

# GAME THEORY

## A note about the Mad Scientist Machine

The Mad Scientist Machine is a culmination of many years of thinking about improvised music. Often one of the most difficult things to achieve in an improvised musical setting is structure. This is particularly true of an ensemble of more than 5 players. The Mad Scientist Machine is a system that helps bring structure to an improvisation while also bringing an awareness of direction and content as a foundation from which improvisation can spring forth.

It is an experiment in creating a balance between freedom and structure and at the same time it also creates a window for the audience into the process of improvisation in music. Transforming a composer's ideas into specific light cues for an ensemble of players, the Mad Scientist Machine is a combination of a game structure and compositional system.

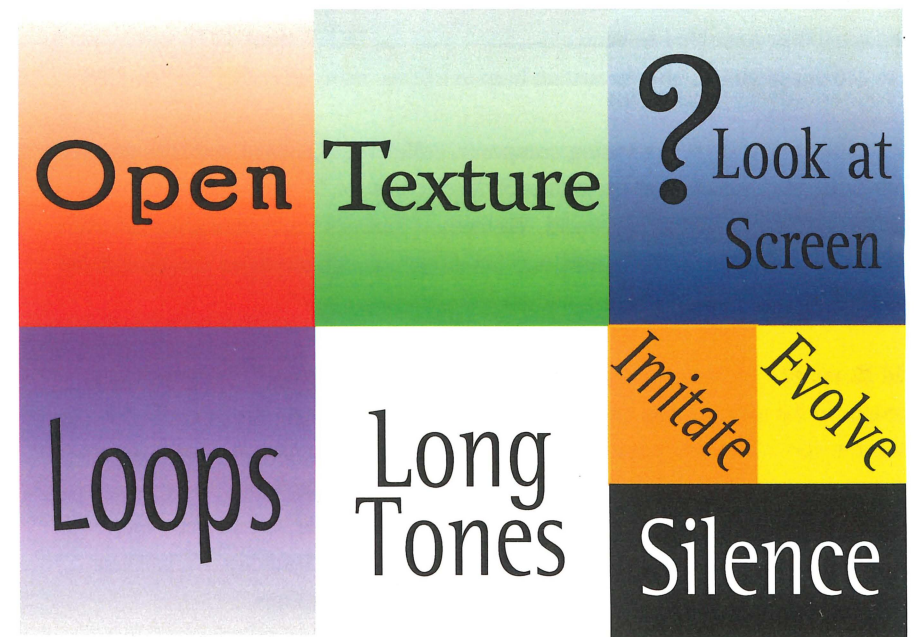
At the heart is a software/hardware system allowing a user (conductor/composer) to organize a group of players in a structured improvised performance. A local or remote user can utilize the software to control an LED light that is placed in front of each performer. Each colour indicates a different performance instruction. For instance, white light signals long tones, whereas green light indicates to play textures.

## A note about Coat Cooke's Game Pieces

**Improvisor Else** is a text based game piece in which players are directed to play or say the composition's text in rhythmic unison at cued intervals and are then free to improvise with the text and the rhythm of the words freely creating one's own patterns and meanings, relating at will to fellow improvisors contributions.

**BoB** explores the pitches B and A transposed from a pattern in the music alphabet in relation to the Roman alphabet and their neighbouring flat, double flat and sharp and double sharp pitches. Gamers are encouraged to pick their own tempo or rubato approach, pitches, number of repetitions, and octave. Almost anything goes here, so look out!

**Scales** suggests that participants move around the fishes scales playing A or Ab and variations in the notes that are 1/8 or 1/4 pitch



Mad Scientist Machine Score

sharp or flat with rules allowing one to do this in various octaves of your range, utilizing full dynamics, silence.

**Shift** has a score that centres around an eighth note pulse that has accents in various time signatures (from 1/8 to 7/8) exploring a melodic contour around four pitches. Many layering possibilities can occur during propulsive forays.

**Wave Culture** is a diamond shape from one to nine inviting the improviser to play any of those numbers at any tempo, frequency or dynamic until the piece is done.

This is a very exciting project as this intimate ensemble has two evenings to explore this playful program designed for the daring improviser. I'm delighted to have such esteemed conductors and such a gifted ensemble of creative improvisors. I give warm thanks to all of them. Finally, a special thanks to Stefan Smulovitz for his creation, and his considerable behind the scenes work to help make this an evocative and exciting show.

Coat Cooke - Artistic Director

Special thanks to SFU Contemporart Arts, Viviane Houle, Allyson McGrane and everyone at Left Right Minds

**Coat Cooke:** is a long time Vancouver resident celebrating his 40th year as an improvising artist this year. He has been associated with the NOW since 1978 and hopes to live to see our planet be able to sustain human life for many years beyond his life.

**Stefan Smulovitz:** Award-winning composer, collaborator, violist and laptop artist Stefan Smulovitz has created more than 50 live scores for films and performs with leading improvisors around the world. Kenaxis -- Stefan's game-changing software -- is used by musicians around the world, and his numerous collaborative creations have been developed for theatre, dance, and art installations.

**Todd Reynolds,** violinist, composer, conductor and Soundpainter, is known as an innovator in the arts and one of the most active and versatile proponents of what he calls 'present music'. The first person to whom Walter Thomson gave his Soundpainting™ language and a longtime violinist for Bang On A Can and the Steve Reich Ensemble, he's played as soloist with Yo-Yo Ma, toured with John Cale, Joe Jackson and Todd Rundgren, continues to play with Kenny Werner and Betty Buckley. He has just released his double CD set, Outerborough on Innova Recordings.

**Lisle Ellis** is a Canadian born, New York based, composer and instrumentalist whose 35+ year career has included work with legendary musicians in both acoustic and electronic contexts and as a leader of his own ensembles. His current focus is toward the book form publication of a collection of his life's work of music scores, visual creations (paintings & drawings,) and essays on creative process and life observations.

Born and raised in Italy, **Giorgio Magnanensi** lives on the Sunshine Coast of BC. His diverse artistic practice includes composition, conducting, improvisation, circuit bending and video art. He is artistic director of Vancouver New Music and Laboratorio.

**Paul Cram** is an award-winning bandleader, arranger, film and concert music composer, Canadian tenor saxophonist, clarinetist and jazz iconoclast. From Vancouver to Toronto to Halifax he has forged a mature and unique voice that cuts across jazz, classical, world and beyond genres to capture a metaphorical "middle kingdom" between Europe, Asia, and America.

**Sarah Weaver** is a New York-based composer, conductor, researcher, technologist, and producer working internationally as a specialist in telematic music. Recent telematic projects include "ResoNations 2010: An International Telematic Music Concert for Peace", at United Nations Headquarters in New York, China, Korea, United Arab Emirates. Weaver is Music and Technology Advisor for Arts for Peace of UN-NGO WAFUNIF, on the advisory board of International Society for Improvised Music, and pursuing graduate work at New York University. [www.sarahweaver.org](http://www.sarahweaver.org)