



## Jerome Kitzke: Containing Multitudes

Jerome Kitzke has said that he always considers himself to be as much a storyteller as a composer, and the three pieces on this CD bear witness to that dual nature. Composed over a fifteen-year period, they express the power and ecstatic magic and originality of his best work. These three pieces also reflect the themes and concerns which have been Kitzke's focus from the beginning of his career: social justice and compassion, the fundamental paradoxes of life and death, and the ability for diverse elements---notated music, speech, improvisation, laughter, extended techniques, ritual drumming---to not only coexist, but thrive through interaction.

Speech in Kitzke's music can be aligned rhythmically with the musical rhythms or can be freely spoken. Even when the rhythms are notated, they almost always follow the cadences of natural speech. His scores are meticulously written---unlike most contemporary composers, who write with a computer notation system, he draws everything but the staves by hand, giving it the human touch. For wordless sounds and other specific emotional intentions, he creates his own graphic notation, which not only conveys instructions to the performers but also turns his scores into works of art (for many years the American Music Center proudly displayed a Kitzke score on its homepage). In the opening of *Winter Count*, for actor, bass drum, and string quartet, the performers are instructed to "ad lib crisply rapid clicks, pops, whistles, and other chattering vocal sounds," which is notated with tiny interlocking squiggles and dots and curls, just as one would imagine those sounds would look like if rendered graphically. Later, to begin the movement "The Blood Rain Breaking," he notates the actor's part with an arrangement of hand-drawn stars, spirals, bars, circles, triangles, and other shapes, and the directions read "ad lib a person going or already gone mad, using words, grunts, squeals, groans, animal sounds, etc." Kitzke's graphic nota-

tion is so clear that musicians around the world can discern his intentions purely from following his scores.

The chattering vocal sounds, which open *Winter Count*, lead directly into a unison between the actor and string quartet's second violin, both marked "no vibrato." Kitzke's music is full of these abrupt turns, each one quick upon the other, juxtaposing sharply contrasting styles. A frenetically active passage might follow one of meditative calm, and simple lyricism emerges out of noisy free jazz-like riffs. Remarkably, the music never sounds fragmentary or disjointed---there's always organic flow within the constant shift of material. Perhaps this is because despite the first impression of Kitzke's compositions as being free wheeling and spontaneous, they are in fact rigorously organized. *Winter Count*, for instance, is arranged into eighteen parts, with musical interludes alternating with recited texts, and two mirroring sections, "The Benediction of Light" and "The Benediction of Darkness," acting as a framing device. But shifting moods also speak to the all-embracing scope of Kitzke's work, which contains multitudes.

*The Green Automobile* is a tour de force for speaking pianist; the only performer so far has been Kitzke himself, since he has only recently started notating the piece. While he's performed it more than fifty times over the years, each performance always sounds completely spontaneous, as if he's responding to Allen Ginsberg's text on the spot. He also makes it seem completely natural to be whistling and laughing and doing rapid-fire recitation of Ginsberg's poem, all during the most intricate piano playing, with the two hands often in different meters, chord clusters pitted against walking bass, traveling across the entire range of the keyboard with ease. There are poignant moments when the action pauses, as in the wistful reflection of childhood "Childhood youthtime age & eternity/would open like sweet trees..." Occasionally the music mirrors the text, for instance with the impressionistic high register tremolos in "The wind-

## CREDITS

### The Green Automobile:

Produced, edited and engineered by Scott Worthington. Recorded April 28th, 2012 at the University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA. "The Green Automobile" © 1953 by May King Poetry Music. Used by permission.

### The Paha Sapa Give-Back:

Produced by Silas Brown of Legacy Sound.  
Edited by Charlie Post of PostProductions Audio.  
Engineered by Randy Crafton.  
Recorded August 21-22, 2013 at Kaleidoscope Sound in Union City, NJ.

### Winter Count:

Produced and edited by Silas Brown of Legacy Sound.  
Engineered by Randy Crafton.  
Recorded October 10-11, 2013 at Kaleidoscope Sound.  
"Agamemnon" selection, from *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, translation by Richmond Lattimore and published by the University of Chicago Press, copyright 1947 by Richmond Lattimore. "Jesus, They Run Into the Millions", "Train" used by permission. "American Football" by Harold Pinter © 2002 Fraser S2 Limited from *The Essential Pinter* published by Grove/Atlantic, Inc. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc. and Judy Daish Associates Limited. Any third party use of this material is prohibited. "Out Beyond Ideas of Wrongdoing and Rightdoing" translation used by permission of Coleman Barks. All other poems are public domain.

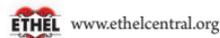
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This recording is dedicated to Eugene David Kitzke (1923-2011),  
Lorraine Grace Kitzke (1920-2012), and Randol Thomas Wessel  
(April 17th, 2014 - April 17th, 2014)

— Jerome Kitzke

and know they may never look again.

Will the train never start?  
God, make the train start!

### **American Football (a reflection upon the Gulf War) (Harold Pinter)**

Hallelullah!  
It works.  
We blew the shit out of them.

We blew the shit right back up their own ass  
And out their fucking ears.

It works.  
We blew the shit out of them.  
They suffocated in their own shit!

Hallelullah.  
Praise the Lord for all good things.

We blew them into fucking shit.  
They are eating it.

Praise the Lord for all good things.

We blew their balls into shards of dust,  
Into shards of fucking dust.

We did it.

Now I want you to come over here and kiss  
me on the mouth.

### **Look Down Fair Moon (Walt Whitman)**

Look down fair moon and bathe this scene,

Pour softly down night's nimbus floods on faces ghastly,  
swollen, purple,  
On the dead on their backs with arms toss'd wide,  
Pour down your unstinted nimbus sacred moon.

### **Reconciliation (Walt Whitman)**

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky,  
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time  
be utterly lost,  
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly  
softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;  
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead.  
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I  
draw near,  
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face  
in the coffin.

### **Out Beyond Ideas of Wrongdoing and Rightdoing (Rumi, translation by Coleman Barks)**

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,  
There is a field. I'll meet you there.  
When the soul lies down in that grass,  
The world is too full to talk about.  
Ideas, language, even the phrase, each other,  
Does not make sense.

### **Epilogue: A Clear Midnight (Walt Whitman)**

This is thy hour O soul, thy free flight into the wordless,  
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the les-  
son done,  
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the  
themes thou lovest best,  
Night, sleep, death and the stars.

shield's full of tears/rain wets our naked breasts..." But those are only temporary detours in the Green Automobile's careening adventures. It seems the most faithful possible rendering of Ginsberg's poem, keeping intact the long breath of the lines, the urgency and vitality and spirit of the text, while also allowing time for moments of tenderness and quiet. *The Green Automobile* is the third of Kitzke's five pieces so far in the amplified speaking pianist genre, the others being *The Animist Child* (1994), *Sunflower Sutra* (1999), *There Is a Field* (2008), and *Bringing Roses With Her Words* (2009).

If Kitzke is as much a storyteller as composer, his storytelling in *The Paha Sapa Give-Back* — commissioned in 1993 by the fearless ensemble Essential Music — is minimal, but no less eloquent. In this piece for four percussion and piano, simply the rhythmic repetition of "Paha Sapa"—the Lakota term for Black Hills — shouted, whispered, and transformed into an incantation and a prayer, tells the listener everything, and becomes a story in itself. Kitzke acknowledges the influence of Northern Plains Indian music, and we might hear hard bop in the piano writing, and echoes of military bands in the use of snare drums, but most of all what comes across is the healing affirmative power of ritual and chant.

*The Paha Sapa Give-Back* begins with the four percussionists on one large calfskin bass drum in the center of the stage, shouting "Paha Sapa" seven times, leading into a unison one-hand roll on the big drum, over which the pianist produces a haunting wailing sound on the strings inside the piano. The drum continues to roll like distant thunder over which the piano plays a plaintive melody, while the percussionists intone "Paha Sapa" again, this time gently. One by one they move to their separate drum sets — arranged around the piano and bass drum — and by the end of the piece they have gathered together again at the central bass drum for a poignant chant, with sleigh bells overhead, and

a final shouting of "Paha Sapa!" The last vocalizations are "Give back!" shouted collectively, and then spoken softer, as a final plea. By the conclusion, the effect is of having gone through a shamanic journey: Kitzke's music brims with ceremonial power and beauty, and at the same time carries forward the great tradition of American experimental music.

*The Paha Sapa Give-Back* is "an exhortation," says Kitzke, for all of us to pay attention to and act upon the sovereignty and sacred land claim issues of the world's indigenous peoples." At the heart of each Kitzke composition is a message of tolerance, of social justice, of living a humane and ethical life. For *Winter Count* he collected antiwar texts by Aeschylus, Walt Whitman, Harold Pinter, Rumi, Helen Mackay, John Scott, and Anonymous, creating a timeless and universal reflection against the horrors of wars past and present. *The Green Automobile* speaks to a more personal quest, but no less vividly and urgently. Most remarkable is how Kitzke integrates his convictions and beliefs within music and text. You listen with as much delight as you experience when you listen to any of your favorite composers, but you may find yourself listening to this album over and over to grasp the full impact and significance of these three astonishing works.

— Sarah Cahill, Berkeley, CA, 2014

Sarah Cahill is a pianist who has commissioned Jerome Kitzke, Terry Riley, Frederic Rzewski, Pauline Oliveros, and other composers. She curates new music concerts at the Berkeley Museum and at the Chapel of the Chimes in Oakland, and her weekly radio show can be heard at [www.kalw.org](http://www.kalw.org)



## 1. The Green Automobile (text by Allen Ginsberg)

*The Green Automobile* is a freewheeling musical account of Allen Ginsberg's 1953 poem of the same name from his Reality Sandwiches collection. I was drawn to the poem's manically energized description of an imagined trip taken in a green automobile by Ginsberg and his friend and occasional lover Neal Cassady. The latter was perhaps best known as being the model for the Dean Moriarty character in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. The trip ranges from California over the Rocky Mountains to Denver with a tender detour to Texas and on to its ending in New York City. Inside *The Green Automobile* the rough beauty of friendship is on display and all that is powerful and exciting about the Beats is in full rhythmic flower.



### The Green Automobile

If I had a Green Automobile  
I'd go find my old companion  
in his house on the Western ocean.  
Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! Ha !

I'd honk my horn at his manly gate,  
inside his wife and three  
children sprawl naked  
on the living room floor.

He'd come running out  
to my car full of heroic beer  
and jump screaming at the wheel  
for he is the greater driver.

We'd pilgrimage to the highest mount  
of our earlier Rocky Mountain visions  
laughing in each others arms,  
delight surpassing the highest Rockies,

and after old agony, drunk with new years,  
bounding toward the snowy horizon  
blasting the dashboard with original bop  
hot rod on the mountain

we'd batter up the cloudy highway  
where angels of anxiety  
careen through the trees  
and scream out of the engine.

We'd burn all night on the jackpine peak  
seen from Denver in the summer dark,  
forestlike unnatural radiance  
illuminating the mountaintop:

childhood youthtime age & eternity  
would open like sweet trees  
in the nights of another spring  
and dumbfound us with love,

for we can see together  
the beauty of souls  
hidden like diamonds  
in the clock of the world,

like Chinese magicians can  
confound the immortals  
with our intellectuality  
hidden in the mist,

They are so young.  
She stands under the window of his carriage,  
and he stands in the window.  
They hold each other's hands  
across the window ledge.  
And look and look,  
and know they may never look again.

The great clock of the station,---  
how strange it is.  
Terrible that the minutes go.  
Terrible that the minutes never go.

They had walked the platform for so long,  
up and down, and up and down---  
the platform in the rainy morning,  
up and down and up and down.

The guard came by, calling,  
'Take your places, take your places.'

She stands under the window of his carriage,  
and he stands in the window.

God, make the train start!  
Before they cannot bear it,  
make the train start!

God, make the train start!

The three children, there,  
in black, with the old nurse,  
standing together, and looking, and looking,  
up at their father in the carriage window,  
they are so forlorn and silent.

The little girl will not cry,  
but her chin trembles.

She throws back her head,  
with its stiff little braid,  
and will not cry.

Her father leans down,  
out over the ledge of the window,  
and kisses her, and kisses her.

She must be like her mother,  
and it must be the mother who is dead.

The nurse lifts the smallest boy,  
and his father kisses him,  
leaning through the carriage window.

The big boy stands very straight,  
and looks at his father,  
and looks, and never takes his eyes from him.  
And knows he may never look again.

Will the train never start?  
God, make the train start!

The father reaches his hand down from the  
window,  
and grips the boy's hand,  
and does not speak at all.

Will the train never start?

He lets the boy's and go.

Will the train never start?

He takes the boy's chin in his hand,  
leaning out through the window,  
and lifts the face that is so young, to his.  
They look and look,

The *Winter Count* recorded here is an antiwar work that expresses that view through the words of these seven poets: Aeschylus, John Scott, Anonymous, Helen Mackay, Harold Pinter, Walt Whitman and Rumi. The poets' timeless words offer reflections on war during Aeschylus' time, the American Revolution, the American Civil War, WWI, WWII, and the first Gulf War. All these poets are no longer alive, but if they were I think they would be creating new poems speaking out not just against war in general, but also against the idea that there is any longer such a thing as a winnable war, a fact most recently manifested in Iraq and Afghanistan. Allen Ginsberg asked, "When will we end the human war"? Perhaps it is not, so to speak, humanly possible. But *Winter Count* aspires more to Whitman's: "Beautiful that war and its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost". Beautiful indeed.

*Winter Count* is dedicated with love to Catherine Kahler. Special thanks to Jennifer Kathryn Marshall.

*Text:*

The first casualty of war is Truth.

### The Blood Rain Breaking (Aeschylus)

My thoughts are swept away and I go bewildered.  
Where shall I turn the brain's  
activity in speed when the house is falling?  
There is fear in the beat of the blood rain breaking  
wall and tower. The drops come thicker.  
Still fate grinds on yet more stones the blade  
for more acts of terror.

### The Drum (John Scott)

I hate that drum's discordant sound,  
Parading round, and round, and round:

To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields,  
And lures from cities and from fields,  
To sell their liberty for charms  
Of tawdry lace and glittering arms;  
And when Ambition's voice commands,  
To march, and fight, and fall, in foreign lands.

I hate that drum's discordant sound,  
Parading round, and round, and round:  
To me it talks of ravaged plains,  
And burning towns, and ruined swains,  
And mangled limbs, and dying groans,  
And widow's tears, and orphans' moans;  
And all that Misery's hand bestows,  
To fill the catalogue of human woes.

### Jesus, They Run Into the Millions (anonymous WWII latrine graffiti)

Soldiers who wish to be a hero  
Are practically zero,  
But those who wish to be civilians,  
Jesus, they run into the millions.

### Train (Helen Mackay)

Will the train never start?  
God, make the train start.

She cannot bear it, keeping up so long;  
and he, he no more tries to laugh at her.  
He is going.

She holds his two hands now.  
Now, she has touch of him and sight of him.  
And then he will be gone.  
He will be gone.

in the Green Automobile  
which I have invented  
imagined and visioned  
on the roads of the world

more real than the engine  
on a track in the desert  
purer than Greyhound and  
swifter than physical jetplane.

Denver! Denver! we'll return  
roaring across the City & County Building lawn  
which catches the pure emerald flame  
streaming in the wake of our auto.

This time we'll buy up the city!  
I cashed a great check in my skull bank  
to found a miraculous college of the body  
up on the bus terminal roof.

But first we'll drive the stations of downtown,  
poolhall flophouse jazzjoint jail  
whorehouse down Folsom  
to the darkest alleys of Larimer

paying respects to Denver's father  
lost on the railroad tracks,  
stupor of wine and silence  
hallowing the slum of his decades,

salute him and his saintly suitcase  
of dark muscatel, drink  
and smash the sweet bottles  
on Diesels in allegiance.

Then we go driving drunk on boulevards  
where armies march and still parade  
staggering under the invisible  
banner of Reality --

hurting through the street  
in the auto of our fate  
we share an archangelic cigarette  
and tell each others' fortunes:

fames of supernatural illumination,  
bleak rainy gaps of time,  
great art learned in desolation  
and we beat apart after six decades. . .

and on an asphalt crossroad,  
deal with each other in princely  
gentleness once more, recalling  
famous dead talks of other cities.

The windshield's full of tears,  
rain wets our naked breasts,  
we kneel together in the shade  
amid the traffic of night in paradise

and now renew the solitary vow  
we made each other take  
in Texas, once:  
I can't inscribe here. . .

. . . .



How many Saturday nights will be  
made drunken by this legend?  
How will young Denver come to mourn  
her forgotten sexual angel?

How many boys will strike the black piano  
in imitation of the excess of a native saint?  
Or girls fall wanton under his spectre in the high  
schools of melancholy night?

While all the time in Eternity  
in the wan light of this poem's radio  
we'll sit behind forgotten shades  
hearkening the lost jazz of all Saturdays.

Neal, we'll be real heroes now  
in a war between our cocks and time:  
let's be the angels of the world's desire  
and take the world to bed with us before  
we die.

Sleeping alone, or with companion,  
girl or fairy sheep or dream,  
I'll fail of lacklove, you, satiety:  
all men fall, our fathers fell before,

but resurrecting that lost flesh  
is but a moment's work of mind:  
an ageless monument to love  
in the imagination:

memorial built out of our own bodies  
consumed by the invisible poem --  
We'll shudder in Denver and endure  
though blood and wrinkles blind our eyes.

So this Green Automobile:  
I give you in flight  
a present, a present  
from my imagination.

We will go riding  
over the Rockies,  
we'll go on riding  
all night long until dawn,

then back to your railroad, the SP  
your house and your children  
and broken leg destiny  
you'll ride down the plains

in the morning: and back  
to my visions, my office  
and eastern apartment  
I'll return to New York.

NY 1953



## 2. The Paha Sapa Give-Back

*The Paha Sapa Give-Back* is an exhortation to pay attention to and act upon the sovereignty and sacred land claim issues of the world's indigenous peoples. *Paha Sapa* means Black Hills in Lakota. They call them "the heart of everything that is". Since the 1870's the Lakota have been struggling on the battlefield and in the courtroom to protect and reclaim the Black Hills, which had been declared legally theirs by the 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaty. Soon after George Armstrong Custer's illegal 1874 discovery of gold in the Black Hills, white miners began to flood the Paha Sapa in violation of the treaty. Then shortly after Custer's annihilation in 1876 at the Little Big Horn there came a series of illegal land deals that robbed the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho of their holy land. In 1975 the U.S. Court of Claims called the government's conduct toward the Lakota in all probability "the most ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealings" in U.S. history. The government's response was to offer money as compensation, which the Lakota refused then and continue to refuse today. "The Black Hills are not for sale" became a rallying cry. What they want and deserve are honorable dealings in regard to considerations of land-return legislation. At the time this piece was being planned and written there had already been legislation introduced in the U.S. Senate by then Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. The political climate was simply not right and the legislation stalled and had to be put on the back burner. Currently it is off the burner entirely but there is no reason it cannot come back on. It seems naïve to think that we, as relatively recent occupants of this land, can ever hope to relieve the social ills that plague us without first honestly attending to the dishonorable dealings foisted upon the original inhabitants during the creation of the United States. In spirit-opposition to the traditional Indian 'give-away', *The Paha Sapa Give-Back* suggests we do just that! Give the land back and attend the flower that blooms from the act.

While I am grateful for the clear influence of Northern Plains Indian Music on this work, *The Paha Sapa Give-Back* contains no existing tunes or forms from that incredible music. This work, along with *Mad Coyote Madly Sings* (1991), *We Need to Dream All This Again* (1993), and *Woope* (1994) form a quartet of pieces that deal with the Black Hills land issues and have been combined into one large theatrical musical work also called *The Paha Sapa Give-Back* with texts and scenes by Kathleen Masterson. *The Paha Sapa Give-Back* on this recording was commissioned by Essential Music and is dedicated to all indigenous peoples still fighting for the rights to their scared lands. Thanks to Charles Wood, John Kennedy, Charlotte Black Elk and Gerald Clifford.

Text:  
Paha Sapa  
Give-Back



## 3. Winter Count (texts by Aeschylus, John Scott, Anonymous, Helen Mackay, Harold Pinter, Walt Whitman, Rumi)

*Among several tribes on the northern plains, the passage of time from one summer to the next is marked by noting a single memorable event. The sequence of such memories, recorded pictographically on a buffalo robe or spoken aloud, is called a winter count. Several winter counts might be in progress at any one time in the same tribe; each differing according to the personality of its keeper.*

— from Barry Lopez's *Winter Count*