them and learn to tune in. Once you have this organization, you have some feeling for how loaded down this can get and how you can assign things to this.

BR: It's very interesting, that, because, I another colleague and friend, with John Silber, I sometimes feel that what he considers--now this is very interesting, it may be complete lack of communication and understanding--but what he feels to be global I find to be very focal.

PO: Yes, the same thing for me.

BR: Now, that's consolation...because he talks in those terms as though it were encompassing a huge thing, and I find that it's in fact--there's nothing wrong with that, it's involuntary--

PO: It's that he's come in contact with all of the literature on right and left hemisphere and seems to want to value the right hemisphere above the left hemisphere. So we make it revolution rather than an integration. Each of these ~~molds~~ modes are equally important.

BR: They're absolutely interdependent.

PO: You can't throw them away. One hemisphere is not artistic and the other scientific. It's impossible; both are operating equally in whatever we do. If they aren't.

BR: What you've just said, and I wish I'd thought of it because it's the answer to the questions that you're asking anyway, that's exactly it inasmuch as one can generalize.

PO: Since this one, the focal mode, is limited, a limited capacity of high value that magnifies and makes possible and enables and then we have to work so hard to train it and have it available. We have to work hard to train our other as well to give us what we need at the time.

BR: I thought that one of the functions of music, though we often wonder what the range of thoughts and what the hell are we doing to a very set understanding of it, almost at an entertainment level, even at the highest entertainment level, and there it is. Really, what it really does is help us to realize how complex everything is, and just to uncover one tiny little bit more of those network of tissues that run everywhere. No matter whose music it is or what period or style it is, it has nothing to do with it, the nature of music is to just reveal a little bit more and show you how much more complicated it is when you get into it. That way I think you start to develop a much more global appreciation of the interaction. That's what I meant earlier when I said seeing connections and fantasizing connections between all those things.

PO: Yes, there is this. And ideally your focal attention is centered right in the middle, so that it's like a searchlight and you can search out all, you can look through all of your store, all of your imagination, or all of the external world or whatever.

BR: I remember seeing for the first time, I wasn't very old but I was able to make some sense of it, Paul Klee's Pedagocial Sketchbook, and starting with a point and then developing into a line and going and all of a sudden there's something wonderful there (mumble).

PO: I think you see it. You see it all through the, through all the world.

BR: And as you asked me about model, I suppose in a way then that starts to be a model, a more visual one for a way of thinking, a way of working and a way of relating huge unity, I suppose; that's what it is.

PO: What I intend to do next quarter, this coming quarter in my seminar with work with the students, the whole idea of the seminar now is to try to get to help them develop feelings for these two modes through exercises and through both verbal and actual rhythmic exercises and so on and so forth to see if they can get to feel their own processes, but then to try to bring it to bear on any particular problem that they may be engaged in. So, for instance, Isabel and I, I understand she might work on Boulez's "Marteau sans maitre". It will be interesting to try to apply, to see how she's approaching it and to see if there are then ways of working it out. Another would be to help someone take a Varese score and look at it from this point of view, because I believe that a lot of his fooling around sets you up in a particular mode, and then when we go into those ambiguous--what is it that Bob calls them?

BR: The , the layers.

PO: Yeah, the timbre, / timbral sounds that Bob is so interested in that are ambiguous--fused ensemble timbres. I think that you are driven into this state so that you could analyze that whole score in terms of this.

BR: That's again what I was meaning when I said about orchestration about function, what I call function, a way in which any given instrument or combination function in a particular context to produce that kind of total sound which eliminates the individuality of each one and yet take any one of them away and you change the nature of the global .

PO: And so there you are.

BR: That is, when we work with conventional instruments, that is a skill that you can train and develop. I think that then you have a larger spectrum available through technology, through other forms of technology, technology and digital synthesis and so on. You can develop skills again in that area, but the important thing I think, is that the artist's job in that sense, is to be aware of that global possibility.

PO: And if you look at, say just look at the history of the development of Western music and take the additions, the harmonic additions, and staring with ~~non-Verdi~~ MONTEVERDI say, where you have to learn finally to resolve that into a chord which is not ambiguous. So that there you are.

BR: You know all that, the nature of phrase length and therefore of formal balance, and therefore of large-scale structure, is based on certain aspects of attention span.

PO: Absolutely.

BR: But how far you can go before you have to come back.

PO: You go into this, you are driven there.

BR: But it's interesting how it changes in Western musical culture anyway. It's very different in others, of course; there are different patterns of tonal combinations. But there's no question that they're in the 19th century with a certain kind of expansionist and already self-centered approach to many things, I mean the nature of Romanticism in a sense very self-centered. You can have huge, long time spans before you'd have to focus again. And we've got used to that now in that respect. It must have been quite difficult for people of that time.

PO: Yes, I can imagine, becuase the kind of focal points that there were, and so I think as musicians, as composers we keep training audiences, ourselves, to move in these ways, we have to break down the foci that occur and put them together and get those delicious ambiguities. So I think it can be fun.

BR: And not models again, to use specific ones, that... Joyce has always been so important for me ever since I've been able to read it, to understand it, it's still almost daily. What I was trying to say earlier, now I can say it more clearly, the notion of working on one chord and wanting to capture that moment. I think what happens--how many people realize that if you're working, let's say, with an orchestra of 90 players, it could be a chorus also, 100 voices, who knows--and all of a sudden you want a tutti chord. How many little black marks, have you--you know, people think--how many you've got to make to capture one tenth of a second, it can take you all morning, and all you're doing is just marking down on the page in a straight line. And then you put tails on them, and then you put two that way, and then you mark it sf. And all you've done is (finger snap) like that. Then you go through to Finnegan's Wake and you realize there's a novel that took 17 years, balancing every word so that it had more than one meaning. And those myriad connections are something else. It's beautiful. And in the end, what is marvelous about it--for me again, I come back to, people sometimes get involved in discussions about politics in music and so on--and I think it's a very political act. Political in the sense that people who would get a hold of it and control it, I mean they ought to do so because it's so much bigger than anybody that's... All they do is put the artist in prison, but they don't, they can never get hold of... And to make things in such a way that they challenge you. They challenge the very roots of what you think and what you do, and you can't do anything about it, there's no way you can combat it.

PO: No, it's a very subversive work.

BR: Yeah, that's right.

PO: I do thank you.

BR: We don't do enough of it, Pauline. Not for the purpose of a project or anything but just to...

PO: Just to talk and find out what each other's doing seems to me so important. I've always felt disappointed at UCSD that there wasn't more of that and there was so much of the other.

BR: It's true. Our lives go churning on down and... I found more of it, I suppose, since we've been working in SONOR because I've got Jean-Charles, who is also a composer, and works in a particular creative/and then he has another area in his life which is an entirely different one. I admire the fact that he can go back and forth between those. It will be nice that you make a piece and that we can all get involved in. That's really what.....

PO: That's good. I feel pretty confident the way that should work out at this point. But for a long time I felt quite alienated. I did, because of the work I was doing, I sort of...

BR: Then you probably can understand then what John feels now. John feels very alienated. For me it's been a very churned up month.

PO: I think it's different. I think I can understand it alright. This is more a kind of bitterness, I'm afraid.

BR: It is unfortunately, that's one thing that's just not part of you at all.

(end of interview)