Live composition in/& performance, 10 December 2012

**Chris Funkhouser: Writing, Voice**

##### with

##### Chris Diasparra: Saxophone, Drums

##### Dave Ruder: Clarinet, Electronics, Voice

##### Alan Sondheim: Strings

Music Factory: December 10, 2012 (approx. 1:30-2:20 p.m.), Eyebeam Art+Technology Center, New York City (http://www.newlanguages.org/)

Three months ago, Alan Sondheim invited me to participate in an “unbroken 96 hour performance” of improvised music, a project which came to be known as Music Factory. Without knowing what to expect at all, I joined in for five hours on one of the event’s four days. To prepare, I practiced on a couple of instruments and arrangements (flute and canjo with digital effects such as echo, double chorus, and creating loops). I also had in mind, from a certain point onward, that I would do some improvisatory writing.

Besides Alan, I’d only played with one other of the many participants, Chris Diasparra, but knowing they’d be there enabled me to have a certain amount of confidence that I could contribute freely. When I arrived at Eyebeam, Alan was onstage with one of his many stringed instruments, and Dave Ruder, a clarinetist, was setting up some electronic gear. When I asked Alan what instrument to play, he simply said, “Listen, and fit in”, or something to that effect. I played some hand percussion for a bit (Tagunggak and Berra Boi), and then settled into flute and canjo playing. After three hours, I took a short break, after which I commenced the writing session while Alan, Chris, and Dave were onstage.

Using a spell-check process I transformed, over the course of forty minutes or so, information from the Music Factory website into a prose poem (see http://cordite.org.au/features/picture-becomes-text-becomes-writing/ for a basic description of the process I use). The process involves some text prep work, which is happening during the first few minutes of the recording. I sat in the front row of chairs next to a projector which illuminated (against a dark curtain downstage) what transpired on the laptop screen. When finite composition begins, strains of the music change as musicians adapt to hearing me verbalize through my thoughts on the language Microsoft Word was feeding me as the poem is tuned. The composition was absolutely unrehearsed: I'd never digitally treated the seed text in any way prior to the event, and it is remarkable how well the ultimate textual result corresponds to themes and objectives declared by the event’s organizers (Alan, Chris, Jackson Moore, & Edward Schneider).

At one point, a delivery man arrives to pick up a parcel; at another, Chris is using an electric pump to inflate an air mattress for backstage use. To conclude, we are all onstage and I read the brand new piece; toward the end, Dave also chimes in with words...