These transcripts of a 1982 Stan Brakhage radio program on film, music, and poetry were sent to me for Web posting by Brett Kashmere, whose note is below, and are posted here with Brakhage's permission. For the present I've decided to post all the transcripts on one page. It may take a minute or two to load, but then you'll have a single document which can be searched in one pass for words or names, or easily copied to a single text file on your own computer. If there are any problems, please email me. Fred Camper

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: The following transcripts are from a weekly radio program that Stan Brakhage hosted on K.A.I.R., the University of Colorado's campus radio station, in 1982. In transcribing these audio tapes I've tried to remain as faithful to Brakhage's voice as possible. However, in some instances, stutters, pauses and missteps have been eliminated in order to improve the rhythm and flow of the text. Where I'm unsure of the proper spellings of names or titles I've indicated so in the script. Please email me with corrections, comments or questions. — Brett Kashmere

The Test of Time:

transcripts of a series of 20 Stan Brakhage 1982 radio programs.

PROGRAM 1

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, my name is Stan Brakhage and I've very kindly been asked by Len Barron first of all, to try to make a weekly radio program, to share some of my thoughts about the arts, and most especially to share with you some of the recordings of poets, of music, some of the plays and dramas that I've collected over the years - things that are very, very special to me and that I'd like to be able to give somehow to people at large. What we heard at the beginning, which will be the Introduction music for this program from now on, is Gregorian chant - specifically some parallel organums. They're directed by Denis Stevens and they're part of a Musical Heritage Society Series called "The History of European Music, Volume Two." And like a great deal of what I'll be playing on this program they're out-of-print and obscure to begin with - not well known. They were recorded by the Accademia Monteverdiana Holy Trinity Church, London, and what they essentially represent to me are a high point for me personally of music from the fifth- through the thirteenth-centuries. I want to lay emphasis on the word 'personal.' I have to be free in doing this kind of program to be nothing but personal, which is to say sometimes, often maybe, always a fool in a way. I'll mispronounce things and falter now and again and my knowledge is one that comes, is 'amateur' in that sense of 'lover.' And maybe I have stature in the world more specifically in relationship to film but otherwise film doesn't represent itself very well on the air and the best you'll have of that is opinions from time to time. For instance I want to encourage film that's as out of the mainstream as some of the music and some of the poetry that I'll be presenting. And most specifically would like to encourage people to go to the 'First Person Cinema' which is every Monday night at eight o'clock in the Fine Arts Building at the University of Colorado, where you'll be able to see a variety of films made most individually in the one sense, but in the other, to me, though that's a hard-to-prove, as an attempt to make art.

SB: An art of film is kind of an absurdity in itself because film really is less than a hundred years old. And I'd say among the many definitions of art that I'll give on this program, one that's the most cautionary is that we really don't know what an art is 'til its been around maybe at least a hundred years and the people that made it are long dead. The opening piece of music, we don't even know who wrote that music, we know it as only as part of the great history of church music. And while that's still in your ears and still in mind I'd like to share with you a piece of music that was sent to me last week by a filmmaker whose works are often shown on the Monday evening series, Andrew Noren. Andrew recorded, just carrying his little pocket recorder with him, performances of Theodorus Keikis [phonetic spelling], who was flown over from Athens by the Bohemian Gardens in Astoria, Queens, and who made this beautiful music on pipes with a goatskin bag under the arm - one of the most ancient forms of music. And of course Keikis is a modern, living man but this music, and this way of making music which is inspired I think, as you will immediately hear, bag pipes on the one hand, or, and here I reach for a point, the Gregorian chant on another. What you're hearing is just a live performance with lots of talk and dancing in the background and even the subways coming in like great monstrous beasts at times. And here it is.

MUSIC: Keikis playing the goatskin bag

SB: This is a music which, in its origin, began with just the two pipes. The goatskin bag is attached sometime later, we don't really know when, as an additional breath bag to provide the base drone to the music. And it's far more ancient than it was in the Greeks. Actually, even what we call 'the pipes of pan,' which is a set of pipes of different lengths that are blown into at the top like kids blow into pop bottles these days for making that kind of sound, even that form was really first referred to in poetry in 1150 B.C. Chinese. This ancient music in other words goes back to the earliest folk stories of Melanesia, for

example, the wind blowing through a crack in the wood and humans picking that up, and supplying each his or her own breath. It was a time when the first great movie that's still going was watched - an extreme slow motion movie that is the watching of the sky itself across centuries. The information of the shift in change of the stars passed on from generation to generation. And as people watched those skies with that infinite patience of those times they saw shapes in them and the very first heroic figures and stories, motion picture stories, so to speak, took place, in my sense of it.

SB: That which gives me the greatest sense of passage of time and of the human endeavor is Rimbaud's first "Illumination." It's called "After the Flood." I'm going to read you from the Wallace Fowlie translation. ILLUMINATIONS, "After the Flood," Arthur Rimbaud, French poet:

SB: 'As soon as the idea of the flood had subsided, A hare stopped in the clover and the swinging flower-bells and said it's prayer, through the spider's web, to the rainbow. The precious stones were hiding, and already the flowers were beginning to look up. The butcher's blocks rose in the dirty main street and boats were hauled down to the sea, piled high as in pictures. Blood flowed in Bluebeard's castle. In the slaughterhouses, in the circuses, where the seal of God whitened the windows, blood and milk flowed. Beavers set about building. Coffee urns let out smoke in the bars. In the large house with windows still wet, children in mourning looked at exciting pictures. A door slammed; on the village square, the child swung his arms round, and was understood by the weather vanes and the steeple cocks everywhere, under the pelting rain. Madame X installed a piano in the Alps. Mass and the first communions were celebrated at the hundred thousand altars of the cathedral. The caravans departed. And the Hotel Splendid was built in the chaos of ice and polar night. Since then, the moon has heard jackals yelping in thyme deserts, and eclogues in wooden shoes growling in the orchard. Finally in the violet budding grove, Eucharis told me spring was here. Gush forth waters of the pond, - Foam, pour over the bridge and over the woods; - black shrouds and organs, lightning and thunder rise up and spread everywhere; - waters and sorrows rise up and bring back the floods. For ever since they have gone - oh, the precious stones buried and the opened flowers! We have been bored! The Queen, the Witch lighting her coal in the earthen pot will never tell us what she knows, and we shall never know.'

SB: Of course, that's not read to you as a poem really because poetry can't be translated. But as in the case with reproductions of paintings, there's something that always translates. So I use it as people do most often, and as one might almost say only with, poetry from other languages as a kind of distant illustration of something that came to the poet as I sense it while he was moving among the magic of sounds that could only exist in his language. At least that's my sense of it.

SB: I'd like now to play you a piece of music by Carl Ruggles. This is from an album still in print, a Columbia Records album, but I don't ever hear Ruggles' music being played; it was so remarkable to me finally that all his life's work was published after his death, and he lived to be very old - he died at 95. I knew him personally when he was in his young seventies and eighties, and always the dream was then that someday somebody would publish his works which shouldn't have been too much of a problem as his entire constant, steady life's output can be put on two LP records. The piece I've chose to play for you is written in memory of his wife Charlotte, whom I certainly remember deeply also. She died in 1957. He based his, really his final piece of music, to her and worked on it across most the rest of his life. It's based on a hymn, "O God, our help in ages past," and the piece is called "Exaltation."

MUSIC: Ruggles, "Exaltation"

SB: "Exaltation" by American composer Carl Ruggles. "Exaltation" for brass, chorus and organ. And is played by the Brass Ensemble, Gerard Schwartz, and the Greg Smith Chorus. And I just want to take a few moments to reminisce about Carl Ruggles. When I knew him it was when him and his wife Charlotte were living in Bennington, Vermont not too many years before her death in the early sixties. They lived in an old church which had been abandoned and was going to ruin and they managed to buy it and remake it into a house but it was more of a church than I think any other church was at that time to me, as they made it their domestic living quarters. They were not quiet and peaceful old people. I think the story that I like best about Carl Ruggles is the - Once the harpsichordist Kirkpatrick visited him and was kept waiting while Ruggles was pounding, over and over again, the same chord on a piano. And finally even Kirkpatrick's patience ran out and he cleared his throat and said, 'Why are you pounding that chord over and over again on the piano?' And Carl Ruggles, without breaking a beat, pounded again and said, 'I'm giving it the test of time.' And that's the way he wrote all his music and that's why there's so little of it, and that's why it's also so great. I don't think we have anything to compare to it. Even Anton Webern looks like a very prolific composer in comparison to Carl. He also composed his music out of small, domestic household things: like he had a little, one of those Christmas three-angels, brass angels with trumpets that are turned by candles underneath them, the heat making them spin constantly and tinkle against bells. For a large portion of his life he wrote two versions of a piece called "Angels" that's based on this kind of source of inspiration. He was typically American, and unhappily, sadly ignored by his culture across most of his lifetime. But as you heard in this piece that I played, I hope, he incorporated all of everything of the past and made his slight variations, and made them constantly throughout the piece so that there's no two lines that really at all sounded the same. Mainly he loved to make music where the actual notes that were played were secondary to the overtones that they would produce. And in that sense he was one of the most modern composers living in this century and perhaps the closest composer friend to Charles Ives.

SB: Ives I'll also have some stories about, though I never met him. I do remember hearing as a child that extraordinary performance of his symphony, on the air, which startled a nation that was thinking of Shostakovich as the most modern at that time. So I want to end this program, and all my programs on a brief poem, you really have to call it, piece of music by Charles Ives called "The Seer."

MUSIC: Ives, "The Seer"

PROGRAM 2

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage and this is the second in a series of programs which will be aired weekly, and finally we've got a title for this series. Listening to the first tape that we made a week ago, Len Barron suggested the title "The Test of Time." And I thought that sounds fine, and those of you that remember the story, I was talking about Kirkpatrick listening to Charles Ives, or rather to Charlie Ruggles playing chords over and over again, and finally in irritation interrupting him and saying 'How long is this going to go on?' And without breaking stride Charlie Ruggles said 'I'm giving it the test of time.' So that's how things come to be named, and it's a good name - I'll try to live up to it.

SB: Today I want to talk about Eugene O'Neill. I'm teaching a course at the University of Colorado in the drama of O'Neill and Williams and I've been spending the whole summer steeped in O'Neill, reading Sheffler's biography which is about eight-hundred pages more than usually you'd want to know about any human being. And I want to, in the broadcast today, to just be very brief about something that I think is the major misunderstanding of Eugene O'Neill. Always, all my life, I've heard theatre-goers, actors, college professors, people in literature, damning O'Neill with faint praise in the form of saying that, 'Well, he's a tremendously powerful writer for the theatre, he may be America's greatest dramatist, but he couldn't write.' Some of them were more specific about that; they say he couldn't write poetry and that was his defeat and so he stumbled on as best he could with his integrity. And I had bought this line about him - there's some truth to it, but there's a greater truth, I've come to sense, as I read his plays over and over again and think about his life and about all the creative people I've known. O'Neill could write poetry and I'm going to prove it to you. Here's a poem that Eugene, young Eugene O'Neill wrote:

SB: 'I know how the beast of the desert feels as the steel bars shut him. I know how he fights a superior force with never a chance to win, how he paces across his narrow cage as he drags his life in fruitless rage, for I, too, am shut in. Bound by a chain of circumstance to a life that knows no peace, fettered more closely than bird or beast by duties that never cease, closely the bars of my cage are set, strong to withstand my wild regret, and no hope of release.'

SB: Now that's a fine poem for those or any times. It's a poem in the sense of what was popular as poetry in America and in fact in the world at that time, certainly the English-speaking word. He's, it's Kipling, to some extent; it's more introspective and disturbing than Kipling. It's absolutely true of his life. It comes out of Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" by way of Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Jail," and it's a kind of poetry that was printed in the newspapers at that time, even. I don't mean in some obscure poetry section but I mean even sometimes on front pages when appropriate. He could have been very successful as a poet. He chose not to be, or was forced not to be by a circumstance that he did so much mean this statement that he made, 'his wild regret,' that he was, he couldn't express it with those old tum-ti-tum rhythmic lines and rhymes. They're really absurd when you have something that desperate to express. And with typical Yankee ingenuity, he took the risk and succeeded at throwing all that over as he began writing his plays. And in 1921 he came out with THE EMPEROR JONES, in which he had by that time completely thrown away such poetics - I mean I can't stand words that have 'tic' attached to the end of them anyway - he had thrown them out, and as you'll hear in this example that I brought of James Earl Jones doing two scenes from O'Neill's EMPEROR JONES. He's content to have boxed in, through the Provincetown Players on MacDougal Street in 1921, to have boxed in an audience in a savage wild scene of beating drums and finally screaming and whimpering and grunting, along with some of the hardest, new sense of poetry that no one could imagine. The inarticulate-seeming, but carefully crafted and deeply felt and meant statements of a man being reduced to terror in the jungle as he's hunted down by those whom once he ruled over, and also which is more to the point, as his mind deteriorates under the influences of their voodoo or his own. And so Eugene O'Neill, actually more than August Strindberg before him or anyone else, turns the stage into a human mind, or in fact the whole auditorium. And here's a good example of a couple scenes.

EXCERPT: Jones reading from O'Neill's EMPEROR JONES

SB: There's no way to really give you the feeling over the air of this whole play because it does depend upon a mix of the drums, the sight of the man, the background, the cyclorama which was put up by the Provincetown Players in their small little narrow theatre. It depends, which by the way was inspired by Gordon Craig's work in the theatre - it depends on so many things, that it's not easily understood as literature. But one way in which I would hope people could begin recognizing the new, new impulses, new at least in 1921 and still not really comprehended in the arts, would be to follow along the line of rhythm - to recognize that there are new rhythmic impulses. They aren't of course new to human existence but the need to express them is new. And they will no longer - humans can't continue to carry the emotions they're feeling in rhythms that were essentially determined by horses and carriages, or riding horseback earlier yet, or so forth. In other words, there are - and in fact external sounds have ceased to be the main point because there's come to be a drive to express the inner mind. At the time Provincetown Playhouse Group attracted all to it who were interested in drama: Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote ARIA DA CAPO for them; even Dr. William Carlos Williams came over from New Jersey and hung around and helped to put together some sets and got the inspiration for writing his plays. And I could go on and on naming people famous and people who became famous and then were forgotten and people who were considered very important at the time and who were too busy working to play the games of politics that get you printed or performed on a stage. But I want to follow the career of one person.

SB: I was reading in the book about a 'Louise' that was one of the wildest flappers of this group and, in fact, when she turned down one of the Provincetown Players to marry someone else, he committed suicide and that created one of the great scandals

of that time. And I was imaging Louise facily as people do when they read a book about someone. And suddenly it named the man that she married: Varèse. Edgar Varèse. And that was Louise Varèse and my brain almost turned entirely around because that was the woman I had known in the fifties as that beautiful, graceful, strong, powerful, lovely, warm, elderly lady, who invited us into the home of Varèse - by us I mean myself and my composer friend, Jim Tenney - and into his studio, where we were not permitted to smoke. And it was Louise who endeared us forever in the tension of meeting the great composer Varèse and listening to all his ideas, who leaned over and whispered to us while he was searching out a manuscript, 'You know, you can go into the bathroom and if you open the window about an inch you can smoke, and blow your smoke out the window and Edgar will never know.' It was also Louise who recognized that we weren't eating very well and who managed to provide for us sometimes as many as three meals called 'snacks' in an afternoon. This sweet wonderful person, who was like so many others someone who carried sparks from the Provincetown Playhouse early productions, and O'Neill's unacknowledged but absolutely should be clear to us now, 'Theatre of the Mind.'

SB: Varèse was entirely different than Louise. He was different than anyone I met, in fact, all different parts of his body were different because he dressed in a multitude of plaids: plaid shirt, plaid tie with diagonals, plaid coat of totally different color, plaid pants. He'd have worn plaid shoes, I'm sure, if they made them, and he was a walking example of the kind of music that he made. I'm going to play a piece now that he played to us at that first meeting. They're interpolations, or the tapes he was making for what was later to be his gigantic piece, "Déserts," which included three tapes mixed with, and interspersed by, orchestral music. He played us just this tape and I think it has an echo with O'Neill's theatre and the endeavor of most of the living artists I've known. So here it is, the third interpolation, the bare tape without orchestra, of Edgar Varèse.

MUSIC: Varèse, "Déserts (Third Interpolation)"

SB: So that piece by Varèse I've chosen to play for you because in the spirit of this broadcast - broadcasting - I want to provide things from my collection of tapes over the years of odd and strange things, records that are out-of-print, poems from books often that are out-of-print, poets reading poetry and having conversations and so on. I want to present material which isn't available. Actually for those that want to hear the full magnificent piece it's available in several recordings, beautifully-made Columbia recordings of the complete "Déserts" and in fact the complete orchestral works of Edgar Varèse.

SB: But now I want to tell you the story of how this came to be. Varèse, after marrying Louise, did not just stay in the village, he stayed into the late-thirties, as I understand it, until he had a nervous breakdown. A breakdown that was caused by the increasing neglect of music, the refusal to accept even what was at that time his rather more standard orchestral works. And pressures, all these pressures converging, and his mid-age crisis, I suppose, and after all that initial excitement of the twenties, the society was burning down unless you were very, very social and could pick up on the social dilemmas of the times, as, say, Orson Welles did with his Mercury Theatre. So, anyway, for whatever all reasons, Varèse cracked up and got into that position very much like the American composer Charles Ives had before him, where he could not stand to hear any noise whatsoever. He'd begin to tremble. And Louise Varèse, who was very good at translating, supported both of them across a ten-year period by translating the novels of Simenon. She also later did some beautiful translations of, for instance, Rimbaud. But during this period it was just bread-and-butter translating that would permit her to take him to Death Valley, which is where they lived across from the late-thirties to the mid-to-late-forties. And he recovered himself and began to compose and it's across that period that he orchestrated and then began making, collecting these sounds to be interpolated within the piece. And that's why many people call him the father of electronic music. I mean he was imagining electronic music back in the twenties and was working on it in the thirties and of course in Death Valley in the forties, when there wasn't really anything but wire recorders, and of course records that could be cut, but no way to control the sounds in the way in which he wanted to. He was anticipating the tape recorder. So that by the time I met him in the early-fifties he was still relying on these very early tapes. He had in 1952, I believe, the first performance of "Déserts" in Paris, France, and he was of course from France. He then came back and lived out his life in the Village.

SB: I also want to be sure to include this story: What finally killed him was he went into a hospital for a hemorrhoid operation that he didn't even need but would've made him more comfortable, and there was some problem with anesthesia and he died on the operating table. But when I knew both him and Louise they were among the most vibrant. He was at the height of launching, really, the whole involvement with electronic music in this country and abroad. He was concerned with where even sounds would mix in the very air. He was coming out of a tradition that I want to give you some of example of, too. But mainly I want to stress that from the beginning, long before he became the father of electronic music, his drive was similar to O'Neill's and many others in the sense of needing to express something of the inner mind, the inner thought process at work, for which the old forms of music would not do.

SB: The filmmaker Ingmar Bergman said that, quote: 'Art lost its basic creative drive the moment it was separated from worship. In former days, the artist remained unknown and his work was to the glory of God.' I would make the claim that it's all the same pursuit, but that the cathedral has become the mind; not in the sense of ego-centric, or a giant monument, which it also unfortunately is too often thought of, but as an endless way through to the universe and to forces and patterns that we don't understand. And just so that you don't think that this is only a modern pursuit, consider the Greek pipes that I played last week, and I'll be bringing some Indian pieces later. But I want to carry on the tradition of flute music with one of Varèse's most lyric, beautiful earlier pieces done, I believe, in the thirties, called "Density 21.5." It finally came to that title because it took a platinum flute to play it. And here it is.

MUSIC: Varèse, "Density 21.5"

SB: And now we'll close, as usual, this program with the tone poem piece of music called "Seer" by the man I take to be the

father of American music, Charles Ives.

MUSIC: Ives, "The Seer"

PROGRAM 3

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage again. I want to play you some flute music today in the spirit of continuing that tradition the last two programs, first of all with the Greek music of Keikis, and then last week with Edgar Varèse's "Density 21.5." I have a tape that I dug out of the basement here that Allen Ginsberg gave me sometime back in the sixties. I was having trouble listening to Indian music at the time and about all that was available was Ravi Shankar. And Allen, back from India, told me that Ravi Shankar was more or less considered the Frank Sinatra of India. And so he promised to send me some Indian music that would intrigue me. And the piece that he sent that I'm going to play a section of is flute music by Panalol Ghose [phonetic spelling]. And so here it is.

MUSIC: Ghose, "Inward"

SB: Now of course Panalol Ghose is a modern man. But that music is in a tradition that's probably close to a thousand years older than the Greek. And at least as I told you in the first broadcast there's a reference in poetry a long time before there's any mention of what we've come to know as 'the pipes of pan.' In fact there's also Melanesian legends about the origin of music with the flute. The story is that once the wind was blowing through a branch of a tree and it scared all the women. And the men said, 'At last we have a way to scare the women.' And they cut off the branch and began blowing in it. And that's the Melanesian origin for music. But in case some of you are feeling that, for instance, the drive of the dramatist Eugene O'Neill to turn the whole stage into a brain, or the drive of Edgar Varèse, as we heard with electronic music, to give some approximation of mental processes with recorded sound mixed with music, that piece that we just began this program with is called "Inward," and that's been a drive always in human endeavor in the arts.

SB: So what then might we mean by 'modernity?' I have a quote here from Charles Baudelaire, the French poet, from his book, THE PAINTER OF MODERN LIFE. Quote, 'Modernity is that which is ephemeral, fugitive, contingent upon the occasion. It is half of art, whose other half is the eternal and unchangeable.' Now that seems to me a very good example of the European view of it. The point at which American artists, as I understand it, would feel most emphasis there would be 'contingent upon the occasion,' or something of present. But you notice, as Baudelaire has, that it would have something to do also with the unchangeable and the past. And I would say that the basic American impulse starts with the moment and then branches out with ideas about the future. For example, a letter by - I don't have very clear ways to represent painting over the radio, but I want to read a letter from the young, in fact eighteen year old, Jackson Pollock, to his brother. Sections of the letter. Quote,

SB: 'As to what I would like to be, it is difficult to say. An artist of some kind. If nothing else I shall always study the arts. People have always frightened and bored me; consequently I have been within my own shell and have not accomplished anything materially. In fact to talk in a group I was so frightened that I could not speak logically. I am gradually overcoming it now.'

SB: End quote. Now that just seems so strange when you think of the paintings of Jackson Pollock which were finally, as what he became famous for, premised on giving the energy of the moment, the act itself of creation in making by hurling paint through the air, which by the way, as I witnessed myself, he was so capable of doing to perfection that once, when some critics accused him of 'chance operations,' though he was pretty drunk at the time, he dabbled his brush into a bucket and hurled a glob of paint so carefully across fifty feet that it hit the door knob square with very little paint spilled over and then he said, 'So much for your "chance operations" and that's the door.' It was in fact the only door that they could leave through.

SB: Another letter by Jackson Pollock, a section from it, written 1930, a year later, to his brother Charles. Quote,

SB: 'School is still bore-some but I have settled myself to its rules and the ringing bells. So I have not been in trouble lately. This term I am going to go but one half-day; the rest I will spend reading and working here at home. I am quite sure I will be able to accomplish a lot more. In school I will take life drawing and clay modeling; I've started doing something with clay and have found a bit of encouragement from my teacher. My drawing I will tell you frankly is rotten. It seems to lack freedom and rhythm - it is cold and lifeless. It isn't worth the postage to send it. I think there should be advancements soon if it is ever to come and then I will send you some drawings. The truth of it is I have never really gotten down to real work and finish a piece; I usually get disgusted with it and lose interest. Watercolor I like but have never worked with it much. Although I feel I will make an artist of some kind, I have never proven to myself nor anybody else that I have it in me.'

SB: What I want to, in that spirit, play next is - first of all, I want to present to you something of one of the students of Edgar Varèse. He's a Chinese student. He'd come to this country, Chou Wen Chung is his name. I met him at the time when Jim Tenney and I were both studying with Varèse. He was very quiet, very polite, very exact, and extremely lyric. And there's one piece of his music that's haunted me all my life. Actually the only use that society has made of it is on a record, curiously enough, that was put out of the music of Edvard Grieg and Manuel de Falla. And as an insert on this record, a box recording,

came a record of Deems Taylor explaining both Grieg and de Falla to the listener. And we'll start hearing the voice of Deems Taylor - he's been talking about composers drawing on folk music. And then he says a little bit about jazz at the beginning, then he curiously goes out of his way to give the only recording of this piece of music by this Chinese student of Edgar Varèse, Chou Wen Chung. So be patient with Mr. Taylor for a couple of minutes.

MUSIC: Chung, "Suite for Harp and Winds" (introduced by Deems Taylor)

SB: So far as I know, that's a whole piece of music. It's the only part of that music that I ever heard. I asked Jim, years later, whatever happened to this young man. And he told me that his fiancée died. I remember her too, an extraordinarily beautiful Chinese girl, and how close they were. And that so far as Jim knew this had been so crushing a blow on him that he had never composed any other music. I hope that's not true across a lifetime for him. His idea was to make very brief, short pieces of music. Maybe he had gone on under some pressures and extended this, I don't know, but I do remember just that piece of tape and as it happened it turned up because my father-in-law, Harry Collum, was sensitive enough to remember the name and when he got this record and surprised that this piece of Chinese music on this explanatory record, small record included with it, he gave it to me. That's happened a lot to me in my life, where very small, miniscule artworks haunt, and sometimes one never hears of the composer or in the case of painting, painter, or poet or filmmaker or whatever, ever again.

SB: I wanted also to take the occasion to say something about the Chinese impulse of inwardness. I have a statement here by the Chinese poet, Wang Yung; he was born in 1936. 'In modern times,' this is quote, 'in modern times, eternity has acquired a new definition. It is no longer the community of endless time but extreme perfection and fullness. Poetry in modern times does not search for inaccessible permanence and universality. It aims at the release of its character.'

SB: This poet, with that statement, I should say 'end quote' there, this poet with that statement, actually places an impulse that exists at least in him in China, very close to Jackson Pollock and to the next composer's music that I want to play for you. And that's some music by my old high school buddy, Jim Tenney, who discovered Edgar Varèse at about the same time I did because of early recordings that somehow got to Denver, and that shocked and astonished us. Jim Tenney did the music for the first film that I made and then later we met in New York City and both of us searched out Edgar Varèse and John Cage, by the way, at the same time. And Tenney studied for years with Varèse and in fact at Varèse's death he named Jim Tenney his quote, 'only musical heir.' And as you'll hear for yourself that doesn't mean he's imitative. In fact he did work for some time with electronic music, Jim did. And in fact made the first set up for synthesizing sound at Bell Labs - a job that he got through Edgar Varèse's influence. But then he returned to orchestral music and what I want to play for you now is a piece made sometime between 1972 and 76 in Toronto, Canada. This is the first section of what's called "Three Pieces for Drum Quartet." You have to be a little patient at first and then it will be worth it.

MUSIC: Tenney, "Three Pieces for Drum Quartet"

SB: It's maybe hardest of all to recognize when a genius in the arts, or anything else, is someone that you've grown up, in a sense, or that is a close friend, or that you might have one living next door or even in your family, so that probably the deepest suspicions are reserved in myself for friends that I've known as long as Jim. But he's convinced me, finally, just as he did Edgar Varèse. I want to give you an example also of his continued working with electronic devices. And as well, his interest in folk music, so to speak. The next piece that I'm going to play is by Jim Tenney also then, it's called "Blue Suede" and its based on the ever-popular "Blue Suede Shoes." So listen carefully and maybe you'll hear the internal mind chewing over this - maybe you'll even hear some 'folk,' if you'll pardon the expression, 'music.'

MUSIC: Tenney, "Blue Suede"

SB: And from all us 'folks,' this is Stan Brakhage signing off with Charles Ives.

MUSIC: Ives, "The Seer"

PROGRAM 4

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage. I want to play for you some very ancient Chinese music. I've been talking about pipes, flutes, the origin of them, possibly in China, at least the earliest references, and I realize I haven't played any Chinese music at all. What I'd like to play for you is a piece that comes somewhere from 206 B.C. to 618 A.D. Chinese is probably the oldest music that we have that's actually written down, that is that we know how - very much how - it was to be played, how it was to be sounded. We've had older traditions of music than this. This one can really only be dated somewhere within the Han Dynasty; but one of the most interesting things to me about it is it's attributed to Lady Wong-Chiang. The Chinese had a great tradition for honoring, for accepting, the existence of women artists. And here's a woman composer who sings to us, across such an immense length of time. She's actually a Chinese noble woman who's out of favor with the King. And she is singing about her grief, but also I hope you'll hear within this strange kind of music, to our ears, the strains and pullings of that agony of her being in disfavor. But also what's made her last all this time, her incredible dignity, how she pulls herself together, the grace of her own charm and strength, which has lasted a long time.

MUSIC: Wong-Chiang, unspecified composition

SB: The Lady Wong-Chiang, of the Han Dynasty, singing her grief across all these centuries to us. Music played on the pipa by Lui Tsun-yuen, one of the most accomplished living players of that ancient instrument. I want to contrast that with - several weeks ago I read a statement on modernism by a Chinese poet. It was from a book called MODERN CHINESE POETRY put together by Wai-lim Yip. The poet whose statement I read is Wang Yung. I want to read a different kind of lament that has to do with being not out of favor with the King, as was the case with 'Our Lady,' but disfavored or estranged from the whole culture. This is a more modern theme. "Variation One," by Wang Yung:

SB: 'These are some roots entwined and all-pervading in the dark of my body. I am inert, easily rotten in this summer. In this summer, I plant with my own hands some poison ivy, an ivy so endearing.'

SB: "[Variation] Two:" 'If I rage, if in the dazzling sunlight I look hard at a fresh-cropped girl, if I hurry among crowds I am only a heap of boring trifles, some causeless trembling. I dissect myself so unpleasantly and restring these fragments for others, equally unpleasant.'

SB: "[Variation] Three:" 'You are only a number of tooth-marked ruts, you are only a number of criss-crossing streets that lead nowhere in wind-less afternoons. I always hold your pulse like a handful of cooling noises.'

SB: "[Variation] Four:" 'It is in your conceited generosity. It is in your low-priced superiority. It is in your luxuriant ignorance, I plant with my own hands some poison ivy. Ah, an ivy so endearing.'

SB: Well, estrangement is always terribly painful, hmm? Because to be in disfavor of the King isn't really any that different than not being able to make it with the culture. I know a lot about the latter in a way because I'm a filmmaker. I don't really - I try to work with film as an art and I don't really have any way to present that art to you. But I've made a living lecturing and I have a lot of friends who have, and one, whom I want to share with you, off a tape made years ago is the filmmaker Peter Kubelka, an Austrian filmmaker. His films are shown on the Monday night evening programs in the Fine Arts Building from time to time. He was raised in - about the same time I was being raised in Kansas and then Denver, he was being raised in Vienna, Austria. In order to escape being part of the Hitler youth program he joined the Viennese Choir Boys; he had a very beautiful voice, his father's a musician, and so they managed to get him into that organization which was then almost immediately turned into a branch of the Hitler youth group. So that in fact at the end of the war Peter and all the other little choir boys, when the Allies were closing in on Vienna, Peter and his friends were - I always imagine them in cassocks and everything - being transported out of town, as, on a train, entirely trying to salvage works of art. So he made his escape from the approaching Allies as a work of art. I've always liked to tease Peter that he should do his autobiography just because he could title it 'I Was a Viennese Choirboy for Hitler.' He grew up, of course, and took all of his musical training into the field of film; not moviemaking like most people are used to, but making a kind of film very like a piece of music. And of all the filmmakers I know, his work really combines sound and picture the most beautifully and what I want to share with you is a section of a tape where he's trying to convince me, who - I'm a silent moviemaker for the most part, to work with sound. He didn't convince me, but the tape section that I'm going to play for you is I think very thrilling. Anyway, he refers to me at the beginning, 'There's someone in the audience that I want to interest in sound.' Peter Kubelka, speaking at the University of Colorado about ten years ago:

PETER KUBELKA (EXCERPT): There is somebody in the audience here tonight whom I want to get interested in sound. And so I'll tell something about an early sound film. When - what I want to say is that people already in the earliest stages of mankind where interested in making film - I mean in doing what we do when we make a sound film - and when they were not quite able to do it because of technical lack, lack of technical possibility. And I will say what this is, what these people wanted to do; and this is to create a 'sync' event, so to speak. I mean to have to see something, and to see something and hear something at the same time, and get something out of it. It's as simple as that. And these sync events, for example all what dance is about is such a sync event. Because you have music, or you have sound, and you try to fit it with your movement, with the movement of your body. And I mean it's a completely illogical thing and - but it is so, that combining visual and acoustical things is something which is a source of great joy to everybody. And now comes the interesting thing: What's the strongest light that you could have for your eyes? It's the sun, you see? It's the fascinating thing of the sun. But you cannot handle the sun. It's out of reach. So the sun has been imitated by fire or - I mean these early people who wanted to imitate the sun - or maybe lightning, you see, they could - Lightning has, and the thunder at the same time, and all they ended up was then maybe having a burning branch of a tree and a drum. And they could make the sync even, like this.

PK: And I have witnessed myself a very early sound film when I was in Africa. This was after I made my ARNULF RAINER film, this is the black and white film. And you have already heard now why I made this film. Because for the first time in mankind, you see, somebody - I mean, I'm able to say sun is light and the dark and light and dark and lightning comes and goes and came sound with it. Of course, I mean, limited, it's ultimately far from the branch and the drums, but it is, I mean, to us little things seem [like] great things and at least its something. Or, another difference that I could point out between me and these people who would drum is that I couldn't afford to have the same joy that they had out of, because they can dance for seven days and be naked and drink and simply fall down and they have their natural ecstasy, and for that the drum may be enough. And when I made this black and white film my situation was such that I had to be integrated in an Austrian 1960s society, I had to wear my clothes and all I could do was go to the cinema and sit down and create myself something which would be, which I would like. And my passion was to create for myself an ecstasy, you see, to make it like the old people made it. And to work with the sound of the thunder and to remain what I have to remain because you cannot step out of what you are. So this was my motive. And then afterwards I went to Africa, I made the African film and then I saw this

stone-age sound film and I will tell you what it was. There were these people in the little village [unintelligible] and they were preparing for an ecstasy, they had a big feast, they had some drink, they had gotten some money. I couldn't really make out what it was. They had a sort of treasure in a little box and there were many tribes come together. And they were beating out the whole day for the ecstasy to be reached in the night. And first they would have procession and they would walk up and down, then they would sing and they would have choir. And then they would have collage games, they would run against each other and fake assault and the excitement would grow and would grow and would grow. And then the sun started to sink, to go down. And the sun goes down rather rapidly in Africa, you come to the equator, [then] it goes. And suddenly, everybody followed the sinking sun. It was a huge, huge sun, and it was a flat land. And the sun was coming down and down and down and down, and that the moment when the sun touched the horizon, just as the split second when the sun was touching the horizon, the first beats of drums was beaten, you see. And I was moved to tears because this was, I mean this is the first sound film in history and - [laughter] It was! You see, it's the same, the crack, this split second, you see what it is about, it is this desire to have the loud moment, loud, loudest, loud -'

MUSIC: Drummers from Niger Africa

SB: And that which I segued with Peter Kubelka's lecture on the first sound-sync film is actually not the drummers that he was hearing in Africa, but it's Songhay Zulu drummers from Niger Africa, which is the closest equivalent that we could dig up to give you some sense of the feeling of it. But I might just as well have chosen a much more modern - though of course these drummers were modern living men, playing in this ancient tradition in Niger Africa in this time - I might have chosen a piece by a modern composer, a composer of this century, which has for me the same feelings. So I think before you forget the end of Peter's marvelous story, I'd like to go to a piece of music by the composer Lili Boulanger.

MUSIC: Boulanger, "Psalm 24"

SB: It just astonishes me that this woman, Lili Boulanger, is not as well known, isn't really known at all. I think maybe the record that I'm playing off of this is one of the few that is still in print. It's an Everest recording, a world premiere recording of the works of Lili Boulanger, and actually under the auspices of her sister Nadia, who's very much more famous than she is. Nadia, the sister, is famous as a teacher, and in fact she instructed almost all the mainstream of American, as well as a great deal of European, symphonic music. Names such as Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Virgil Thomson, all studied with her. And she taught them principles that were really principles of aesthetics of music that really were created by this sister of hers, Lili, who was always frail and sickly, if you can believe that after hearing this powerful "Psalm 24" that I just played. Always frail and sickly, and in fact, did die in 1918 at the age of twenty-four, leaving this incredible legacy. I'll be playing more of her later. But we're out of time today. So some other time I'll play more, much more of Lili Boulanger, who's one of my very favorite composers.

MUSIC: Ives, "The Seer"

PROGRAM 5

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage. I'd like to play for you today some recordings of a man that I can't really call a close friend, though I felt extremely close kinship with him in high school when I read his works in, of all places, the South High School Denver Library: the works of Kenneth Patchen. Later I was to meet him, spend several evenings with him, and I'll tell you a little about that story. I was especially moved by his poems for Miriam, love poems to his wife, which so inspired me that I had extraordinary images of her created in a kind of, oh, tawdry fifties beauty; but also sort of Diaphanous and wispy. I mean she became one of the figures in a whole line of poetics that were my dreams of loving women to come. And when I met her I was not prepared to recognize the beauty that she had: she was a strong, powerful, short, elderly woman who came to the door and invited me in to the home of Kenneth Patchen. And it took me a little while to realize, and then fully believe, that this was the beautiful Miriam sung of in the poems. Then, it was an important lesson for me because I began to see a kind of beauty that male chauvinism had not ever prepared me for.

SB: Patchen also was a disturbance. My use of him in high school was his belligerent outcry against the draft; how he would kick the master sergeant rather than allow himself to be examined as fodder for what would then be the Second World War. Actually when I met him he had been through many back operations and was flat on his back, weak, pale, in obvious pain, and being very much cared for by Miriam. And there are a lot of different stories about Patchen, what happened. He never would have had the strength anyway or would simply have ended in prison had he met a sergeant or anyone else as forcefully as his poem wanted him to. And somewhere before his actual induction into the war he slipped and fell down the stairs and had the first of [many] back injuries which were compounded by operation after operation. But the spirit was exactly what had drawn me as a young man in high school. It was a spirit against, well, and for, well, he'll speak better for himself. Patchen is one of those people who everyone seems to know about who reads a great deal, and who's recognized, and whose books are kept in print, but whom for reasons I think his own voice will tell to you, who is ignored largely by the literary world or by any other kind of establishment. But the young keep coming to him, like I did in high school, and still do. And what I want to play are some of his selections from the great book, THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT. I'll play a number of these today and then later sort of play sections of it until the whole of it has been heard because it is in fact, it does fall beautifully into a journal, a voice now, alas is Patchen's dead, that comes from the other world with the most startling news

that you will not find in the newspapers. Kenneth Patchen reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT.

EXCERPT: Patchen reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT

SB: I think before talking any more about Kenneth Patchen or anybody else, I'd like to play the last piece of music composed by Lili Boulanger, as she's dying, in 1918 in Paris, France: "Pie Jesu."

MUSIC: Lili Boulanger, "Pie Jesu"

SB: Not to be unrelentingly solemn today, though when solemnity comes to such beauty as that, and Patchen's anger and sorrow, sadness, also comes not only to some of the things that you've heard already but to a great beauty and even exorbitant wit, and - but today the mood seems to be different. Maybe in a way one should be glad that so fragile a person, though so strong a composer, as Lili Boulanger, didn't have to survive more than one World War. And dying in 1918 she was spared the breakdown of all worlds' peaceful inclination. And the Second World War which put Patchen on his back, and some people six feet under of course - thousands, millions. Patchen did live out his life, though very much like an en-coffined poet. His disgust, as you've heard already, was so complete he never did so far as I know come to a peace and resignation like Lili did.

SB: And these two, thinking of these two people and their relationship - Patchen, by the way, and I mean it should be said, was not the kind of saint either that he sounds in his journals any more than he was the strongman who boasted in rhyme and reason of hitting the master sergeant. He was a fairly cantankerous man. In fact, the reason I didn't never get to know Patchen better was because at the time in San Francisco, which would be, say, early-fifties, you could either belong to the Kenneth Rexroth group of poets or you could belong to the gathering around Kenneth Patchen; you could not belong to both. You quickly had to choose; you were given about three, four weeks to choose between the two. This was mostly at Kenneth Patchen's insistence. So this man who wrote so eloquently against war was waging the strongest possible one that he could from a sofa against one of the other most interesting poets of his own city. And in fact it went further than that; the rifts became very strong. If you went to Kenneth Rexroth's you also couldn't know Robert Duncan and other people. And otherwise not. So within a few weeks when I had to make my choice, reluctantly, I began attending regularly Rexroth's salons and didn't embarrass the Patchens' with that by going to their home further.

SB: Both Patchen, Kenneth and Lili lead me inevitably to one of the greatest poets of our century who also isn't nearly as well known as she should be: H.D., which stands for Hilda Doolittle. There's a poet that survived both those World Wars and had almost the full brunt of both of them. Dear friends perishing senselessly in the trenches of the First World War - the whole world gone mad. And then all the beliefs between the wars that that had been the war to end all wars and then the monstrosity of the Second World War, which she sat out in London amidst the blitzed bombings. She's a woman who tends to only get into literature of most people because she was - she was the girlfriend of William Carlos Williams, she was the fiancée of Ezra Pound, who sort of swept her off her feet over to London in the early-teens of this century. She married another writer, Aldington. She was the great love, one of the great loves of D.H. Lawrence. The record on that is obscure and deliberately hidden so that the proof of it almost comes from the extent to which Aldington, her husband, and she herself have tried to conceal it. But in the new book by Janice S. Robinson, H.D.: THE LIFE AND WORK OF AN AMERICAN POET, a biography of Hilda Doolittle, the case is made, as strong as I think it can be on the evidence, you know, on what is finally rather weak evidence unless you turn to the poems both of D.H. Lawrence and Hilda Doolittle, in which the astonishing thing emerges that she probably is the major model for Lady Chatterley in Lawrence's LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER. Whether that's true or not, it should be. It should be someone as graceful and fantastic and beautiful and intelligent and spiritually akin to him in a way; and also it should be someone who was strong enough in herself to resist his macho, and make her own song. Whatever it is, H.D. writes of war after, you know during the Second World War and afterwards from a perspective which she creates for herself. Suppose it were true, as an early Greek poet had conjectured, that Helen never was of Troy; that Helen had been spirited away to Egypt and that there, later, that Achilles was never killed at Troy, and that later, he had met her, in Egypt, on a beach.

SB: H.D., a very old woman, who not only should be the model for Lady Chatterley, but maybe if God is a woman, God should sound something like this, reads from an asylum in Switzerland, not too long before her death, passages from her great poem, HELEN IN EGYPT. Beginning with the section where 'How Did We Greet Each Other,' meaning Helen of Troy and Achilles.

EXCERPT: Doolittle reading from HELEN IN EGYPT

SB: So, that's H.D. reading from the long poem, the epic poem, HELEN IN EGYPT, and I'll be playing more of that on other days. But once again we're out of time.

MUSIC: Ives, "The Seer"

PROGRAM 6

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage. I feel like talking about loneliness today in human beings, about the

attempt to reach out to each other and as its occurred in the arts. And I guess that's as good a place as any to take up the chronicle of Kenneth Patchen, in the form of his readings from his journal, which I'm going to play every time until we've heard all of those selections that he put onto tape because they're so meaningful to me. Kenneth Patchen, reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT, and here is the piece of the journal for today.

EXCERPT: Patchen reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT

SB: And so it goes, and not just between cows and humans, or between Patchen and his lonely circumstance, flat on his back most of his life and in pain. But just ordinarily from day to day, between any human beings. Some people think that the arts were created, and are, for reaching out from one human being to another, and in a sense they are, but when, when that becomes an overwhelming imperative my view of it is that that's communication at best, or whaling like the wolves at the moon or whales in the sea. That what distinguishes an art of any kind is a beginning recognition that there is no simple communication. So that the song can also exist in itself. Everyone knows how lonely people are in our time because a lot of people have written about it or sung of it. But it's always been an imperative. Those very strong, almost church militant Gregorian chants that begin this broadcast are also intrinsically lonely. And or - what I'd like to play for you is one of the songs of the Auvergne.

SB: These beautiful pieces were arranged from Basque folk songs by Joseph Canteloube and in this case sung by Natania Davrath, orchestra conducted by Pierre Delaroche in a Vanguard record that indeed may still be available. The piece that's always been the most beautiful to me is "The Shepard's Song" of the Auvergne hills. And I give just a little sense of what's being sung. Quote: 'Shepard across the river you don't seem to be afraid, sing the Bolero. Shepard, the meadow is in bloom, come over here to sing the Bolero. The grass is greener on this side, you come here, Bolero. Shepard, the stream separates us and I can't cross it, sing the Bolero.'

MUSIC: Davrath singing "The Shepard's Song"

SB: The great poet of loneliness of the twentieth century, the great playwright who more than maybe anyone else has dramatized human separation, humans separated from each other plus their reaching out to each other in the most tender, lyric ways, and the hold, the only real hold we have on each other. That playwright is usually, and in my opinion, considered to be Tennessee Williams, who died this year. And I'd like to play a little section from THE GLASS MENAGERIE, which was the play that first brought him to the world's attention. And this section is also the last performance by Montgomery Clift, before he died. In the scene of the play, near the end, there's been a terrible argument and he's been thrown out of the house, or has chosen to leave, and with his mother screaming after him 'Go to movies, then, go to the moon.' And that's where this scene begins.

EXCERPT: Clift reading from Williams' GLASS MENAGERIE

SB: Montgomery Clift, I understand, wanted more to do that the play, that part in that play than anything else at the last, coming through all the dreadful experiences of his life, the car wreck that smashed his face, the plastic surgery, the struggling to act again through that plastic, his own hopeless addiction by this time, and alcoholism, as was the case with Tennessee Williams, when he died this year. And yet not hopeless. He's managed to bring his whole art through, informed by his experiences, to make this loneliness a public demonstration.

SB: But I just very much also did want to give you just a little bit of Tennessee Williams himself, without acting ability, reading that same passage, where you can hear, I feel, a truth more terrible than the stage has yet presented to us.

EXCERPT: Williams reading from THE GLASS MENAGERIE

SB: I hear at least a terror in that flat reading that is to me the real source of where the writing came from, for this is Williams' most, most autobiographical play. It is his trying to come to terms with his sister, called 'Laura' in the play, and of course the part that you heard both these men reading is really himself, an expression of himself, that sister who somehow nobody could save. She became, so Williams says in his memoirs, the first frontal-lobotomy person in the country and was rendered essentially a vegetable for the rest of her life. And some of the last things that he, one of the last things that he had said to her in a fit of sibling anger was, 'I hate the very sight of your face.' And that's a mainspring for a great deal of his work, but I think never more tenderly or clearly than in that particular passage somehow.

SB: And then what shall I say about the sixties. I want to share my friend Bruce Baillie with you, a filmmaker, and there's no other way to do that in this form than with his voice. And how shall I explain what was happening to anybody in the sixties at that time, maybe just simply say what his condition was and then leave it to him. He was driving around in a car when he made this tape. He made this tape because he could no longer face getting up on a stage in front of people at all. We both had been scheduled to give film programs in Kalamazoo, and Baillie sent the tape instead to me personally, and then to be played there. So after all these years I'd like to share at least a small part of it with you; he's driving his car and he's talking into his own tape recorder.

BRUCE BAILLIE (EXCERPT): It's early morning, Thursday, and I've tried to get to this next [unintelligible], I only have a quarter with me, and a full tank of gas. And then I can send this airmail special to you, and possibly you'll get to hear it, the tape, before Saturday's over. I tried my best to get there. I don't know, I can't, I just can't seem to - to go through all the American traffic and excitement anymore. I had to take a long trip from where I live, north of San Francisco, and I drove all

day, and slept by an Indian creek in the middle of the trip, and continued on down and got there. I just couldn't get on that airplane this morning. Schedule's from 6:17 a.m. to 12:31 and so on until 6 p.m., a whole day on that airplane with all those dead people. I couldn't do it again. So I just, got up late last night, headed north again, couldn't cash a cheque anywhere. Finally did, got gas. I slept out by some - well it's in the north of the bay, and there's kind of a big river goes up there. And I always wondered who lived up there; there's a few houses along the way. I was just settling down, and lighted a match to write some notes, and, a big yellow moon up in the southeast. Very sad moon, to see me still going. I had a dream up at my place, where a lunar beloved came to me and was very sad that I was, just as in always my life I'm on the move. And I thought maybe I'd see him the next night to continue, because when I woke up I decided to give in to whatever it was. But it was too late, I guess, there he was watching me last night. So anyway the guy comes up with a flashlight, and says, 'You can't be sleeping here.' Some poor big fat guy that I could tell was scared. I told him I was sick. He says, 'No no. I gotta sleep, I can't -' I say, 'Oh well, okay.' Unfriendly country. I got back in the car and drove a little further north and found a little place off by farmers. Slept awhile and now here I am.

SB: About the time that Bruce Baillie sent me that tape, the filmmaker, the Austrian filmmaker, Peter Kubelka came to live with Jane and I for a month or so in our mountain cabin. And Peter insisted in those days, and still does, on playing the recorder, on getting together with people and making some kind of music in that way that can get neglected as we listen to fine performances to Basque folk songs blown up into orchestral versions. We can forget what's the origin of all of it and where it all finally ends. The piece of music that we get together and play is very ironic under the context; it's one of the saddest, loneliest songs of the Civil War, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," and its been sung at most wars since. And maybe here's the only antidote - I mean I don't think Peter realized quite the irony, or maybe he did, that during the Vietnam War we'd be sitting here playing in this fashion this song. He's insisted that I play on the violin, I haven't played on since I was a child, and so I provide a kind of base drone; and Jane joins him in the recorder, and here it is:

MUSIC: Kubelka, Stan and Jane Brakhage playing "When Johnny Comes Marching Home"

SB: And there was, there is a piece of music that I give 'the test of time' on, Charles Ives' "Seer." By the time he wrote it he knew perfectly well that probably his orchestral music would never be played alive in his lifetime. And all the same, as true amateur, he went right on making his music.

MUSIC: Ives, "The Seer"

PROGRAM 7

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, this is Stan Brakhage. I wonder if you ever heard of Frei Jacinto Frei Jacinto. I'm not even sure how to pronounce the name myself, so I'll spell it: J-A-C-I-N-T-O, eighteenth century Portuguese composer. And probably you haven't heard of him; there's only two pieces of music that they've been able to find so far by this man, but they're both significant enough; they've been preserved. He was a contemporary of Scarlatti and Seixas, eighteenth century. And here is his remarkable "Sonata in D Minor."

MUSIC: Jacinto, "Sonata in D Minor"

SB: One can suspect that this Frei Jahinto, or Jacinto, Portuguese eighteenth century composer, was so alarming to his contemporaries with music like that that they might have stoned him to death, and that's why we only have a few pieces from him. Beautiful and lyric as the piece is in a way, it's fraught with rhythms of belligerency, and war rhythms I would say. I'm no expert on them by any other, but the ultimate study that all of, most of my growing up, almost all, the radios carried to me the major sense of war rhythms, the urgency of them. Aside from the messages, which I often didn't understand, I understood the rhythms and their effect on the people and how they moved through human beings on the streets around me. It was my school of rhythm of war. I give you just an example of it.

EXCERPT: Radio war recordings

SB: So the rhythms need not necessarily be fast or swift. They can even be a certain pacing which leads straight to prayer. Human beings have been commissioned to make a war music; that is a music that people will be not only willing but anxious to die to. Composers have made fortunes and made this their entire life of composition. I give you an example from the Civil War, replayed, of course, by the Eastman Wind Ensemble. Civil War war music:

MUSIC: Eastman Wind Ensemble, Civil War music

SB: So, we have a music which is composed but, I think, not by artists, because it's composed not to give a sense of something, or a balance, but actually to effect people, to stir them up.

SB: I want to play for you another piece, by Charles Ives, himself singing, which shows the excitement that a person can have, in this case in the fever of the First World War, and out of Ives' patriotism, singing joyously of going over there to fight - "We Are There" is the name of the piece - but because he is and cannot help himself to be a composer, he really shows forth

something of the horror of old men singing delightedly of war.

MUSIC: Ives, "We Are There"

SB: And so we have it. I think as artists cannot help but make it a clarity, a whole sense, not only of the rhythm but of something of what it leads to and of its even false grounds. Art also is useful for people to extract these rhythms of truth and to destroy the balance of rhythm-ing and use again for propaganda. Hitler, for instance, studied carefully the nineteenth century theatre, studied with the theatrical people of the Max Reinhardt tradition of theatre, the rhetorical sense of theatre, and honed all their gestures, and their senses of voice into a masterpiece of propagandizing, I think.

EXCERPT: Hitler's address

SB: And so he led a nation feverishly to war and finally sucked a whole world into it. And I think really essentially off these rhythm-ings. You know, people who actually have heard him speak have said that the movies that show him speaking, the newsreels that is, the recordings that have been made, don't capture even more than a little bit of the hypnotic power that he had. But my friend Eugene Salomé, who experienced directly Hitler's speeches, and experienced them, by the way, as a determined spy against the Nazis throughout the whole Second World War, said that even he, with his determination, and his full consciousness of his determination to destroy the Nazis, had to be very careful listening to Hitler; and that once he opened himself just a little bit during a speech, and, like unbuttoning one button of his coat, and began to feel himself swept up in the Nazi enthusiasm. He has also told me that that little piece of recording I played for you is the closest he's ever heard, actually on record or tape or film, to something of the sense of the power of his speaking.

SB: So we have a sense of what the arts can do when imbalanced, and a sense of what they can do in the original. Artists are no more immune from war fever than anybody else; for example - well I can't say that some are and some aren't. I think maybe it's a good moment to listen to see what Kenneth Patchen has to say from his JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT this week.

EXCERPT: Patchen reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT.

SB: That's also a war poem that was written, that was begun at least during the Second World War as he lay flat on his back with a whole society gone, to him, mad around him; though that was, as you know, the just war, the Second World War. That was the war which seemed most to have to be fought and which Patchen and some few other refused to have anything to do with.

SB: But then there are the poets who are extraordinarily belligerent like our Portuguese composer; the young Ezra Pound, before the First World War, writes this:

SB: 'Damn it all! All this our South stinks peace. You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music! I have no life save when the swords clash. But ah! When I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing and the broad fields beneath them turned crimson, then howls my heart nigh mad with rejoicing.'

SB: That's from "Sestina: Altaforte," and that was done by Pound with a drum and with his voice more than I can make it for you. Something more like this:

SB: 'In the hot summer have I great rejoicing. When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace, and the lightnings from blank heav'n flash crimson, and the fierce thunders roar me their music. And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing, and through all the ribbon skies Gods' swords clash.'

SB: And so on for a number of other verses. But then let's listen to the Pound of the CANTOS, a Pound at the age of eighty-seven, having lived through two World Wars after writing that poem; after having been incarcerated twelve years in an asylum rather than be tried for treason for his collaboration with the Italians during the Second World War; a man who devoted so much of his life trying to stop war in the meantime; and between those wars had written of the deaths of so many of his friends at the front, dear friends of his; so that this part of the CANTOS really is just an old man reminiscing. But still with that balance that it's not against war, that it's, concludes its jokes like 'getting it up,' its kind of war-front humor, its camaraderie; and yet, lists off all that's been lost.

EXCERPT: Pound reading from the CANTOS

SB: And that still has carrying in it, though feebly and with some deep recognition, still it carries in it, rhythm-ing, belligerent, aside from what's being said. Again I don't know any better way to contrast than to hear some more from Kenneth Patchen, who managed that almost impossible, and considered by most people cowardly thing, to keep out of it altogether. Kenneth Patchen:

EXCERPT: Patchen reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT.

SB: And so we have a peacefulness condensed entirely within this writing that he's doing at this period and yet, as I said before, he was fighting also with his little circle of admirers against Kenneth Rexroth's, or Robert Duncan's, or anyone else's in town in the fifties. But he had managed at least to make an area in which the rhythm-ing was peaceful.

SB: Yet it doesn't begin to touch the old woman, H.D., who had young been Ezra Pound's lover in a tree-house in Pennsylvania; who'd followed him across the ocean against her parents wishes; who'd married otherwise, and separated herself, and fiercely retrieved her own poetics from his; who'd had an affair with D.H. Lawrence during the First World War; and who'd lived out a whole life and come finally to the peace of these lines in HELEN IN EGYPT where she's imagining all of it, those two wars, through the Greek Trojan War.

EXCERPT: H.D. reading from HELEN IN EGYPT

SB: Whatever sense I've been able to make of this I wish to dedicate to Frank Georgiana and the production of Howard Barker's NO END OF BLAME, an extraordinary play by a playwright unknown to me except for this production, a play which manages to ring some real hope, some careful hard hope, out of two World Wars and the difficulties of living in the twentieth century.

MUSIC: Ives, "The Seer"

PROGRAM 8

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage and today I feel like talking about love of women. It's been very difficult across the twentieth century for men to express love of women in words. And that's because there's been too many centuries of lies, so many endearments in language and so much harsh reality, that many women have come rightly to feel a hatred of the language of love, even the word itself, used so much in hypocrisy. And for artists this is a problem, of course no less than for anyone else, in fact its their charge to revitalize the language. One of the tactics for doing this has been to play with it outrageously; to make fun, which would be easy but could also be a hurtfulness, like lies. But the other is to play with it out of deep love and feeling. Not since Lewis Carroll perhaps has anyone made a poem quite like the one I'm going to share with you; and its made by a painter, Kurt Schwitters, mostly famous for his beautiful little collage works - pieces of trash and discarded objects that he'd collect on the street and weave and paste together into a magnificent little treasure chest of pictures that now are considered great masterpieces of twentieth century art. He was a man not content to just deal with collage of image, but put together poems, both in French and English, and we're fortunate enough to have him reading his poem, "An Anna Blume." The voice of Kurt Schwitters.

EXCERPT: Schwitters reading "An Anna Blume"

SB: [Laughs] So - Kurt Schwitters. That may seem an extreme to have to go [to], but all artists have been pushed, all male artists at least in the twentieth century, have been pushed to extremes to give some new, and therefore, their new, some real expression to their feeling about women.

SB: For many men the only way they could arrive at it is through love of daughters. Charles Ives, at the turn of the century, has this beautiful little song to his two daughters called "Two Little Flowers."

MUSIC: Ives, "Two Little Flowers" (sung by Evelyn Lyre)

SB: Though that's not, that's an extremely sentimental, we would say today, equivocation of women, and daughters haven't had all that much luck with their fathers either across this time. The piece is beautifully sung, by the way, by Evelyn Lyre, and that's probably still is available on a Columbia record of "American Scenes, American Poets: Songs of Charles Ives." Sentimental? Well, some men have gone to great lengths to really serenade their loves, without being sentimental; and I think one of the greatest examples of such is by Andre Breton.

SB: Andre Breton writes the following to his wife. He was, I should pause to say, really the leader of the Surrealist movement in France; not only at the turn of the century, when it began, but clear up through the war years when he edited a magazine of Surrealism called VIEW, in New York City. The unacknowledged leader, though there was no real position or elected leadership. I think maybe Jean Cocteau postures him best when he puts him in the film as a character in his film ORPHEUS, and has Andre Breton say to the famous poet, who's won the approval of all the people that, 'The people are alone.' And to additionally within that film, or Cocteau's picturing of Andre Breton, to defend a book of poetry that's nothing but blank pages, and a movement called Nudism, by saying, 'Well - it's better than if the book was filled with bad poems.' In addition to these, being the aesthetician of this movement, Andre Breton was also a fine poet, and I'm going to read to you from his poem "Freedom of Love":

SB: 'My wife with the hair of a wood fire. With the thoughts of heat lightning. With the waist of an hourglass. With the waist of an otter in the teeth of a tiger. My wife with the lips of a cockade and of a bunch of stars of the last magnitude. With the teeth of tracks of white mice on the white earth. With the tongue of rubbed amber and glass. My wife with the tongue of a stabbed host. With the tongue of a doll that opens and closes its eyes. With the tongue of an unbelievable stone. My wife with the eyelashes of strokes of a child's writing. With brows of an edge of the swallow's nest. My wife with the brow of slates of a hothouse roof. And of steam on the panes. My wife with shoulders of champagne. And of a fountain with dolphin-heads beneath the ice. My wife with wrists of matches. My wife with fingers of luck and ace of hearts. With fingers of mown hay.

My wife with armpits of marten and of beechnut. And of Midsummer Night. Of privet and of an angelfish nest. With arms of seafoam and of riverlocks. And of a mingling of the wheat and the mill. My wife with legs of flares. With the movements of clockwork and despair. My wife with calves of eldertree pith. My wife with feet of initials. With feet of rings of keys and Java sparrows drinking. My wife with a neck of unpearled barley. My wife with a throat of the valley of gold. Of a tryst in the very bed of the torrent. With breasts of night. My wife with breasts of a marine molehill. My wife with breasts of a ruby's crucible. With breasts of the rose's spectre beneath the dew. My wife with the belly of a gigantic claw. My wife with the back of a bird fleeing vertically. With a back of quicksilver. With a back of light. With a nape of rolled stone and wet chalk. And of the drop of a glass where one has just been drinking. My wife with hips of a skiff. With hips of a chandelier and of arrow-feathers. And of shafts of white peacock plumes. Of an insensible pendulum. My wife with buttocks of sandstone and asbestos. My wife with buttocks of swans' backs. My wife with buttocks of spring. With the sex of an iris. My wife with the sex of a mining-placer and a platypus. My wife with a sex of seaweed and ancient sweetmeat. My wife with a sex of mirror. My wife with eyes full of tears. With eyes of purple panoply and of a magnetic needle. My wife with savanna eyes. My wife with eyes of water to be drunk in prison. My wife with eyes of wood always under the axe. My wife with eyes of water- level of level of air earth and fire.'

SB: Still it's in a tradition, it's in the tradition, however beautifully, of praising women, which women at least have come to learn, to suspect, if not absolutely hate. That by the way was translated out of the French by Edouard Roditi and in a beautiful little book with drawings by the painter Arshile Gorky.

SB: Women have tended to do better in praise of women in the twentieth century, though even they, as you'll hear in the next example, have to go to extremes of language. Edith Sitwell, in her marvelous façade: you have to imagine one of the most stately ladies of England, whether poor as she sometimes was, or well to-do; moving always alone, though in company with her brothers and her small band of fellow artists; even finally internationally known, as it's said, but lonely and unknown by the people; moving always with a stately grace in dresses of velvet, an elegance that had to make up for all that was often lacking; finally becoming very old and finding, in collaboration with the composer William Walton, finding herself on a stage as part of an entertainment in the English theatre. She and Peter Pears, reading her poems and I'm going to play one of hers in praise of some women, accompanied by William Walton's music.

EXCERPT: Sitwell reading an unspecified poem, with music by Walton

SB: And so there's something of the original recording, London recording of Dame Edith Sitwell herself reading. Since then there's been another recording put out with further music by William Walton and that's a wonderful record, too. But I can't help but prefer hearing the voice of Edith Sitwell herself. And I'll be playing it for you again.

SB: Maybe it's because women of course know the actual condition and would know that in the language as well. I think the greatest tribute to women has been written by Gertrude Stein in a simple little poem that's also the most widely spread in the English language. You all know it I'm sure: "Rose is a rose is a rose." Everyone makes a joke of it and it's supposed simply to mean that a poem is a poem and a rose is a rose. But it also means, if you slur the language a little, if you consider that what the rose has meant through all the years of English poetry, and then you slur them a little as you go round and round with that line, you get 'Rose,' the name of it, is 'arose,' a growth process, growing up, is 'eros,' 'e-r-o-s,' a symbol for sex, is 'arrows,' 'a-r-r-o-w-s,' which could be either cupids' arrows or death, is 'sorrows' also a symbol for death; and birth, sex and death in relationship to women is what that poem has always meant. So it's not just a toy, delightful as it is as that.

SB: The extremes to which people have to go. Well, of course it's the problem of making up a new fiction. Let's hear what Kenneth Patchen has to say with that as he describes honestly his creating of people for his JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT.

EXCERPT: Patchen reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT

SB: At the same time that I knew Kenneth Patchen - I had just met him in San Francisco - I came to know one of my dearest friends of my life, the poet Michael McClure. And Michael, in the sixties, created an extreme form of language to say everything. He created a book of sound poems that combine his English with the expressions beyond the language of English. And these sound poems - I just have to give you some sense of another kind of elegance: I can see Michael McClure and Dame Edith Sitwell walking along the street together; they'd make a perfect couple in a way. Michael, tall, stately, extremely handsome, handsomeness that's like coiled-steel if you take a hold of him, and with the courage to break out of language and do what made everyone else say he was making a fool of himself. Go and read one of his "Beast Poems," as he called it, to the lions in the San Francisco Zoo, his friend Bruce Conner making this recording.

EXCERPT: McClure reading a "Beast Poem"

SB: Love of women? Well, a reaching out with his whole animal being and loving - a recognition of his being animal and reaching out to all the animals of the earth, the whole basis for any kind of human loving. And for the occasion I want to change the end music for this program and play Charles Ives, another little piece of his, "The New River."

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 9

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage. I want to talk today about one of the greatest filmmakers, Orson Welles. A man who in a different time, I've always thought, could probably, might have been, the Shakespeare of film. He had all that kind of strong personality, as to control the economics, to control the stage setting, and casts of, in some cases, of films he made later, hundreds of people; and on the stage, the complications to be producer and director and to deal with the temper-mentality of actors and actresses and so on. And none of this killed the sensitivity that he had as a child, which had him reading, quoting from memory Shakespeare before five years old, performing with the little puppet theatre his Shakespeare productions. Actually, we weren't ready for a Renaissance yet. And so he ends up the fool of Johnny Carson, in some sad sense, or of Dean Martin, and can't seem to make films anymore at all, or stage productions. He's also a man very involved in politics all his life and worked under the Roosevelt administration, which makes the piece that I'm about to play for you even more surprising. He also loved and based all his work on the bible. And here we have a strange piece coming, through the recent years, of his own writing, his questioning of 'The Great Society' under Lyndon Johnson, and eventually his attacks on the Vietnam War. Anyway I'll let him speak for himself. Here's Orson Welles and his own script, and reading THE BEGETTING OF THE PRESIDENT.

EXCERPT: Welles reading from THE BEGETTING OF THE PRESIDENT

MUSIC: Sergei Rachmaninoff, "Prelude in C Sharp Minor"

SB: I conjoined that piece of music, which is Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Prelude in C Sharp Minor," with Orson Welles' escalading of 'The Great Society' because I do deeply believe that music is not abstract, that it's just another way of thinking. And that there are patterns which are expressed through music, which do reflect directly whatever most blunt political troubles or world crises we're either trying to survive or are perhaps trapped in. That piece of music is to me one of the most beautiful pieces of music written in the twentieth century, but it's also one of the most successfully classical. It's built of a very particular structure that people are entirely used to, or at least were at the time that he composed it and played it over and over again, as Rachmaninoff was also a great concert pianist. And in fact the magic of this particular record is that this is as exact a recreation of Rachmaninoff playing the piano as you will ever hear; its done through a particularly sensitive system, a player piano that actually, instead of being holes punched in paper, was quills dipped in mercury, so that when Rachmaninoff performed on that piano, the slightest tremolo of his playing was recorded and traced and that performance can be recreated much better than any of the by now very old records that were made of him. Anyway, my reason for playing it was to listen to a kind of very extraordinarily beautiful but somehow musical trap out of the nineteenth century; and that piece, the "Prelude in C Sharp Minor" had become a trap for Rachmaninoff himself; he was always asked to play it, everywhere he went, it was so popular; and he came to hate it worse than any piece of music ever composed.

SB: So it is with most people and the bible. The bible has come to them in forms and been used in so many ways unhappily for their torment and for their restriction that the great beauty of the bible itself has come to be difficult to turn to. And yet it does still remain, at least in America, the base of almost all writing. It and Shakespeare were the two books that made it across the plains, you know, even after the cow died and the covered wagon was stuck somewhere, the family still carried those two books. And you can hear it very clearly all the way through THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT, by Kenneth Patchen.

EXCERPT: Patchen reading from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT.

MUSIC: Josef Matthias Hauer, "Vienna Night"

SB: And the design that I chose to put with Patchen's piece from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT is "Wien Nacht," or "Vienna Night," by Josef Matthias Hauer. And the reason that I did that is I know no other human who's tried so hard as he did in this century to deflect the history of music from the kind of use of it to create power and swelling of emotions, such as is beautifully epitomized by Rachmaninoff's "Prelude in C Sharp Minor." Hauer rejected all of those constructs, those familiar constructs that were so rooted in the emotions of people that they would feel great power and great strength and great surety, great passion, tragedy, so forth. Hauer wanted music to become, as I think Patchen is calling for, a reflection of the designs of simple living and of beautiful, peaceful thinking. He was the first man to create the twelve-tone system of music. And instead of this giving him a peaceful life, along came Arnold Schoenberg not long after and, absolutely independent of Hauer, created a twelve-tone system of music which did incorporate within itself even more of a sense of power and strength and emotional fervor and drama, and as if, not to - and I mean even further difficult for Hauer, along came Alban Berg, who created some of the most powerful, bloody operas of the twentieth century, capable of dealing even with Jack the Ripper in music. And poor Hauer sat there with his beautiful quiet pieces in absolute poverty in Vienna, slowly sending out his music which wasn't played, occasionally playing it himself. And his fury mounted across the years, until he finally was making a stamp that he put on all his letters saying 'Josef Matthias Hauer, the original creator of twelve-tone music' etc. In other words, he too didn't escape a war of a sorts. But the music is beautiful, simple, and an alternative.

SB: And finally he was recognized - there's a wonderful story I have to share with you about Hauer. Finally the city of Vienna, which always did try to honor its artists and give them a stipend and help them to survive, came to him with an award that's usually given to anyone that's achieved any kind of international fame in their twenties. He was in his late-sixties or seventies when they finally arrived at his slum-dwelling little room, knocked on the door, he came to the door, in his shorts, as

it happened, and they held out this award to him and he threw up his hands and he said 'I knew you were coming!' So he did get some kind of honor at the end.

SB: Patchen rejects of course Leonardo da Vinci, also a murderer; all culture, all of artists even at times, all of books; if you remember he refers to these big-bottomed ash cans into which men dump their souls. And this rejection of the arts must always be mixed with some sense that also out of the arts comes the antidote. That the bible cannot be an occasion trusted by everybody as an occasion of solemnity, does not prevent it from continuing to be the basis of rhythms of the language that we hold, and many of the concepts, too; and, or even an occasion for gentle humor, which sees in the whole of the flood, the biblical flood, an occasion for praising the simple things of daily life. Robert Duncan's "The Ballad of Mrs. Noah."

EXCERPT: Duncan reading "The Ballad of Mrs. Noah"

MUSIC: Samuel Barber, "Hermit Song #1" (sung by Leontyne Price)

SB: Two of my very people conjoined there, the poet Robert Duncan and his "Ballad of Mrs. Noah," and the American composer Samuel Barber in the first of his "Hermit Songs," in this case sung by Leontyne Price. And that's all for today. We move on to Charles Ives and "The New River."

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 10

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage and I'd like to present you with a riddle. I'm going to play a piece of music and if you are at all like myself when I first heard this, or any of the people I've played it for, this music will probably haunt you, and you may have difficulty naming it.

MUSIC: Igor Stravinsky, "The Rite of Spring"

SB: And so in the middle of playing the first piece I segued over to the orchestral version, at which point a lot of people at least probably recognized Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps," or "The Rite of Spring." The part that I was playing first is a version for two pianos, which was used of course in the original composition of the piece and used to help the dancers to learn how to dance to it. And played in this case on a London recording in this case by the famous pair, Eden and Tamir, who have made it their job to go around showing us what can be done with two pianos. One reason I did that was that this piece, which is generally associated with creation, is almost impossible to recognize in its original piano version. But, by many people at least who are familiar with it, at least those who've seen FANTASIA, the dinosaur sequence, might call it to mind when they hear the whole texture. Well, I have a sense that creation is hard to recognize in a more daily sense. All the time, people when they think of creation these days think of scientific explanations and so forth, or maybe ancient myths which are often no longer believed; but around us, just in the daily chores and happenings of our life, and especially as it occurs in the mind of children, are creation myths, bringing anew. And one of the most amusing I know is James Broughton's "Papa Had a Bird."

EXCERPT: Broughton reading "Papa Had a Bird"

SB: James Broughton's "Papa Had a Pig." James Broughton is one of my oldest friends, one of the most delightful people on Earth. He's a poet who's managed to be the most avant-garde in our time by choosing to write in various styles that are major routes of our sense of rhyming, and limerick, and language in general, but which have tended to be overlooked or despised and that's not to bother James, who's anyway run in the teeth of the times in every way he could. He's a person who originally was a tap dancer in show business and writing poetry then, too; found his home in San Francisco, created a press there which published some of the most extraordinary avant-garde works after the war, and went right on mining his own childhood experiences of poetics in relationship to modern times; that is with a language absolutely American and not at all Mother-Goosey, in the original sense. A man also who insists on touching everything, every person, disconcerting to Americans who are usually uptight, when Broughton comes up and feels their biceps, their shoulders, their stomach, their legs, their thighs, the tops of their heads, and embraces them such as few are embraced even by their mates. And James is a complete delight and, also his constant exemplum, example, at least of creation to me. Wit is perhaps one of the greatest ways to make the daily re-creation alive in people's minds.

SB: Another great wit, a great poet, and an old friend of mine, Ed Dorn; in his very latest book, CAPTAIN JACK'S CHAPS, by the Black Mesa Press, writes this poem, "God Creates Man":

SB: 'There's no problem with God created man, of course he did; he just created a lot of monkeys first, for practice. But anyway, that's all rather vague; to be exact, Odon created man, as well as poetry, and he wore a hat and carried a staff and he was a traveler, like Mercury.'

SB: Almost all of any poet's work, any single poem, could be said to be about creation. But one of the most interesting drives in our times, to me, is to mine earlier myths to find how other people just looked at the world freshly. I'm going to play Ed

Dorn, reading years ago, more than a decade, in Riverside, California, his then work-in-progress from RECOLLECTIONS OF GRAN APACHERlA, the creation myth of the Apache recreated as Edward did in "Creation."

EXCERPT: Dorn reading "Creation"

MUSIC: Panalol Ghose, untitled

SB: I, my goodness, even called old friend Ed Dorn, "Edward," to get some distance from him, so that I could hear him as he gets at the Apache legends of creation; and then conjoined with the India Indian music of Panalol Ghose. I've been embarrassed since I first played a section of Panalol Ghose, knowing, and that you have to hear the whole of it to get a sense of creation. Creation begins with at least almost nothing, and then has to develop carefully every piece of itself to make a world. And so, as usual, we end the program with "A New River," of Charles Ives.

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 11

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage and I want to share with you today the ghost of a great composer, Claude Debussy. At the turn of the century there was an extraordinary player piano that was invented by Edwin Welt and demonstrated actually in 1904. A player piano of course wasn't anything new; for a long time paper rolls were punched in a certain way that when played back they would cause the keys of the piano to depress and play notes, but in a rather mechanical fashion. But what Mr. Welt had invented was a form of this piano that could be applied to the finest of grand pianos, and a system of quills dipped in mercury that would cause every single vibration of a performance played on that piano to be recorded in squiggly lines so that you could have a playback that was the most extraordinary in its capturing of the sense of playing the piano of anything we had possible until the invention of stereophonic recordings. And one of the composers that was recorded playing his music was Claude Debussy. So you have to, to get the full magic of this, imagine a stage, red velvet curtains opening, a grand piano sitting in the middle of it, and then suddenly the keys beginning to be depressed as in fact the very pianistic's spirit as well as the composer's spirit of Claude Debussy plays for you his "Sunken Cathedral."

MUSIC: Debussy, "Sunken Cathedral"

SB: That recording was released by the Keyboard Immortals series. Some record albums of other composers as well as Debussy, shortly out of print, didn't seem to create much interest in the world and I don't understand why because one can really hear how Claude Debussy himself wanted his music played, and in hearing the way he slurs the tones into each other, one can sense his relationship to the French Impressionists, to that same aesthetic that he was a part of. One can also hear that drift as they were making images, wishing to make images out of particles of light. He too, though he was a composer of music, wished to make pictures out of particles of sound and even in this case to represent an architecture of the imagination. So one hears also in the music how he was a Romantic, just by the choice of the kind of architecture that he picked.

SB: I want to read the first two verses of Edgar Allen Poe's "The City and the Sea," a poem very related in its imagery with language, particles of sounds we call words, trying to create an architectural sense of an entire city. Quote:

SB: 'Lo! Death has reared himself a throne, In a strange city lying alone. Far down within the dim West, Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best, Have gone to their eternal rest. There shrines and palaces and towers (Time-eaten towers, that tremble not!) Resemble nothing that is ours. Around, by lifting winds forgot, Resignedly beneath the sky, the melancholy waters he. No rays from the holy heaven come down On the long nighttime of that town; But light from out the lurid sea Streams up the turret silently- Gleams up the pinnacles far and free- Up domes- up spires- up kingly halls- Up fanes- up Babylon-like walls- Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers- Up many and many a marvelous shrine Whose wreathed friezes intertwine The viol, the violet, and the vine.'

SB: End quote. There's three more verses to that poem but that gives an idea of representing a whole architectural vision just with language. I mean there is this yearning in people to escape their own forms of expression, to reach out to others, from which have come some of the most marvelous pieces of art. Goethe, for instance, is saying something similar when he says architecture is frozen music; and this reach from one art to another is the most leavening process of all to each of the arts and hopefully to everyone's daily experience.

SB: How to represent architecture in film? Well most people would just say you take a picture of some buildings. But that doesn't really do it for us any more than then that people are aware, I think, of the architecture around them just by walking through it and using it. I want to play a little bit of one of Peter Kubelka's lectures. Kubelka, who's a Viennese filmmaker whose films are sometimes shown on the Monday evening series at eight o'clock at the University of Colorado. His desire, not just to accept that he's a maker of moving pictures, but that he wishes to be inspired by and to actually architect a film as I think beautifully expressed by him in this section.

PETER KUBELKA (EXCERPT): This is one of my targets also, to achieve architecture, architecture in time. [Unintelligible]

and monumentality in form, these things are difficult to achieve in cinema, and I can not really motivate why I want [them], I mean, this is a very personal statement, but I have had this in all films, to have the films in a way that they can be repeated over and over, and that that form would be equally complex and measured as music. And so, and that they would give the pleasure more, the more you see, and the more you know them. And this I tried to achieve also in the African film. The film should be documentary in one sense, on one hand. On the other hand, beautiful formally; so that it could be also seen like a ritual and passed over and over again. And it would reveal only, by many, many viewings, things would come up from where you would not have thought them. And when you see this film with twenty-four attentions per second, when you arrive to do that, you will receive much more then when you just look at it like this. So another wish is to pitch up our capability of time-consuming, you see, this fantastic beauty of being in a rapid visual construction.

SB: And an architecture is suggested by Peter Kubelka across a space of time. I mean we ordinarily think of an architecture as a structure that only inhabits space; only maybe as the Romantics began to appreciate the deterioration of these structures, the castles, the ruins, or even imagine them wavering underneath the sea, did we begin to recognize that these structures exist in time. So there could also be an architecture of time, not just an order but a beautiful sense of structure of it.

SB: Glenn Gould speaks in criticism of his earliest recording of "The Goldberg Variations" of Bach, in a little section I want to play to you of the last interview before his death this year; and in the course of speaking, he speaks for the structure of the second recording of "The Goldberg Variations" that was among the very last things he recorded before his death; so that he ended his life as a public recording pianist as he had begun it, for it was indeed "The Goldberg Variations" that had made him famous the world over at twenty-five. And it was the re-recording of it, however, and his sense of the difference between the two that says that one element that happened across all those years was that he had rid himself of some of the Romantic ways of playing that are so, become so popular now that Debussy and others began them. And had chosen for a kind of architectural, architecturing of time in his second recording. So let's hear what he has to say with it in the last recorded interview with one of his dear friends.

EXCERPT: Gould speaking about "The Goldberg Variations"

SB: I don't think the death of anyone has grieved me more than that of Glenn Gould; I'd come to expect so much of him. Even his eccentricities were terribly encouraging to me all along, just as much as they were irritating to the old style of concertgoer. Finally he had to give up playing the piano in public, I think, principally because he had to keep the situation human in a way that wasn't acceptable on the concert stage. Architecture, or a sense of form as fine as he's talking about it there, is usually associated with somebody very cold and abstract and removed from earthly concerns. But Glenn Gould, for instance, really felt at one period that he had to play with his shoes off so that he could feel the vibrations of the sound he was making through the bottoms of his feet; something that maybe Mr. Welt would have understood, who was creating a player piano that could record those slightest variations through quiverings of mercury and quills dipped in them. But also, Glenn Gould needed always, even just as a recording artist after he gave up concert performance, he needed to sing. The studios would try to baffle his out of tune and intrusive voice and never could quite manage to do that; he just finally knew he had to hum or sing as he was playing in order to play his music at the best. And so he did.

SB: The composer of the twentieth century that is the architect supreme for me is the Viennese composer, Josef Matthias Hauer. And I just play you a section from his atonal music "Number 12." Every note that goes up must have a series of notes, must have a corresponding scale that goes down to structure it. And I think this is where new architecture in music is heard the clearest.

MUSIC: Hauer, "Number 12"

SB: And, as we usual, we end on Charles Ives, "The New River."

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 12

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage and I'm here to tell you as a filmmaker-artist in the twentieth century, battle-scarred from many, many wounds, that not only is the voice of the turtle dove heard in the land, but also the voice of the critic. And in fact I'm also here to say that it's [an] absolutely essential voice, and I've paid an enormous price for it. But times when there is no solid continuation of criticism are times that become flaccid in the imagination; and some critic will immediately jump in and say that's a lousy rhyme and doesn't stand, and he or she would be right. All you have to do is look at the period after Dr. Johnson held forth as a critic in England against all his contemporaries and himself, and see the wondrous growth of poetry that comes during and after that time. And then times in which there are no great critics usually don't get heard from; in fact some of the poems that we have preserved come only because they're taken on, mentioned, criticized in fact in books of aesthetics, and the original poetry books would get lost and the aesthetics would be all that was left.

SB: However, though I've had dear friends as critics, they have tried me. I want to share with you a tape, a little section of a

tape that was made with my friend, not only critic but first of all a poet, a beautiful man who in the twenties moved with a cape through Greenwich Village and sang for his supper. That is, read his poems in bars long before that had become any kind of a fashion in the twentieth century; who finally, though he continued to write poetry, was earning his living as a critic, and the man I'm speaking of is Parker Tyler. And probably most famous for his use of psychoanalytic methods in looking at and studying the movies; his book HOLLYWOOD HALLUCINATIONS is a good example. Well, Parker and I were friends, and yet he remained a critic with me and here is a tape made about twenty-five years ago. I had just returned from the Brussels World Fair and Parker Tyler is asking me about it:

PARKER TYLER (EXCERPT): I don't really want to be conned Stan, but I actually think of you as a daring young man with a flying camera. Your camera does move a lot, and you flew by plane to Brussels, and split, didn't you, back? SB: Yes. PT: And you've been up in the air a great deal. And I know for very lately you've been up in the air about your future; maybe you still are. I've proposed young artists, especially avant-garde artists, never feel secure. Tell me, do you feel secure now as an avant-garde artist, now that you have a job? SB: No, I would say that the further that I go in my own work, I feel less and less secure, and that I try to be as excited and happy about that as possible. To be economically insecure as a film artist is very disturbing because the entire art does depend to a greater extent than most other contemporary arts, upon large sources of money. But to be aesthetically insecure is more important than perhaps anything else. And a more - PT: You mean aesthetically secure? SB: To be aesthetically insecure. PT: Oh, you want to be aesthetically insecure? SB: Oh certainly. The minute that I would become aesthetically secure would mean that I had arrived at some epitome, or had the feeling or some sense of having created a masterpiece or an end-all film or a, and I would be extremely disturbed as if I were ready to stop, actually, in the progress of my work. PT: Well that's interesting. You mean it's practically an ideal statement of the way an avant- garde artist should feel who hadn't really made his big masterpiece. SB: No, well actually I don't know. The thing that disturbs me is about 'avant-garde artist' - PT: Oh, you reject that term? SB: No, I don't exactly reject it because usually where it's applied - I would reject it generally - but usually where it's applied, the term 'avant-garde artist,' it tends to mean to me, my rather tenuous or ephemeral association with certain individuals working in the film area whom I enjoy being associated with and do feel related to aesthetically - PT: You mean other, other experimental workers - SB: Other experimental filmmakers. PT: Yeah. SB: But more and more of late I've begun to find that also this term is being applied to a large body of people who are essentially tricksters in the film medium, and to whom I don't particularly care to be associated. I would say since Brussels, since the experience of the experimental film festival in Brussels, I and many other filmmakers whom I do associate with, have begun to reject two terms: avant-garde filmmaker and experimental filmmaker. PT: Yes, but that brings up a practical difficulty; for general purposes the only two available terms that are accepted, are known by, by even an initiated public are 'avant-garde' and 'experimental.' Do you have another one to propose? SB: Well one would hope we could begin speaking of the art of the film. The only difficulty with that terminology is that men like Bosley Crowther in the New York Times use it to apply to hack Hollywood movies so constantly - PT: Alas. SB: And frequently, that you can't possibly use it in that context. So lately the context of this work we're speaking of. PT: So there's no alternative. But in other words you don't like labels. SB: No. My greatest impression, the only one that was really most worthwhile from going to Brussels and seeing the Brussels international exhibition, was that actually a hundred and thirty-three films had been entered in the Brussels exhibition and I had, you know, expected somehow a hundred and thirty-three artists all working somehow in the same area, in related area. PT: But excuse me. There weren't a hundred and thirty-three actual artists; that's the number of films. SB: Number of films, yes. But out of the artists, whatever number it is that that represented - PT: What is it, about a hundred? Or something like that? SB: Somewhere around there. Eighty-some I believe actually. PT: Uh huh. SB: Out of that large group of artists I found that actually there were only between twenty and thirty that I would call artists in the film. And I don't mean just in relation to my own work; but they would be approaching the film as a form of art. And out of that twenty or thirty there were only maybe ten that I felt had accomplished anything. [Fades out to the sound of a baby crying.]

SB: And so two critics are joined by a third: baby Myrrena Brakhage, who can't stand the vibes that are coming off of the other two of them. The whole experience of making that tape with Parker Tyler twenty-five years ago was so painful to me that I put that tape away and tried not ever listen to it or think of it again. Yet, as I go back to it, it's the clearest expression that I have ever been able to make of the beginnings, and the continuities of my feeling; and Parker brought that out in me, however annoying he was in the process. And Myrrena picked up on it and began her lamentations.

SB: Let's go from the absurd to the sublime in criticism. And the sublime usually occurs of those criticized [inaudible] of the glory of their god. Handel is one of the greatest of them. And in his "Israel in Egypt," drawing on the bible, he gives, in criticism of all enemy, I mean in the bible its Pharaoh and his hosts pursuing Moses; but the British listening to the composer Handel were sensing themselves as the rulers of the world and drowning all their enemies in the sea, and proceeded to do so and reigned supreme on the sea. "The Lord Shall Reign Forever and Ever."

MUSIC: Handel, "The Lord Shall Reign Forever and Ever"

SB: And I think there's no finer recording I've heard that captures the real spirit and thrill; this is a Musica Etna presentation with Frederick Waldman as conductor. The rhythm-ing and the real thrill of triumphing over your enemies - for that seems to so many people a good impulse - to make a better world. I mean, listen to this contrast: Here's a poem by Marguerite Young from a book called PRISMATIC GROUND, long out of print; fortunately her great book MISS MACINTOSH MY DARLING is still available and I recommend it to everyone. But listen to this early poem of hers called "Recurring":

SB: 'Fold away your sorrows in a pretty box, fold away your sorrows under too quaint locks. Rats will never find them, to gnaw them through, nobody wants them, they belong to you. In the lonely darkness you will find them yet, you have not forgotten, you will not forget. Fold away your sorrows, safe from moss and mold. They were never purchased, they cannot be sold.'

SB: Contrast that spirit, which would seem to leave her so safe and free of any engagement of criticism, so hermetic almost as Emily Dickinson, with the other and terribly necessary side of her character. She's teaching a class at NYU, and here's a section of her criticizing the new biography of Katherine Anne Porter, in fact an old friend of Marguerite Young's. The biography of Katherine Anne Porter is by Joan Givner and Marguerite Young doesn't much like it.

EXCERPT: Young commenting on Givner's Porter biography

SB: Okay, so without that searching and piercing defense of what she believes in, no poetry is possible, and I don't know how Emily Dickinson did it; we don't have it very much recorded except that incredible wit in her letters.

SB: I want to now play for you the voice of James Joyce. And a sense of criticism at its best, dramatized in his fine art. But as you're going to have trouble hearing his voice I'm going to read you, quickly this section, "Aeola" section so that you can just concentrate on the rhythm of the critic in the la-land:

SB: 'Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentleman, great was my admiration in listening to the remarks addressed to the youth of Ireland, a moment since by my learned friend. It seems to me that I had transported into a country far away from this country, into an age remote from this age, that I stood in ancient Egypt and that I was listening to the speech of some high priest of that land addressed to the youthful Moses. His listeners held their cigarettes poised to hear, their smoke ascending in frail stalks that flowered with his speech, and let our crooked smokes, noble words coming, look out, could you try your hand at it yourself. And it seemed to me that I heard the voice of that Egyptian high priest raised in a tone of like haughtiness and like pride. I heard his words and there meaning was revealed to me. From the fathers, it was revealed to me that those things are good which yet are corrupted, which neither if they were supremely good, nor unless they were good, could be corrupted. Ah, curse you, that's St. Augustine. Why will you Jews not accept our culture, our religion and our language; you are a tribe of nomad herdsmen, we are a mighty people. You have no cities, nor no wealth; our cities are hives of humanity and our galleys trireme and quatrium laden with all manner merchandise, furrow the waters of the known globe. You have but emerged from primitive conditions; we have a literature, a priesthood, an age-long history and a polity. Nile, child man, apogee by the Nile bank, the barberraries kneel, cradle of bull rushes, a man supple in combat, stone-horned, stone-bearded, heart of stone. You pray to a local and obscure idol; our temples, majestic and mysterious, are the abode of Isis and Osirus, of Horace and Aminrah. Yours serfdom, awe and humbleness; ours thunder and the seas. Israel is weak and few are her children; Egypt is in host and terrible are her arms. Vagrants and day laborers are you called; the world trembles at our name.'

EXCERPT: Joyce reading the above passage from ULYSSES.

SB: So, we have criticism criticizing criticism without seeming to taking any sides and showing forth the worst of that usage. And we'll end as usual with Charles Ives' "The New River."

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 13

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage and today I'd like to finish up playing the "Aeola" section, from the great book ULYSSES by James Joyce, which got cut off on "The Test of Time" last week. You know I sit here in this booth at K.A.I.R. at the University of Colorado where these tapes are made, I sit in here with Jo Chodosh, bouncing about among cartridges and recordings, records and tapes, and performing all kinds of engineering miracles in this tiny little room that comes sometimes to feel like a globe in a Hieronymous Bosch painting, with blues sparks creeping up the walls; often with Don Yannacito, sitting here watching the clock along with the rest of us, pressured by time, and that's another kind of test of it. And so I didn't often, don't often get to finish what I started.

SB: But it's just as well because I'd like to present James Joyce to you outside of context; I mean I used him last week rather shamelessly in a kind of context of criticism. That whole section from his book ULYSSES, which really deals with a mix of voices critiquing, as he imagined it, ancient Egypt critiquing the Jewish people, and saying 'Why don't you join us? Why don't you change your ways? We're so mighty and we're so powerful.' Well, it made a good usage in that sense, and I like contexts - I mean my main incentive for doing this is to share with you these treasures to me of recorded poets and out of print recordings and tapes that I've collected over the years of conversations, and I do like to string them almost like, along a line of context of some sort or other, just to hold them together so they're more memorable. But today the context is maybe 'patch-up.' And I'd like to free James Joyce for you, and that reedy little voice of his, that Irish lilt, that music of his language, recorded in 1924 in his master's voice studio in Paris; a voice so extraordinarily out of the past, to some extent buried under scratches of the recording and the ordinary hiss of recording of the times. But still maybe you can almost hear the music better in the sense that it's free to be a music. And that's the greatness of any poet, any great writer. Or maybe also to give a little sense of his autobiography - I mean this is a man who put himself into exile, who cut himself off from the greatness of a great period of Irish literature, went into exile in Switzerland, finally settled in Paris, a man like a fawn in his build but going blind, struggling with his eyes; so it must have been hard from him to read his own text and make a recording of it, and to bring him alive as a human being in that sense.

SB: What he's saying is, he's imagining Egypt, in the form of a lecturer, recreating Egypt for you, attacking the Jewish people for not joining the great power; well of course, I mean he had his reasons - he could identify with those Jewish people in the sense that he was a man that so much had to reject the known powers and ways of his time, that on his mother's deathbed, for instance, she pleaded with him to accept religion; and he could not make himself be hypocritical to satisfy her even at her death, an agony for him of course, and that guilt that haunted him all his life. But here is maybe some of the reason. Quote,

SB: 'A dumb belch of hunger cleft his speech. He lifted his voice above it boldly. And then said, "But ladies and gentleman, had the youthful Moses listened to and accepted that view of life, had he bowed his head and bowed his will and bowed his spirit before that arrogant admonition, he would never have brought the chosen people out their house of bondage, nor followed the pillar of the cloud by day; he would never have spoken with the eternal, mid- lightnings, on Sinai's mountaintop, nor ever have come down with the light of inspiration shining in his countenance, and bearing in his arms the tables of the law, graven in the language of the outlaw." He ceased, and looked at them in joined silence.'

SB: So now that I've given you the English of it, here's the Irish music of it. James Joyce himself:

EXCERPT: Joyce reading the above passage from ULYSSES

SB: And so James Joyce had to follow his muse instead in order to give us this extraordinary life's work of writing which, well there's just nothing to compare to it. It's tough and hard to read - certainly most people find FINNEGAN'S WAKE impossible - but I don't because I always start with just the music, the beautiful sounds of it, and then let whatever it is that will come to me arise from that. Following his muse he came to a whole new possibility of language.

SB: Following James Broughton, following his muse, came to a whole making-it-new of old kinds of language, and old ways of thinking in poetics. You know when I introduced him several programs back, I really again, pressured by time - I mean we're boxed into this room with twenty-six minutes - pressured by that time, I just barely had introduced him in the sense of how he comes on to people tactily, needing to touch, not just people but everything in the world, and maybe gave you a frightened and imbalanced picture of him. That's also his strength of creativity and his loveliness, his power, in a sense. James Broughton I cannot imagine making a creation of the world in which one figure reaches out a single finger to touch that of another, as is Michelangelo's, and maybe too much the rest of a sense, the Renaissance and the Sistine ceiling, sense of it; that Christian hesitancy that's inhibited. Broughton really must feel, in the most earthy sense, whatever it is he's chanting about. So when he talks about a visit from three muses, on the one hand he really means it. I mean these muses are as he knew them in his childhood, as any child might know them, dancing through the chicken yard. And at the same time they are: all of that power and majesty of inspiration which makes his poetry, and anybody's, possible. "A Visit From Three Muses," by James Broughton:

EXCERPT: Broughton reading "A Visit From Three Muses"

SB: And so that you don't imagine that that's just invented delightfully in a moment of freedom from worry and struggle, James Broughton really comes to make that poem at a time when he'd had a continuous headache for a long time, was facing a terrible mid-age crisis, and then finally had almost been killed while hiking along the cliffs by the sea, slipping, some sand slipping from under him, and his hanging by roots from sheer annihilation holding onto these plants until someone came along to help him up; and he was blocked in his writing. And this is how he, a modern living man, brought the muse alive in him again.

SB: The muse, which we usually think of as something wispy and distant and Greek, or some such, having very little to do with us unless we make reference to the Greeks or some such, really available to anyone, just in the immediate environment. You see also one of my impulses is to make these people human. I think art's been removed from so many peoples' lives because they're caught up in some hatred of the great man or great woman syndrome or think of it as an activity, Ivory Tower-like. And really the chicken yard is the more clear ground.

SB: For instance, you think there's no piece of music in the world that's thought of in loftier, more exalted and removed from daily activity's form, than Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony," a pinnacle of musical achievement. Well I want to present a form of it that I hope will wipe out all that and make it hearable again, and out of an impulse that began with Franz Liszt. Franz Liszt wished, simply, to share this wonderful piece of music created by this Viennese man, Beethoven, who hadn't been so terribly dipped in bronze yet. He wanted to share this great music with people that could not afford to go to concert halls, the peasants, in fact, or country people, farmers and so on. And he made tours to small towns, the provinces, in order to play his own music and share with them, but how to share with them a whole symphony? Well the drive was so strong in him that he sat down and transcribed Beethoven's "Fifth" for piano so that he could play it. And then, several years ago, Glenn Gould, tortured in his own way by concert hall audiences and wishing never to have to sit in front of them again but deciding to spend the rest of his life making recordings so that people could listen to them in the comfort of their homes, in their daily lives, picked up Franz Liszt's transcription for piano of Beethoven's "Fifth" and I'm going to give you the whole first movement of it:

MUSIC: Gould playing Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony (First Movement)"

SB: And I am, by the way, not trying to bring these voices and this music, which in this last case has become too familiar to hear freshly in most forms. I'm not trying to bring these voices and these poets down to earth, in some sense, so that you care more about them, or even so that I do. But more to inspire some confidence to reach out to one's neighbor, or finally even one's self. To make it daily some way and not have it removed and lofty as I feel has killed interest in the arts in so many

people. Hardest of all is to appreciate or give any expression to or for the people that you really know. I mean I could talk easily for hours about people I've read about in books, but when I begin to describe a friend like James Broughton or most of the people I've shown on here - well for example, Charles, Charlie - there I did it again! The first time I met the composer Carl Ruggles, I had been for so many years using his name in combination with Charles Ives'. Then I called him Charlie, and I did on one of these programs.

SB: Ed Dorn lives in this town, and I see him almost weekly; and he and Jenny, by the way, put out the only newspaper that I care to read from cover to cover, Rolling Stock. And how to describe him? Well, he tackled the problem. He showed how you can get the clearest portraits of people by their very enemies, the white people coming in contact with the apaches, if you just carefully select certain quotes. And here's a whole poem made of them.

EXCERPT: Dorn reading an unspecified poem

SB: Okay, so I'll not dodge the issue, I'll make my first attempt to give a description of Ed Dorn with whom I'm most familiar. If I were going to make a film of President Jackson, it is his visage, and movement and power and grace that would encourage me to do it, and maybe with balance. And now we're out of time again, and we end on Charles Ives' "The New River."

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 14

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, this is Stan Brakhage, babbling along here at K.A.I.R., making another tape for broadcasting, and one part of my mind talking to the other and shaping the neat tongue with air and sending it onto a tape and out over the airways eventually. And a lot of people understand something, and some people don't understand anything and nobody understands everything and even I don't understand all of it. But if I were to start babbling, as we say, and go 'ba-da-ba-de-boo-de-ba-ba-de-boo-ba-ba-ba' like that and went on too long it would become very disturbing. And yet we're used to it, in ancient music. We've heard it all along. For instance, these beautiful old Basque folk songs, the songs of the Auvergne. The first one I'm going to play you says, in articulate French, quote: 'Unfortunate is he who has a wife. Unfortunate is he who doesn't have one. He who hasn't one wants one. He who has one doesn't want one.' And that's so altogether obvious - I mean that's an 'end quote' there - that's so altogether obvious that then there's nothing left to do but break into sounds that don't really mean anything except, this is what we've all heard and all know and that doesn't even necessarily make it true, or some such babbling. Here it is.

MUSIC: Basque folk song

SB: And so it goes. The second refrain on that, by the way, to be fair to the ladies is, quote: 'Fortunate is the woman who has the man she needs. But even more fortunate is she who hasn't.' And then it goes into the same babbling sounds. So we're used to that. And yet in modern times there's a kind of turn that's been taken, sharper, harder, and not yet accepted by most people. But I hope you'll listen to this sound poem, a poem made up using noises and actual, in this case, the a-b-c's of the alphabet, both in English and in Greek as well as other languages at times, to make a kind of a music very close to baby talk, in a way, to the roots of all our talking. So this one is done by the collage artist and painter Kurt Schwitters, and is read by his son. And this is the end of a long sound poem, the final movement we might call it.

EXCERPT: Schwitters' son reading from an unspecified poem

SB: And so we have the end of what's actually, oh my goodness, it must be a forty minute long piece of music, I would call it, but not of a kind that most people are used to in modern times, listening to.

SB: Gertrude Stein in the same spirit and in the same town as Kurt Schwitters, involved herself with these origins of language all her life. And was ridiculed and laughed at. Why, I wonder, don't we ridicule and laugh at children? But then of course we do. And yet there's a spirit that reaches out to them. I used to sit and talk with the babies and I think almost every loving parent does, making these sounds. These sounds which, out of which, this large repertory of sounds that any baby can make, out of which that child will carve a very limited set of sounds, that will then be the language that he or she has learned. Numbers also stand in a strange relationship to this development. And Gertrude Stein, along with the composer, Virgil Thomson, made several operas, the most famous of which is "Four Saints in Three Acts," and the scene that I'm going to play you is actually all about 'making a scene.' And it's all about the possible numbers of this scene. And a scene of course for saints could be a break in the meditation spirit, and/or a sin, so the language even puns on that. But basically it's just a nonsense of number.

EXCERPT: A scene from Stein and Thomson's "Four Saints in Three Acts"

SB: And so it goes on and on, and of course is mixed with just enough tantalizing understandable English language that people in fact enjoy it. But there's no reason why it couldn't entirely be made up of numbers, as some works of hers, Gertrude Stein's that is, are. Really what we're talking about, the need to break into, well, first of all language to begin with; and then maybe, you might say secondarily, that world of number, which is somewhere between language; and, three, abstract thinking,

or what's called the inexpressible. Well artists are always going to stray into the realm of the inexpressible because really that's their work, is to try to push through those boundaries, the same as astronauts do through space, those boundaries of the known kinds of thinking and communicating in the mind.

SB: But then, also, there's ways to do that in daily living which I think William Faulkner, to name one, is the master of writing about. I mean there's James Joyce expressing, in Paris, also, where lived Schwitters and Gertrude Stein, there's James Joyce creating a way to express what was called 'interior monologue,' the mind just rambling on with words and language. But William Faulkner, who was said to be writing under the influence of Joyce, has actually, in his novel, THE SOUND AND THE FURY, taken on the task of expressing the idiot mind. Idiot, of course, if you know your Greek, is a word that merely means 'a private person.' But an idiot would be someone who would be babbling, and in his thinking, as the character Ben in THE SOUND AND THE FURY, he would be considered to be babbling. And then of course the book by William Faulkner also deals with other characters and outside description. And by the end of it I come to the sense that Faulkner has really taken on Shakespeare's dicta about life, that it's a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing, and created a something that makes it possible for me to really feel that the idiot's mind, in its so-called babbling, and anyone else's, can all mix and make a marvelous weave. Well anyway, in the section that I've chosen to play for you, they are all going to church, that is Dilsey and the idiot Ben, and the narration is outside the incident and so the experience is being described. But just listen to what happens when the congregation, all gathered together to hear their favorite preacher give the same old sermon in the way they love, encounter a strange minister who's been brought in from St. Louis, and who doesn't at first impress them at all. And then note how finally he does.

EXCERPT: Faulkner reading from THE SOUND AND THE FURY

SB: And that was William Faulkner himself reading this passage from THE SOUND AND THE FURY in a beautiful, incantatory voice, and I'm just, I'm moved to put on something that I recorded on a Sony Walkman riding on a bus through the snow, so that the sounds of passing electric lines and other force fields sometimes interfere, making their own babble, and sometimes seem to dance with it. But, I think what it is will overcome any difficulty of the recording. And of all things it's Marilyn Horne singing to a live audience at La Scala, this music arranged by the American composer Aaron Copland, and I just can't describe to you what it was like to hear this and pick it up in this bus and to carry it with me and send it along to you.

EXCERPT: Brakhage's bus tape recording of Marilyn Horne singing

SB: And, as usual, we end with "The New River," by Charles Ives.

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 15

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage, and I would like for you to just listen to this beautiful, beautiful piece of very ancient Chinese music called "Birds Returning to the Forest," in which you can hear not only a multitude of bird sounds being imitated but also fights between the birds as they invade each others' nests and so on as imagined by Chinese composer, Anonymous.

MUSIC: Anonymous, "Birds Returning to the Forest"

SB: That was played by Lu-Wi Man-Sing [phonetic spelling] on an instrument called the arhu, which is really essentially two steel strings. And well might composers, ancient or modern, be involved in bird song because I hope to convince you before this program is over that almost all instrumental music really springs directly from that. Let's just listen for a moment to a recording of a variety of birds singing in the woods, a little record that's included in a book called BIRD SONG: ACOUSTICS AND PHYSIOLOGY, by Greenewalt. And you'll hear a variety of them right now, including many warblers I'd like you to take some notice of.

EXCERPT: Various bird sounds from Greenewalt's BIRD SONG

SB: Well it goes on, and it isn't only composers of course that are interested in birds, but everybody. Poets, for example, some sense of just making a song, of giving forth of themselves into rhythmic word-shaping in song; and also specifically imitating the birds in many of those songs.

SB: I want to not just deal with the poet, though, as I re-introduce James Broughton to you, because I realize that I've been so involved with that I haven't had a chance to even let people know that he's a filmmaker, and one who's works are often shown at University of Colorado on the Monday evening programs. He's one of the greatest living American filmmakers. And I think it's the particularity of his ability to not only think in terms of sound but image, to think in terms of image when he's making sound in his poems, and of the sound or the texture of the noise of a thing when he's making films. His films for instance are extraordinarily involved in texture. But here anyway is his poem "The Birds of America," which will speak very well for itself in this context.

EXCERPT: Broughton reading "The Birds of America"

SB: I always feel when confronted by James Broughton a little bit like a birdcage maker, only not so sour a one as he imagines. But I do hanker after meaning, after understanding. I mean I'm fascinated that these birds around us are now considered by a whole branch of science, the study of such, to be the leftovers of the dinosaurs. And not that dinosaurs were those great lizard-things that I was raised to believe they were. And I pursue that, and I study them and I watch them, and that's a visual occupation of mine out of which I make films that I can't share with you. But another aspect of it is, that I've used in my films, is slowed-down bird sound. And I clearly hear the birth of at least all the horns of the orchestra. So from that same book I described to you earlier, I want you to listen to first some birds played regular speed, and then one-eighth speed.

EXCERPT: Various bird sounds from Greenewalt's BIRD SONG

SB: Now there is a composer named Olivier Messiaen, who had the ability to sit and listen to these sounds of birds and to slow them down in his mind, and even speed them up, to hear the full extent of what his art, symphonic music and organ music, came out of. And he devoted a considerable part of his life to making a series of piano pieces called "The Catalogue of the Birds." They're played in the recording that I've brought by Yvonne Lorio, who's his life-long companion and a great pianist. He himself for years was the organist of a church in Paris and then also did teaching. I remember a friend of mine studied with him there at one point, and sometimes he would miss class. One day after missing several classes, he showed up and started to talk about music to the students and wandered over to the window and opened it up and stood there and said, 'O les oiseaux, o les oiseaux.' And just overcome, turned and left the room. What I'd like you to do is imagining this man so involved with birds, sitting in a marsh listening particularly to le rousserolle effarvatte, which is a marsh warbler. And I'm playing from the district where he lived a piece of, recorded in France, of this bird and a couple of other birds. Just listen for a minute.

EXCERPT: Bird sounds recorded in France

SB: And so you have to imagine him listening particularly in this marsh to the reed warbler, as we would call it, among the sedge warbler and the bittern, which are the other birds heard there. And the reed warbler is the one with the kind of high, tweeting pitch; and out of that comes one of the greatest pieces in modern music that I know, "Le rousserolle effarvatte."

MUSIC: Messiaen, "Le rousserolle effarvatte"

SB: And so we go out of the marsh of Olivier Messiaen to "The New River" of Charles Ives.

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 16

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage, and today I want to introduce you to some of my friends, as usual. I'm going to tell you the story of how I met Robert Creeley. First of all, in the sixties, the most famous book of poetry that I was interested in reading, and that also was being shared widely with the society around me, was Robert Creeley's FOR LOVE. But long before that book came out I'd been reading Creeley's poetry through friends, sometimes just receiving it in the mail, as was the ordinary way then, and now again, to receive new poetry, in letters in the mail. I had never met him, so when I came back from a lecture tour, Jane and the then three Brakhage children all met me at the train and she told me that there was right at that instant a farewell party for Robert Creeley going on in Boulder. I determined to crash it. Now I don't believe in crashing parties and in fact I never have before and I haven't since. But this one we certainly crashed. Even though my face was covered with a stubble of beard and I was smarmy from two days on a train. And Jane was just there in a corduroy pullover and the children were all dressed colorfully coming apart as children usually are, especially the baby, you know, dropping diaper, etc. And this was a kind of formal party at a large, intimidating-looking house in Boulder where all the faculty had gathered together to meet and say good-bye to a poet, Robert Creeley, and his wife, Bobbie who was with him. Well it does say something about the sixties that we were graciously received even though we moved through that band of well dressed-up people like the wildest gypsy parade you ever saw. And - but you see it was just something I had to do. I had to meet him. I already loved him. And there might not ever be another chance. And then he and Bobbie reached out to all of us - and I mean they were just delighted to see us, like they say, and we were some sight, and embraced and were immediately close and have been really ever since.

SB: Within several weeks I had arranged for Bob to make the recordings that you're about to hear, and I think they were the first actual studio recordings that he'd ever made of himself reading poetry. So, here's a young Bob Creeley reading a poem that by the way later Jack Nicholson was to make a whole film based on, starring himself and directed by himself - a very famous poem at the time. But when Bob made it he's just reading it to me in a little booth not unlike this one, in which I'm passing it on to you. Bob Creeley, reading several poems from FOR LOVE.

EXCERPT: Creeley reading from FOR LOVE

SB: Most people get the news of love of course first hand or then with each other, or from popular songs, not from poetry. But the most ancient poems, the Chinese poems, the lyric poems about love aren't all that different from, say, the love songs of the Auvergne. As arranged by Joseph Cantaloube and sung by Davrath, I just give you an example: 'When I was a young girl, I tended my sheep, toora-loo,' etc. 'I had a spindle and got a shepherd, toora-loo. To watch the flock, he wants one kiss, toora-loo. But I am not ungrateful, and instead I give him two kisses,' and the 'toora-loos' are about where words cease to have any meaning.

MUSIC: Basque folk song (sung by Davrath)

SB: Two other lifelong friends, Ed Dorn and Jenny Dorn, long before they were collaborating and making Rolling Stock, the greatest newspaper in the world, long before the kids even, they came on their long honeymoon to visit Jane and I at nine-thousand feet in the mountains and stayed awhile. And during that stay Ed shared with us and allowed us to tape some songs that were then works-in-progress, and here's "Song 2" and "Song 3" from the mid-sixties, late-sixties I guess.

EXCERPT: Dorn reading "Song 2" and "Song 3"

SB: Gertrude Stein is very good at starting where most people are just superficial. And most people are pretty superficial when they first come upon each other with dreams of loving. A young man's fancied lightly, to be sure, turns in spring. 'Pigeons on the grass, alas,' is understandable if you realize that young ladies were then ordinarily called pigeons. It was a term like 'babies' or whatever. And on the grass, that would make many women. But 'alas' - ah, the term 'lass' goes way back and has a long dignity. And yet also this is just a picture. 'Pigeons on the grass, alas,' as set by the composer Virgil Thomson, in "Four Saints and Three Acts."

EXCERPT: Stein and Thomson's "Four Saints and Three Acts"

SB: I haven't quite figured out what the 'magpie in the sky' is, but I suppose it would have something to do with what comes later, after the honeymoon. Gertrude Stein has a beautiful short story included in her long, gigantic book, THE MAKING OF AMERICANS, which is really about that complication of love between parent and child. I don't know; the one leads to the other, but I often think we oughta have at least two words. Anyway, here's a little story of a father and his son, read by Gertrude Stein herself:

EXCERPT: Stein reading from THE MAKING OF AMERICANS

SB: There's a wonderful sense that Gertrude Stein has of just taking it flat. And in fact, though people have found her annoying in her 'repetitions' as they call them, she's insisted over and over again, she doesn't repeat. And/or, maybe more to the point, she said people only really express themselves by saying the same thing over and over again. And if you think she's an odd, strange writer, just try listening, really listening, on, you know, on your parting line sometime, to how people really do talk.

SB: Tennessee Williams, the American playwright, has also written a beautiful little poem that I think expresses, oh, somehow, all of it, the pain of the love between a mother and a child. He of course could get into the situation of the mother himself. He had in his play, THE GLASS MENAGERIE by creating the character Amanda. He really could understand, from both standpoints, and this tiny little poem I think shows it.

EXCERPT: Williams reading an unspecified poem

SB: You can't really do a program as this - it seems to be about love as it moves on, clear through children and into their breaking the yoke and moving into the burning wood, without, in fairness, dealing with the superego, which has to do with the strangest of all, that kind of abstract love for the whole world. Here's a statement by Sigmund Freud, who after all, named the superego, which exhibits what it is so much. First of all, in German he says, and I'm translating, 'At eighty years of age I left the people of the German nation, my home in Vienna, and came to England, where I hope to live the rest of my life.' Now that's in German. But, of course, he's forced out by the Nazis. Then comes this statement:

SB: 'I started my professional activity as a neurologist trying to bring relief to my neurotic patients. Under the influence of an older friend, and by my own efforts, I discovered some important new facts about the unconscious and the psychic life. The role of instinctual urges and so on. Out of these findings grew a new science, psychoanalysis, a part of psychology, as the new method of treatment of the neurosis. I had to pay heavily for this bit of good luck. People did not believe in my facts and thought my theories unsavory. Resistance was strong and unrelenting. In the end I succeeded in acquiring pupils and bringing up an International Psychoanalytic Association. But the struggle is not yet over.'

SB: And he says that - end quote - and he says that when he's, well in 1938, when he's very close to death himself, a very old man and suffering terribly from cancer. I have the recording which is hard to hear because of the prosthetic device in his mouth which makes it both painful and difficult for him to speak. But he tries to express this as best he can in English. Here's the voice of Sigmund Freud:

EXCERPT: Freud speaking about psychoanalysis

SB: Finally, here's a poem that I think has it all. A father has had an argument with this son, and it tortures him very much,

and the whole family. And because he's a poet he's able to turn that grief into some sense of the whole river that he and Celia and Paul, his wife and son, are. This is "A"-11, with Louis Zukofsky reading.

EXCERPT: Zukofsky reading "A"-11

SB: And as usual we end with Charles Ives' "The New River," conducted by the composer Günther Schuller, by the way.

MUSIC: Ives, "The New River"

PROGRAM 17

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage, and I'm thinking of Debussy again today. It was considered so extraordinary in the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth, that a man should conceive to try to engender a sense of image through music. And I guess people have somewhat grown used to that idea, at least in the early forms of it. Just to give a semblance, here is the end of Debussy's, a section near the end of Debussy's "La mare," or "The Sea."

MUSIC: Debussy, "La mare"

SB: And so why does that give us a sense of the sea? I mean the sea sounds totally different than that. You could, any child could and often does with the mouth, make sea sounds that are more easily recognizable, for example [Brakhage makes sea sounds]. So forth. I mean the voice can imitate that sound. And yet there is a quality to that piece that hauntingly is like the sea. I don't know, sometimes I think if it had been called "High Winds Over Bermuda," it might also give us some of that sense. But as I've listened to it over and over again I think not so perfectly. So as I struggled with it and struggled to understand it I came to realize it was rhythm and texture that were the two things that were engendering picture: that's the rhythm, Debussy's listening to the rhythm of the sea, not just thee rhythm but the varieties of rhythms, and using different kinds of instruments, different kinds of textures, that is, to give that sense of ocean.

SB: And actually that's all that is really useful in music accompanying any film. You can take any melody in the world, and by just shifting its rhythm and tempo you can use it to accompany appropriately any kind of film scene. It's the changing of the rhythm, and then, much less important but still very useful, the texture, which makes a piece of music appropriate to a particular scene. You can try that yourself: just take some familiar piece of music and by slowing it down and changing its rhythm, or speeding it up, or making it marshal, you can make it fit a love scene or a war scene. Just rhythm and tempo. Well, that's one of the oldest tricks in the world.

SB: Here's a kind of magic that comes from the Elizabethan era. It's an Elizabethan folk song, and a very bawdy one, too. I mean, you know, when in the springtime a young man's fancy lightly turns to love, and the song is sort of a kind of cockcrow, Elizabethan cockcrow, sung by the way by Ed McCurdy, with Eric Darling on the banjo, a record long, long since out of print. I'm giving an example because it's the rhythm and the texture, not only approximating the sexual act, but just horseback riding to get to it, for example, which gives this piece its power and pictorial evocation.

MUSIC: Elizabethan folk song (sung by McCurdy with Darling on banjo)

SB: I just have to take a little time to tell you a story. That record is so important to me, because it is a result of hearing that sometime between Christmas and New Year's Eve, oh my goodness, it'd be twenty-six years ago now, drunk I was at a party of some friends who just had received this record and were delightedly playing it. And it was hearing that piece of music that sent me spinning immediately out of the party and back to where I knew Jane was, and proposing to her after my fashion, which was yelling at her for two hours that if she was just having an affair with an artist, then she should get out of my life, but otherwise she should stay with me. Then I collapsed onto the bed, my head spinning and the next thing I knew I heard her on the phone to her parents saying that she was eloping with Brakhage.

SB: So I puzzled over that piece of music, in fact that whole record in the intervening years. I was too drunk to really listen to the words, and in a way they kind of offend me as I'm sure they would a lot of women these days; they'd say, 'Oh yeah, in the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to rape, or some such.' Be that as it may, it was along the line of the rhythms, and a kind of an itchy texture of banjo-ness that I realized that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with Jane. Within a year we had a baby and we were moved from Denver and back in New York City, and I had been to the Brussels World Fair and returned and was having an interview with one of the most extraordinary aestheticians. I don't want to call him a critic, though that's what he's usually called, 'cause I don't like the term; he was greater than that. He was one of the greatest aestheticians of our time, Parker Tyler. I'll just read you what Jane has written about Parker Tyler for her book that she's writing about those days; she's writing it in the style of the Mabanogian. Anyway, here's what she says about Parker Tyler. Quote, 'Parker Tyler, who had in his youth worn a flowing cape and sandals to show his golden toenails as he sang in bars for his supper and a bed. But now Parker Tyler was more sedate, and was very brilliant, and a critic, and could cut anyone into stew beef with his tongue in three seconds flat if he decided to.'

SB: End quote. Well that's Jane's impression from the time. She was sitting in the background trying to keep the baby quiet.

That baby Myrrena who's now twenty-five years old. Why I want to play this tape for you is not just the aesthetic talk or to bring alive something of Parker Tyler to you; but if you'll have the patience to listen, instead of trying to screen out the sound of the baby as Parker and I were in our annoyance, and Jane in her embarrassment, but listen to how the sound of this crying baby effects this conversation:

PARKER TYLER (EXCERPT): [Sounds of baby crying in the background.] Oh yes, Eisenstein's theory of an artist like Eisenstein, of vertical montage, that is exactly correlating sound, such as music, to any kind of background sound, speech and the visual image, to correlate them exactly. Do you feel that that's an idea, or something you might work towards, or do you discard it really? SB: Well, no, I don't discard it; actually I look on it as the last authentic, aesthetic advance in the use of sound in relation to the moving picture image, are those notes and fragments and semi-experiments in Eisenstein's work; I don't feel anyone was progressed beyond that point. Many experimental, so-called quote 'experimental filmmakers,' end quote, which I more like to refer to as individual filmmakers now, have attempted to use, the only advance they have made is to try to make use of musique concrete, or some form thereof - PT: Oh - SB: [Continuing] And that is to use actual live sounds as music, and this somehow does make an interesting new direction for film because these live sounds, are in some relationship to the actual real images, the sense of the real that we get from photography, therefore the quote 'real images,' which they are photographing and cutting and using and creating some kind of a work in motion with rhythm out of. So there's a relationship between the source of material for their visual statement and the source of material for their sound statement if they're using musique concrete, is close. But otherwise there's been no advance. That is, for instance, the combination of the musique concrete idea with film has produced no musical advance, nor no real visual advance aesthetically. PT: But now to apply this to some of your own films. In REFLECTIONS ON BLACK, for example, you use a soundtrack made up of boys playing in the street, don't you? SB: Yes. PT: Well I think that that as a musical, what shall I say, musical corollary, augmentation of your visual ideas, is very successful because, in a way, the things that, the extraordinary things that are happening and the sort of way in which you've externalized an internal life, psychological action, in this story you tell visually, could have as a physical background, such sounds happening out of the street while these things are taking place inside; I think it's successfully. But do you think that musique concrete can be used abstractly too? That is, to the sounds having no relation, or having no relation in life to the things that are going on on the screen. SB: I think most usually, and I'm drawing again from my experience at Brussels in seeing so many again, quote 'experimental films,' end quote, that this is the, that most of the musique concrete is used as if it were music. Period. That is to create very much the same kind of mood as the Hollywood musical orchestra does, only you're using sounds instead of instruments. They haven't, and a few, a very few filmmakers have begun to explore the possibilities of using sound in a more literate, literary relationship to the visual image; that is, they have not just taken a musical score made out of sounds and used it to accompany or create an overall mood for a scene, but have broken down the source of those sounds like siren and so on, or siren/riveting machine, and rather than combining those with an actual pictured riveting machine on the screen, or an ambulance rushing somewhere, have used them with an extra sense of dimension, by putting them over, for instance, over a tense dramatical psychological scene. But they have used them with the sense of what the riveting machine is as a source of sound and what the siren is, only not to use them to accompany those visual images. PT: Well that's just pure, that's, that is, that's those, there that's a word, using words abstractly, and you make all art in a concert hall, just to think of the human voice and various accidental sounds in the street, as making a kind of music. But, you think such things could be used in films successfully, provided they're used with a certain taste and instinct for dramatic contrast? SB: The ideology of musique, the idea of musique concrete, that is as I read it, music composed out of sounds rather than musical instruments, recorded sounds, offers tremendous possibilities to the filmmaker to extend his dramatical statements, rather than simply they have been used to extend, to create a new and unusual type of music to accompany the mood of the film. PT: Mm hmm. SB: Music is most generally used in Hollywood film, let's say, you know not only Hollywood but foreign commercial films, even the best music is always used essentially to create a mood; and, all, in once breaking this down I discovered that, that the only variants in music out of which this mood is created are really rhythm and tempo. For instance, I can take any piece of classical music and merely, if I'm allowed to vary its mood, and its rhythm and its tempo, I can make it fit a love scene, a cowboy scene, a sad scene- [Fades out.]

SB: And so the old filmmaker meets himself, coming around again in his youth and you can see some of my ideas have not changed much. They are solid ideas; it doesn't mean they haven't been questioned over the years. It's a wonderful scene in a way: here are two men trying not to notice the baby, and the baby is a, not only a wonderful appropriate background to the whole conversation, but is effecting the very choice of words and the very rhythms they're using.

SB: Charles Ives is the master of this kind of thing, and I always think it has a lot to do with his father, George Ives, who was the bandmaster in Danbury, Connecticut, as little Charlie was growing up. He must have been an amazing man. He loved to send bands all over the town in different directions each playing different tunes. And a lot of the people in Danbury thought he was crazy, but liked him all the same. His son always said he was a great man. His father encouraged the townspeople to sing out each in his own way, and not to worry about being in tune or anything like that. And once someone came and complained, one of the people in the choir of his father, complained because he had been to the Boston Conservatory and he was disturbed at the voice of the best stonemason in town. And he said, he sings off-key, the wrong notes and everything, and that horrible raucous voice, he said. And Charles Ives' father, George said, 'Watch him closely and reverently; don't pay too much attention to the sounds. For if you do you may miss the music. You won't get a heroic ride to heaven on pretty little sounds.'

SB: Well all this rubbed off very beautifully on Charles Ives and what I want to play for you next is Günther Schuller conducting a piece called "From the Steeples and Mountains," in which Charles Ives has tried to utilize the sounds in the town and their reverberations against those very mountains. Not to make a picture of them, but to just give you the full sound sense that's around us all the time.

MUSIC: Ives, "From the Steeples and Mountains"

SB: And what the composer Edgar Varèse added to this is the psychological side of listening. As he sits, after a nervous breakdown, recovering in a desert, he tries to make a piece of music which captures not just what the desert is itself, but what's missing, water for instance. I'm going to play you an interpolation, that is something made to be played with a symphony orchestra, but which I'm going to play by itself, as the psychological side of feeling a landscape. "Interpolation Number Two," from the piece "Déserts":

MUSIC: Varèse, "Déserts (Second Interpolation)"

SB: But old Charlie Ives, long before the tape recorder, and the possibility to introduce sounds in that way on the stage, also was involved with reminiscence, with the psychological side, with nostalgia. Usually he could only use tunes, say, for nostalgia, to evoke a sense of the past. But anyway, the end of the program at the moment is called "Remembrance," by Charles Ives.

MUSIC: Ives, "Remembrance"

PROGRAM 18

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage, and today I'm thinking about a little boy growing up in nineteenth century France, who had two protuberances, one on each side of his forehead, bony uprisings, covered by skin, but all the same, upraised enough to give, and placed to give the semblance of horns. And how he must have suffered from his playmates teasing him as being the devil. Or the worry of his parents, the superstitions that still hung over those times. He grew up actually to be a sweet, gentle, human being, and someone who had carried from that childhood experience primarily the sense of his being different. So that as he began to compose music he created one of the greatest differences in music of that very lively time. His name was Claude Debussy. He tried to create a sense of vision, of visible things, of tangible things beyond sounds through the sounds that he was making. And by the magic of an extraordinary player piano which doesn't just use holes punched in paper, but uses quills dipped in mercury so that every tremolo of the piano playing can be recorded on paper and then rerecorded in stereophonic sound, we're enabled to listen to a performance of this grown man, Claude Debussy, playing one of his most extraordinary piano pieces, "A Notebook of Exquisite Things."

MUSIC: Debussy, "A Notebook of Exquisite Things"

SB: "A Notebook of Exquisite Things," by Claude Debussy, not of exquisite 'sounds' but 'things,' which so much expresses the desire of many artists at the time to reach across the boundaries of their particular art, to create pictures through music, or music, giving musical titles to paintings.

SB: Perhaps the most extraordinary is, of course, Marcel Proust. Really his life had been one of a 'gay young blade,' really in the Parisian societies when he was young, and then mid-life he began to retreat and finally retreated ultimately into a cork-lined room to compose one of the greatest masterpieces in literature, REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST. We have it in an extraordinary translation also, which people say, as a translation into English is a masterpiece in its own right, by C.K. Scott Moncrief, a book somewhat different than Proust's French, but a remarkable achievement in English. This book, which Proust spent then the rest of his life writing, began for him when he was given a crumb of a Medallain cookie with some lime-blossom tea by his aunt; and the conjunction of these tastes caused a flood of memories, which one has the sense would have completely overwhelmed him if he hadn't begun to retreat from the world and to the present world and drawn his memories and begin this great book. At any rate, he also pulled on an extraordinary involvement with music. He was tremendously involved with Debussy, for example. At one point in his book he describes the almost overwhelming impression of the first seven notes of a cockcrow, which is given to him by this opening of Debussy's quartet.

MUSIC: Debussy, unspecified composition

SB: But that piece of music was not the most important to him. The most important influence of all, which is referred to right in the opening book of REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST, "Swann," "Swann's Way," and in the section called "Swann in Love," Swann being the hero of the book, we have the following passage. The hero Swann is suddenly listening to a pianist playing a piece of music, and now I read from Proust. Quote,

SB: 'The year before, at an evening party, he had heard a piece of music played on the piano and violin. At first he had appreciated only the material quality of the sounds, which those instruments secreted. And it had been a source of keen pleasure when below the narrow ribbon of the violin part, delicate, unyielding, substantial and governing the whole, he had suddenly perceived where it was trying to surge upwards in a flowing tide of sound. The mass of the piano part, multiform, coherent, level and breaking everywhere in melody like the deep blue tumult of the sea, silvered and charmed into a minor key by the moonlight. But at a given moment, without being able to distinguish any clear outline, or to give a name to what was pleasing him, suddenly enraptured he had tried to collect, to treasure in his memory the phrase or harmony, he knew not which, that had just been played, and had opened and expanded his soul, just as the fragrance of certain roses wafted upon the moist air of the evening has the power of dilating our nostrils. Perhaps it was owing to his own ignorance of music that he had been able to receive so confused an impression. One of those that are not notwithstanding, are only purely musical

impressions, limited in their extent, entirely original, and irreducible into any other kind.'

SB: End quote. I'd like to lay emphasis on 'Perhaps it was owing to his own ignorance of music that he had been able to receive so confused an impression.' The music, he sent, as he himself then, as in the character of Swann begins pursuing in the novel, trying to find out who is the maker of this extraordinary melody that had overwhelmed him so. He sent literary scholars rummaging to try to discover what was that theme and what was that original piece of music in Proust's life that had prompted him. Well there's a great many of them; but the main candidate is, for this part, is Saint-Saëns. That it was a piece of Saint-Saëns' music which prompted this extraordinary experience. And I'm going to play you the first movement of that piece of music.

MUSIC: Saint- Saëns, "Sonata Number 1 in D (First Movement)"

SB: Well I wish there were time to play you the second half of that piece. But that was the whole first movement of Saint-Saëns' "Sonata Number 1 in D," played in this case by Heifetz, on an RCA Victor record that probably is available. I don't know if the Keyboard Immortals series that rerecorded the player piano renditions of Debussy and others is still available or not. What is available is the same kind of experience that Proust had. Saint-Saëns, interestingly a person a lot like Proust, after his bitter divorce from his wife, he spent most of the rest of his life living in his own railroad car, being shuntled onto sidings when he wanted to stay somewhere a while, and then connecting to a train going anywhere when he just wanted to be on the move. A railroad car complete with all his household furnishings and a piano, of course, composing happily away as he chugged across the French countryside. So whatever form of life you're living, a little phrase of music, or a line, a beautiful line of poetry, or a line on paper making an image, all these things can be transferable and reach out toward each other.

SB: Today, appropriately, I'm going to change the end music to a new piece by Charles Ives again, this one called, this one performed by the Yale Theatre Orchestra under James Sinclair, in an arrangement by Kenneth Singleton, of Ives' little piece, "Remembrance."

MUSIC: Ives, "Remembrance"

PROGRAM 19

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage, and I'd like to read you my favorite poem. It's called - one of my very favorite poems - "A Dream Within a Dream," by Edgar Allen Poe. This is the first stanza:

SB: 'Take this kiss upon the brow! And, in parting from you now, thus much let me avow. You are not wrong, who deem that my days have been a dream; yet if hope has flown away, in a night or in a day, in a vision or in none, is it therefore the less gone? All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream.'

SB: End quote. A pause there to say there's a story behind this poem. It's embedded within the poem and it has to do with young Edgar Allen Poe, about three years old, watching the death of his mother from tuberculosis, in a terrible slum dwelling, basement dwelling, where she had no chance to beat the disease. She was a theatrical person, an actress in fact, and always dressing herself up in ways to be other people, to entertain the children, as that's the only entertainment young Poe and his sister had. And her death, then watching her being carried away, had upon him an extraordinarily different sense then death does hardly at all for children today from whom it is hidden. One, it was clear, her death, her being gone; two, what was she that had gone? Here's stanza two, quote:

SB: 'I stand amid the roar of a surf-tormented shore, and I hold within my hand grains of the golden sand. How few yet how they creep through my fingers to the deep, while I weep, while I weep! O God, can I not grasp them with a tighter clasp? O God, can I not save one from the pitiless wave? Is all that we see or seem but a dream within a dream?'

SB: End. Everything has a story behind it, like we say, but also within it. Those explicit details I gave in the middle of that poem might not be extricable. But what was important about them is. It used to be that most poetry just told its story straight-out and was set to music as is this Elizabethan folk song, sung by Ed McCurdy; this song called "A Maiden Did a Bathing Go."

MUSIC: McCurdy, "A Maiden Did a Bathing Go"

SB: Most often the story does not turn out so simply happy, as we know. It's hard to present story in the conventional literary sense on a program that only has twenty-six minutes. But there are stories within stories. And certainly one that stands out in my mind is from William Faulkner's LIGHT IN AUGUST. Himself reading the story of Dilsey coming to live with her brother after her father's death and how she gets pregnant. William Faulkner reading from LIGHT IN AUGUST:

EXCERPT: Faulkner reading from LIGHT IN AUGUST

SB: And then there's inference. I mean that story's really part of a much longer series of stories within stories, as a novel can become that large mirror of life. Then there's inference, which leads us on. Or what in poetry might be called 'metaphor.' Or what in life might be called 'metaphor.' For instance I'd like to share with you what I think is a story, but it's really just an entry in a journal kept by the Japanese writer Akutagawa. Akutagawa's most known to those of us in the West because he wrote IN A BUSH, or RASHOMON, which was Kurosawa's film that began his worldwide fame. Akutagawa died young, and A FOOL'S LIFE, which is what he titled his journal, was the last book he left. Here's one of the entries. Quote:

SB: 'Spartan Discipline. With a friend, walking up a back street, moving directly toward them, a hooded rickshaw approaching, totally unexpected, riding in it, she of last night. In the daytime, too, her face seemed lit by the moon. His friend present, naturally. There couldn't be any sign of recognition. "A beauty," his friend noted. He, looking off to where the street banged up against the spring hills, not able to hold up, "Yes, a real beauty."'

SB: This extraordinary little book is filled with stories that really the reader has to finish. And in finishing, it can go in a variety of directions, and participate in the making of all of them him or herself. And what is the story behind this story? Here's Akutagawa's last note, his suicide message. To his friend, Masou [phonetic spelling]. Quote:

SB: 'Whether or not this manuscript ought to be published, and of course, when it should be published or where, I leave to you. You know most of the people who appear in it; but if you have it published I'd rather it didn't have an index. I exist now in a most unhappy happiness, but strangely without remorse. Only that I feel sorry for those who had me as husband, father, son. Good-bye. In the manuscript, consciously at least, there is no attempt to justify myself. Last, I leave this manuscript to you feeling that you knew me better than anyone else. The skin of this cosmopolitan me stripped away. At the fool of this manuscript, go ahead and laugh. Twentieth June, 1927. Akutagawa.'

SB: I think he was thirty-six years old when he committed suicide. That translation by the way is by Will Petersen, a beautiful little book; I wish there were more of Akutagawa's writing available to us. It's fashionable these days to say that poetry has abandoned story altogether. Not at all. Poetry has tried to find ways to tell stories that include everything and depend a great deal on inference.

SB: One of the greatest such examples I know I'd love to share with you: the poet Charles Olson. I had one whole glorious day and night with him, one should really say mostly night, and several days following after, of friendship and affection and long conversations. He lived in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and he created a figure like everyman from the Middle Ages, only for our time called "Maximus of Gloucester." And this figure embodied, or carried, was the dramatis personae of all the people in the history of Gloucester and all those in the immediate environment around him. Near Gloucester was a place called Dogtown, which Charles said was one of the most beautiful places on earth. One of those places, he told me, that you know is extraordinarily special and which he was also watching being ruined. Dogtown yielded to him, out of its histories, the following story of a man named Mary, who raised a little bull and fought with it everyday as he grew up, matching his own strength to it, a way of building his own strength to match it. And Charles wrote this story which reaches all the way back to the Hittites maybe, or at least the Greeks, the Egyptians with their sense of the sky and the earth and everything he could bring to it, to expand a story with all the possible inferences anyone could think of. Charles Olson reading "Maximus, from Dogtown":

EXCERPT: Olson reading "Maximus, from Dogtown"

SB: Maybe there's time to read you another little story from the journal by Akutagawa:

SB: 'Sparks. Brain-drenched treading asphalt. The rain ferocious, in the downpour he breathed in the rubber coat odor. Before his eyes an aerial power line released sparks of violet. Strangely, he was moved. Tucked away in his jacket pocket, meant for publication in the group magazine was his manuscript. Walking on in the rain once more he looked back at the line. Unremittingly it emitted its prickly sparks. Though he considered all of human existence, there was nothing special worth having, but those violet blossoms of fire, those awesome fireworks in the sky. To hold them he would give his life.'

SB: And that's the end of that. And maybe another, very briefly, another side of him. I mean, "Butterfly." Quote:

SB: 'In wind reeking of duckweed, a butterfly flashed. Only for an instant, on his dry lips he felt the touch of the butterfly wings. But years afterwards, on his lips the wings imprinted dust, still glittered.'

SB: And so we end, as usual, with "Remembrance," by Charles Ives.

MUSIC: Ives, "Remembrance"

PROGRAM 20

MUSIC: Gregorian chant

STAN BRAKHAGE (SB): Hi, I'm Stan Brakhage. I suppose most people's sense of hearing actual sounds mixed with musical instruments comes from Rospighi's "The Pines of Rome." At least that was the most famous, often-played symphonic

piece of my generation that used sounds within it. Bird sounds. In the section of it called "Catacombs," Rospighi definitely attempts to create the sense of a nightingale singing. And then, almost to contrast with his accomplishment of creating this with musical instruments, he falls back on ordinary bird sound which is almost always reproduced with this little simple child's toy that you turn and creates that kind of noise. Anyway, here's a little section of it to refresh your memory.

MUSIC: Rospighi, "The Pines of Rome"

SB: And so on to "The Appian Way," which is the next section of that piece of music. Clear back in the history of music, I suppose occasionally, some actual noisemaker's been brought in - in fact, in a way you can say that every instrument that was brought in was a noisemaker - back to the beginning of beating on a hollow log or the chest itself to express the beat of the inner heart. So that all of music really is that kind of sympathetic magic; but once musical instruments get established they tend to try to separate themselves from the ordinary usages of their sound and to express something else.

SB: The greatest composer to make a shift in this, I think in the last hundred years, is Claude Debussy. He didn't use actual noisemaking instruments to create their own sounds. But he used, in this next piece I'm going to play, the piano, to try to make it give a sense of the wind. Almost as if to say this percussion instrument can dance with the wind. The piece is called "The Wind on the Plain, Number Three," and again, as I like to do, I'm playing the Edwin Welt piano recorded in the Keyboard Immortal Classic series so that we can hear how Debussy himself played it. And as this is a recreation of his own sound - I mean however wonderful Gezey King's [phonetic spelling] performance of Debussy is, and I think it is wonderful - it's far too sharp and clear to be expressive of what the composer intended. Debussy, as you can hear for yourself on this recording, wanted a kind of mushiness; the piano's reaching out toward the wind without becoming it. "The Wind on the Plain," Claude Debussy playing.

MUSIC: Debussy, "The Wind on the Plain, Number Three"

SB: I really like that, you know, I like that kind of music, I like that sense of the arts. I'm for instance always very nervous with paintings that try to look like windows. I mean, what's the purpose? I'd rather have a window. Painters who sign their paintings on the back so there'd be no sense of, nothing between the viewer and his imagining this was a hole on the wall. I like painters to sign boldly on the front, in some way that says this is a painting. There've always been those two drives in the arts. I mean there was a famous Greek sculptor whose paintings of grapes were supposed to be so great that the birds flew down and pecked on them. I just don't think that's good for the birds and I know it's not good for the painting and I don't see the point. I love a music that reaches out toward an actual sound but keeps its own integrity. And is a piano piece.

SB: But what about that area between the sound itself and the musical instrument, which is a sound-er, controlled by humans? Well that area I think might be, for some people, the area of the gods, or the spirits. Certainly it is for Henry Cowell; he completely changes the whole inside of a piano and the entire way you would play it. That is, playing on it more like a harp than on the keys in order to create a spirit sense, the spirit of the banshee. But then why do I go on talking about it? American composer Henry Cowell, on this Folkways record, speaks about his piece of music himself and then he'll immediately play it. Henry Cowell:

EXCERPT: Cowell discussing the "The Banshee"

MUSIC: Cowell, "The Banshee"

SB: I think that area between the sound made and the musical instrument played, where as I said I think gods dance, demons, angels, ghosts, things of the spirit, or what we ordinarily call things of the imagination in this presumptuous time, is the richest land for the arts. I think it's home base for the arts really. I mean, people have so much trouble deciding between the terms actuality and imagination, and I think this in-between area is just where the artist manages to make actuality, through his or her imagination, reality for everyone else. I love that story of the painter Whistler, who some young lady commented to him, 'Isn't the sunset beautiful?' And he immediately replied, 'Yes - nature is catching up.' What he really meant of course was that she wasn't aware that it was centuries of people painting sunsets that made her or any human being aware of it, maybe, at all.

SB: I never knew Harry Cowell; I always wished I had. I hear he's one of the sweetest men in the world. But a close friend of his was my mentor, Edgar Varèse, and I played a lot of his music on these programs. I'm going to play the only piece of "Déserts," the interpolation, that he made while sitting out his exile in Death Valley U.S.A., sitting in that desert all those years like an ancient saint, listening. And not trying to repeat the sounds of the desert but, as you'll hear on this, the very first of the tape interpolations, which he dreamed up long before there was a tape machine, trying to again, reach to that in-between area and dance with the sense of the desert, with whatever recorded sounds from elsewhere he could bring to it.

MUSIC: Varèse, "Déserts"

SB: And just so that you don't think that avant-garde and largely unknown American composers, Varèse actually France but living most of his life here, that these art composers who are well known by the art crowd but not by most of the rest of the folks, just so you don't think that they haven't been an influence, I want to play you just a little bit of a piece from the Grateful Dead. It's from "That's It For the Other One," an album called ANTHEM OF THE SUN. My understanding is that it's the bass player, Phil Lesh, who had studied classical music and who had become involved in Varèse, and Henry Cowell and many other people, John Cage, of this great era of concert music making; but also that Jerry Garcia, though his background is folk and bluegrass, as the leader of this group also took a tremendous interest in it. Here's a little, just a little example:

MUSIC: Grateful Dead, "That's It For the Other One"

SB: Well, I just give a little piece of that, because I mean I have to say frankly I find it pretty, it's too improvisational for my interests. But still, I mean I think it's wonderful they've been so influenced and who knows about all these divisions we're creating. We're all heading somewhere and in our various ways we'll get there presumably.

SB: I want to close today's program with an extraordinary piece that's very, very inspired by Varèse, and Charles Ives: Malcolm Goldstein's "The Seasons: Vermont." And this actually has been produced on a Folkways recording very recently; but the Folkways recording of it, record of it, is totally different than the tape piece section I'm going to play for you, which Malcolm sent me several years ago. I've never met Malcolm but we've corresponded quite a lot over the years because there's a strong relationship between his music and my filmmaking. And I don't know how to characterize that for you better maybe than to quote William Carlos Williams' dictum. Quote: 'No ideas but in things.' End quote.

SB: There will never be two performances alike of this "Seasons: Vermont," by Malcolm Goldstein, because of the way it's set up and notated. But it is a group of instrumentalists playing in relationship to sounds. I couldn't even find on this original tape where Malcolm's "Spring" begins, because it's kind of mushed into "Winter," as it should be: the seasons all together. They're quite separated out neatly on the Folkways record, but anyway we're starting somewhere in the beginning of "Spring," and you can hear the frogs croaking, peoples' windows are beginning to open, housecleaning is starting, people are beginning to fuse, bands begin marching down the streets and go by, the birds are singing, and of course there's very much water and building and rejuvenation, and here it is:

MUSIC: Goldstein, "The Seasons: Vermont"

SB: Well, we didn't quite get all the way through Malcolm Goldstein's "Spring," but that'll just make it that much more a unique spring. And then we end as usual with the father of all this kind of music in America, Charles Ives' "Remembrance."

MUSIC: Ives, "Remembrance"

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