

Available Materials By and About JAMES TENNEY

The music and theoretical works of James Tenney have had an enormous impact and influence on many composers of the younger generation, yet it's quite difficult to locate his scores, writings, and compositions. Joseph Pinzarrone has said that Tenney is perhaps the "most famous unknown composer in the country," yet there is not one commercial recording of his music available. To many in the avant-garde, Tenney has become a kind of "legend"—someone who they have heard a great deal about, and by whom they've possibly even heard a piece or two, but whose work as a whole is largely a mystery. To help alleviate this situation I have compiled a "survey" of available, important sources on Tenney, drawn largely from a recently completed book, *The Early Works of James Tenney* (available from Soundings Press, 948 Canyon Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87501; Peter Garland, Editor and Publisher). This list is by no means intended as a complete bibliography of Tenney's work, but may serve as a starting point for those interested.

I. Recordings

"Noise Study" (early computer generated work, 1961); on *Music From Mathematics*; Decca DL 9103 (out of print).

"Stochastic (String Quartet)" (another computer composed work, 1963); also on Decca, 1963 (out-of-print).

II. Publications (by Tenney)

A. Scores

Monody, for solo clarinet (1959); in *Pieces: An Anthology*; Michael Byron, Ed.; Vancouver, A.R.C. Publications; 1975 (or c/o Michael Byron at the Kitchen, 484 Broome St., NYC 10013).

String Complement (small graphic score to be played with computer generated *Ergodos I or II*); *Notations*; John Cage and Alison Knowles, Eds.; Something Else Press; NY; 1969.

Choreogram (for musicians and dancers); *Soundings #1*; Peter Garland, Ed.; Soundings Press; 1971.

Postcard Pieces;—10 pieces written on postcards, each dedicated and paying some type of homage to the work of another artist; in *Scores: An Anthology of New Music*; Roger Johnson; NY; Schirmer Books; 1981.

Three Rags for Pianoforte (*Raggedy Ann, Milk and Honey, Tangled Rag*); 1966; published by E.C. Kerby Ltd.; 198 Davenport Rd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1J2. These rags were recorded in the late '60s by Sam Charters, with Tenney on piano, issued in a limited edition reel-to-reel tape.

Hey When I Sing These Four Songs Hey Look What Happens; 1971; in *Scores*....

For 12 Strings (rising); 1971; in *Scores*; orchestration of his classic tape work *For Ann (rising)*.

Clang; for orchestra; 1972; *Soundings 3/4*; Peter Garland, Ed.

In the Aeolian Mode; 1973; in *Scores*....

Chorales for Orchestra; 1974; in *Pieces: A Second Anthology*; Michael Byron, Ed.; Vancouver, Canada; A.R.C. Publications; 1976.

Spectral CANON for CONLON Nancarrow; for player piano tuned to the harmonic series; in *Pieces*; 1975.

Three Pieces for Drum Quartet; *Pieces*...; 1975.

Meta Hodos; A Phenomenology of 20th Century Music and an Approach to the Study of Forms; 1961 Tenney's first important theoretical exposition of the basis of many of his compositional ideas. This long work has long been out-of-print, but can be obtained widely in libraries.

"Sound Generation By Means of a Digital Computer"; *Journal of Music Theory 7/1*; 1963; one of the first explanations of computer synthesis procedures to composers and musicians.

"Computer Music Experiences, 1961-64"; *Electronic Music Reports #1*; Institute of Sonology; Utrecht; 1969; a highly interesting account of his work at Bell Labs. See the *Soundings Tenney* issue for much more on this work.

"Form"; in *Dictionary of Contemporary Music*; John Vinton, Ed.; NY; E.P. Dutton; 1971.

"META Meta Hodos"; *Journal of Experimental Aesthetics 1/1*; A.R.C. Publications; Vancouver; 1977; John Grayson, Ed./Publ.; If anyone knows where to get copies of this publication, please let me know. "META Meta Hodos" is arguably Tenney's most significant theoretical work, though its dense style makes it difficult for many readers. The *JEA* was an interesting experiment that produced one very important issue (it also had Robert Ashley's "When the Virus..." piece in it), but aside from a few libraries that happened to order it, it is virtually unobtainable, although it is rumored that there are many copies with A.R.C. in Vancouver! "META Meta Hodos" provides the basis for the understanding of Tenney's theory of "hierarchical temporal gestalts."

"Conlon Nancarrow's Studies for Player Piano"; in *Conlon Nancarrow: Selected Studies for Player Piano*; Peter Garland, Ed.; Soundings Press; 1977. These notes on Nancarrow's music are currently being used as part of the liner notes on the 1750 Arch recordings of Nancarrow's complete works.

"The Chronological Development of Carl Ruggles' Melodic Style"; *Perspectives of New Music 16/1*; Fall-Winter; 1977.

"Temporal Gestalt Perception in Music" (with Larry Polansky); *Journal of Music Theory 24/2*; Fall 1980. This is the current installment of the Meta Hodos series, involving a computer simulation of Tenney's theories of perception.

"Introduction" to *Americas* by Peter Garland; Soundings Press, Santa Fe; 1982. If you haven't read OP regular Peter Garland's wonderful book on American music, shame on you, and Tenney's introduction is also quite special.

III. Other—recordings, writings about Tenney, etc.

Charles Ives, 31 Songs; Folkways; Sam Charters Producer; Tenney (and Philip Corner) piano; Ted Puffer, voice.

Band, Ellen; in *Allos*; Ken Gaburo, Ed.; Lingua Press, La Jolla, CA; 1980; astrological reading of Tenney.

Ornerian, Khaleef; "In Case of Beer Call Jim Tenney" *Soundings #6*; score containing some profound insights into Tenney's musical personality.

Polansky, Larry; Interviews with Malcolm Goldstein, Philip Corner, and Alison Knowles about Tenney; taped and in my possession

Van Riper, Peter; "The Tangled Case of Tenney's concerts"; *Ear Magazine East*; Vol. 5 #2; one of the more interesting of the various reviews of Tenney's music.

Young, Gayle; Interview with Tenney; *Only Paper Today* (now *Music-Works*); Vol. 5 #5; 1978. Indispensable short interview by the fine young Canadian composer/instrument builder.

Zimmerman, Walter; *Desert Plants*; A.R.C. Publications; 1976. Incredibly, this book, which contains fine interviews with many of the most interesting composers in the U.S., is in the same situation as the late *Journal of Experimental Aesthetics*. If anybody knows where to get a few, please contact me.

James Tenney; Special Soundings Press Issue; Fall, 1983; available for \$10 from, 948 Canyon Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87501. This issue contains several major, unpublished works by Tenney, my own book length consideration of Tenney's work entitled *The Early Works of James Tenney*, and shorter pieces by Phil Corner, Garland, Malcolm Goldstein, and others. Cover by Alison Knowles.

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