YASUNAO TONE

September 29, 1979  8:30 p.m.  The Kitchen Center, 484 Broome Street

VOICE AND PHENOMENA - A GRAMMATOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE PIECE (Two Parts)
Performers: Mimi Johnson, Yasunao Tone, Yoshisharu Suenobu

PART I

The three poems are:

'Deng Jin Ling Feng Huan T'ai' by Li-Po
-translated 1 from "Three Hundred Poems of the Tong Dynasty"
-translated 2 from "Sunflower Splendid" (Joseph J. Lee, translator)

'Jin Se' by Li Shan-yin
-translated 1 from "Three Hundred Poems of the Tong Dynasty"
-translated 2 from "Sunflower Splendid" (James Y. Liu, translator)

'Gon Ci' by Po Chu-yi
-translated 1 from "Three Hundred Poems of the Tong Dynasty"
-translated 2 from "Sunflower Splendid" (Ronald Miao, translator)

PART II

-from the Chinese Etymological Dictionary of 100 B.C.,:

'Shuo Wen Jie Zi' by Xu Shen
'Gia' by Jacques Derrida

NOTES: The film projections accompanying the poetry reading are made from visualizations of each Chinese character of the three poems, which are synchronized with the reading.

Since Chinese written words are called 'ideographic pictograms,' the correspondence between image and word seems obvious. But the relation between word meanings and the character's form is rather subtle and sometimes the differences between meanings and characters are so drastic that one can hardly perceive the relationship between them.

The formation of Chinese characters largely depends on punning (borrowing similar sound) and rebus (compounding two or more ideogram/pictogram) - you may recollect 'signifiers play.'

INTERMISSION

MUSIC AND GEOGRAPHY (1979)
Performers: Yasunao Tone, voice; David Tudor, piano; Martin Kalve, star-cloud instrument (Kalve's invention)

The Chinese text consists of excerpts from 1,000 Volumes Encyclopedia, "Tai Ping Yu-lan," published in 983 A.D. (Translation: Yasunao Tone with assistance from Judith Grossman)

NOTES: The core of 'Geography and Music' is a collection of stories translated by Yasunao Tone from 8th century Chinese texts. For example, Tone made this excerpt:

On a frontier of Ri-Nan, a part of northern Vietnam, there lived the Rou-tou, or dropping head people, whose heads fly well. Among this race or species, one man is always sacrificed for prayers. These people were also known as Hui-puo, or insect dropping heads. However, this is obsolete now. Before their heads fly, their eyes vanish and their ears become wings. They return at dawn, landing on their bodies. In the Wu period, 3rd century AD, they were captured quite often.

While the stories are read, instrumentalists perform music that Tone derived from 8th century Chinese pipa (lute) music.

-------------

Special thanks to Merce Cunningham, Voice control delay system built by Yoshi Saito. This concert was made possible in part by assistance from CAPS (Creative Artists Public Service Program).

The Kitchen Center is supported in part by the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Community Trust, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The J.M. Kaplan Foundation and by the Institute of Museum Services, a Federal agency in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Contemporary Music Series is partially funded by the Jerome Foundation, The Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music and the Mobil Foundation.