



[CatSynth](#)

cats, synthesizers, music, art, opinion

- [Home](#)
- [Reviews](#)
- [Photography](#)
- [Highways](#)
- [Contact](#)

« [Weekend Cat Blogging and Photo Hunt: Song](#)
[CatSynth video: Cat listening to music – Chris Marker](#) »

[Outsound Music Summit: Sonic Poetry](#)

July 21st, 2012 - [Music](#), [Reviews](#), [San Francisco](#), [Synthesizers](#)

The concert series of the Outsound Music Summit began this Wednesday with [Sonic Poetry](#), a night combining poetry and live improvised music. This was a first for the summit, with three leading Bay Area poets collaborating with local improvising musicians. Each of the sets featured a different style of poetry, which was reflected in the music and performances.

The first set featured **Ronald Sauer**, a leading figure in the North Beach poetry scene. His poetry was infused with social satire and provocative imagery, and his reading style had that driving tumbling-forward energy reminiscent of earlier poets of that scene. In this performance he was joined by percussionists **Jacob Felix Huele** and **Jordan Glenn**.



[Ronald Sauer, Jacob Felix Huele and Jordan Glenn. [Photo: PeterBKaars.com](http://PeterBKaars.com).]

The music began with deep ambient sounds and resonances as Heule rubbed a cymbal on a bass drum and Glenn struck metal bowls atop a set drum. Sauer then launched in a humorous poem whose lines poked fun at different poet stereotypes. The music moved into rich textures with mallets, stick hits, vocal sounds and buzzing – the latter occurred as the words alluded to mosquitoes. The next poem, a gentler piece about garnering, was accompanied by soft rattling sounds and resonant metallic rods. Tuned percussion and inharmonic timbres supported Sauer’s “romantic” poem that was featured rather intense sexual language and imagery – and which prompted the evening’s lead curator **Robert Anbian** to exclaim “Now Ron, don’t hold back!” One of final poems of the set featured the memorable line “The life of an artist is an elegant suicide.”

The next set was a duo featuring poet and performer **rAmu Aki** with musician **Karl Evangelista** on guitar and electronics. rAmu Aki’s poetry is deeply rooted in the landscape and culture of San Francisco’s Tenderloin (“TL”) neighborhood where he lives, and by his own declaration was inspired “by the voices inside his head.” He also wore an impressive blue feathered headdress.



[rAmu Aki. [Photo: PeterBKaars.com](http://PeterBKaars.com).]

Alongside Aki's fast rhythmic words, Evangelista began with an anxious chromatic guitar line. Phrases like "City of Light" and "English Harassment" were followed by sounds with distortion and other effects, and looping to produce contrapuntal textures. The poetry was full of references to the Tenderloin, some of which like the street names, were familiar, others less so. There were light chords against angrier words, surf tone and more distorted guitar moaning. During a break, there was a rather pretty guitar solo on top of which followed a gentler and prettier poem. A jazzier and more rhythmic section of music accompanied the poem "Grove and Laguna Sunset." Overall, the duo has a strong musical rapport, with rhythmically tight starts and stops to phrases, and pauses that allowed the music to come through clearly.

The final set featured poet **Carla Haryman** and musician **John Raskin** on saxophone and other instruments, joined by **Gino Robair** on percussion and prepared piano. Unlike the other collaborations in this concert, Haryman and Raskin have worked together for a while, and I was quite looking forward to hearing their performance.



© PeterBKaars.com

[Carla Haryman. [Photo: PeterBKaars.com.](http://PeterBKaars.com)]

The music began with the sound of bowed metal followed by soft staccato tones on the saxophone. Haryman's words were also quite staccato and worked well with the sparse percussive texture of the music. Indeed, I was quite drawn to her more abstract poetry, and I found myself listening to individual words as if they were percussion instruments mixed in with the other parts of the music. There were more metal ringing sounds against a longer and more melodious saxophone line, and some electronic sounds that reminded me of old video games. Raskin also recited words at various times, either independently or in sync with Haryman. Gino Robair's Blippo Box provided its usual liquidy percussive sounds that blended with the saxophone and words. One particular line that stuck with me, and stuck together as a full phrase, was "why is it that some afternoons turn into Miles Davis events?"



© PeterBKaars.com

[Jon Raskin. [Photo: PeterBKaars.com.](http://PeterBKaars.com)]

The next piece was from a larger work in which the text of a lecture by musicologist and critic Theodor

Adorno was processed into a new poetic form and recited by Haryman while Robair performed on prepared piano. Raskin also participated in reciting the text, helping turn parts in a dialogue that included the lament that we “cling to the term new music” unlike visual art which doesn’t hold on to an equivalent overarching term (though one could argue that “modern art” is an equivalent). The overall effect was quite humorous, especially in an audience steeped in experiencing and talking about new music. The piece entitled “Orgasm” was more frenetic, with electronic noises and Raskin employing electronic and electromechanical devices inside a large brass-instrument mute. The final piece featured Raskin playing a squeeze box and Haryman reciting phrases that felt more narrative than the individual words of the earlier pieces, and visual imagery such as “waking hours shiver under glass.”

My experience with poetry is that it tends to be far denser than standard language. As such, it can be a challenge to listen to in sets that are 30 minutes long or more. The rhythmic musicality and phrasing employed by rAmu Aki and the sparse abstract texture of Carla Haryman’s poetry made them work particularly well in the longer setting of a musical performance.

The evening was well attended, with many unfamiliar faces who followed the work of the featured poets but may have been experiencing new-music concerts for the first time. Overall, it was a very strong and dynamic opening concert for the Summit.

[Tweet](#) < 3 2

[Like](#) 5 people like this.

You may also enjoy reading:

[New Podcast: Requiems for a Submerged City](#)

[Blessing Moon - July 9, 2009](#)

[Pmocatat Ensemble and Chorus, and Weller-Borosque Duo](#)

2 Responses to “Outsound Music Summit: Sonic Poetry”

1.  [Tillie & Georgia](#) Says:
[July 22nd, 2012 at 2:50 pm](#)

“My experience with poetry is that it tends to be far denser than standard language.”
Maybe that is why poetry has not been an art form I have liked at lot. I like your

way of putting it. It may have been OK to listen to with the music too.
Hope you enjoyed the event.

2.  *Kitty Says:*
[July 22nd, 2012 at 5:17 pm](#)

The Outsound event sounds like it was a lot of fun. The headress looks very interesting, and I like the bright colours.

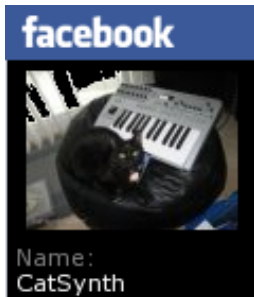
Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

• Join



[Submit your catsynth pics!](#)

[Learn to Make Music](#)

Start Your Career in Music
Industry Request Free
Program Brochure Now!
us.sae.edu

[Install Google Chrome](#)

A free browser that lets you do
more of what you like online!
www.google.com/chrome

AdChoices 

- Search for:

• Categories

- [Art](#) (278)
- [Cats](#) (1119)
- [Film](#) (28)
- [Highways](#) (136)
- [Luna](#) (406)
- [Mathematics](#) (45)
- [Modernism](#) (101)
- [Music](#) (381)
- [News](#) (212)
- [Personal](#) (254)
- [Photography](#) (286)
- [Reviews](#) (263)
- [San Francisco](#) (321)
- [Software](#) (24)
- [Stats](#) (38)
- [Synthesizers](#) (791)
- [Travel](#) (95)
- [Uncategorized](#) (7)
- [Wordless Wednesday](#) (254)

• Twitter



catsynth
catsynth

[FelidaeFund](#) California official replaced after killing cougar – SFGate – sfgate.com/news/article/C... via [@SFGate](#)
4 hours ago · [reply](#) · [retweet](#) · [favorite](#)

[catsynth](#) Why aren't we investigating right-wing extremists the we way we do supposed radical Muslims?
4 hours ago · [reply](#) · [retweet](#) · [favorite](#)

[catsynth](#) Former DHS Analyst Daryl Johnson on How He Was Silenced for Warning of Far-Right Militants in U.S.
[bit.ly/QQzCGW](#) [@democracynow](#)
4 hours ago · [reply](#) · [retweet](#) · [favorite](#)

[catsynth](#) [@LOLGOP](#) I am going to have to start using the phrase "Smoked a little Romneycare"
yesterday · [reply](#) · [retweet](#) · [favorite](#)



[Join the conversation](#)

• Archives

Select Month ▾

• Visits

469,328

• Meta

- [Log in](#)
- [Entries RSS](#)
- [Comments RSS](#)
- [WordPress.org](#)

• Tag Cloud

[amar chaudhary](#) [analog](#) [architecture](#) [Art](#) [black cat](#) [carnival of the cats](#) **cat** [Cats](#) [cats on tuesday](#) [COTC](#)
[electronic music](#) [experimental music](#) [Highways](#) [hipstamatic](#) [ipad](#) [iphone](#) [keyboard](#) [korg](#) **Luna** [midnight](#)
[monday](#) [modular](#) [moog](#) [Music](#) [new york](#) [NYC](#) [performance](#) [photo hunt](#) [Photography](#) [polly moller](#) [review](#)
[roland](#) **San Francisco** [soma](#) [synth](#) [synthesizer](#) **Synthesizers** [video](#) **WCB**
[weekend cat blogging](#) [Wordless Wednesday](#)

• Networked Blogs

NetworkedBlogs

Blog:
CatSynth

Topics:
cats, music, art

Follow my blog



© 2006-2012 CatSynth

Design by [FlashDaWeb](#)

CatSynth is proudly powered by [WordPress](#)