

Preface

The thoughts and perceptions collected in this book evolved out of my music making activities of the past twenty-five years, as well as from innumerable experiences of the natural world / environment. It is a very particular view of improvisation that is offered here: *the musician as one centered in the process of discovery, unfolding moment to moment, that is realized in the gesture of enactment / sounding.*

My concern, especially in these times of a world increasingly fragmented and compartmentalized, is directed toward the awareness of ourselves as whole beings, each with an abundance of rich and diverse energies, interacting within a complex and ever-changing social / political fabric, as well as within the natural environment that sustains our living. There are many implications that extend from this vision of improvisation; aesthetic, social, political, economic and educational value considerations become apparent and are touched on in these writings. Musical techniques (particularly "extended" performance practices) are discussed also, with some scores and study procedures included, but always as understood as an expression of the wholeness of our humanity (an ongoing process of finding ways to clarify what needs to be done), rather than as devices within themselves.

The book consists of articles, previously published in various periodicals, interspersed with excerpts from journals, interviews, letters, scores of music and program notes, that reflect my involvement with various aspects of improvisation. The printed articles outline some of the larger considerations, which the journals and other materials embellish and extend. The section focusing on performance practices, beginning with the article "The Gesture of Improvisation," emphasizes bowed string instrument techniques; as a composer / violinist, this has been my deepest source of experience. All of this, however, is clearly applicable to other instruments and to the voice, and can be adapted to them: each person, their own sound offering.

Malcolm Goldstein
September 12, 1987