

## ations for the Rays of the Wheel

*"In all beginnings is a magic source. In all beginnings dwells a magic force" 1*

Susan: *"Why are boys obsessed with numbers?"* Gregory: *"No, we're not"*

Susan: *"You are"* Gregory: *"Don't stop dancing or you'll fall off" 2*

Superstition and magic collide with logic. **Raydale Dower** is working through his obsession with numbers and more specifically their pattern forms in terms of the harmonics in art, music, nature, space. **For the CCA, Raydale is creating a Magic Theatre** -part kaleidoscopic laboratory, part work, rest and playground, part temple, all studio. To conduct, analyse, calculate, decipher. To muse, confuse, enlighten and darken. Go inside.

Like Bach's *The Musical Offering for Frederick the Great*, Raydale's is a systematic riddle. Front to back. Soft. LOUD. *The Ricercar*. Raydale's instrumental circumnavigation explores chance and rigour. Taking logical apparatus and taking philosophical justifications to seek out, eak out, act out and tease out new sounds from the way out; to listen intently to the static, the electric silence, the transparent radiation. Feedback the feedback. Here comes the sound, the sound of confusion. Strange loops -

Recursive, repetitive, alchemical, degenerative, imperative

Recursive, repetitive, alchemical, degenerative, imperative (echo)

My process of re-reading for this task of introduction takes me through a very Germanic tradition in arts, music and letters from **Dürer to Vollmer, Bach to Schoenberg, Novalis to Hesse**. But closer to home in the early 20th century **D'Arcy Thompson** notes in the seminal treatise *On Growth and Form* that:

*"The beautiful configurations produced by the orderly arrangement of leaves or florets on a stem have long been an object of admiration and curiosity; and not the least curious feature of the case is the limited, even the small number of possible arrangements which we observe and recognise. Leonardo da Vinci would seem, as Theodore Cook tells us to have been the first to record his thoughts upon this subject; but the old Greek and Egyptian geometers are not likely to have left unstudied or unobserved the spiral traces of the leaves upon a palm-stem, or the spiral order of the petals of a lotus or the florets of a sunflower. For so, as old Nehemiah Grew says, 'from the contemplation of Plants, men might first be invited to Mathematical Enquiry.'" 3*

Like Thompson, but a full century before, the geologist philosopher **Friedrich von Hardenberg** (aka Novalis) notes:

*"Is there a fine art of mathematics? Mystical Mathematics. Musical Mathematics. Has Mathematics merely a finite purpose? Is it not purely theoretical? Truly pure Mathematics? Quantities are construed by quantitates." 4*

*"Musical relations seem to me to be actually the basic relations of nature. Crystallizations : acoustic figures of chemical oscillations. (chemical sense) Brilliant, noble, divinatory, miracle-working, clever, stupid etc. plants, animals, stones, elements etc. Infinite individuality of those beings - their musical sense, and their sense of individuality - their character - their inclinations etc. They are past, historical beings. Nature is a magic city turned to stone." 5*

In the late 15th and early 16th Centuries, **Albrecht Dürer** pursued this search for measurement and the mysterious element:

*"Science was necessary for the acquisition of knowledge in its own field. But it was only one method of solving the problem and a precarious and inadequate one into the bargain. After having practised simultaneously, for several years, both scientific research and artistic creation, Dürer had begun to lose faith in mathematics as the best standard for the judgment of art. He no longer believed that the Golden Number could be found by using such tools of measurement. He had come to regard it as only one of the elements of aesthetics, not the ubiquitous and omnipresent reality itself." 6*

se (1877 - 1962) wrote that:

... of the intellect in concentric systems, and pairing the living beauty of thought and art with the magical expressiveness of the exact sciences. In that age in which music and mathematics almost simultaneously attained classical heights, approaches and cross-fertilizations between the two disciplines occurred frequently." 7

The artist **Ruth Vollmer** (1903 - 1982) made fine art from the relationship forged between the spiritual/natural/geometric/mathematic. *"The fantastic thing in nature is that nature would not be possible unless it could reproduce these over and over."* 8 A critic of Vollmer noted *"Vollmer's work tends toward an impasse between extremes to be both abstract and organic, "found" and crafted, refined and anti-aesthetic. This oscillation brings to the surface a specific tension in the work."* 9 Many critics thought her work too prescriptive but some saw her search for mysterious elements and not just the solution to an equation.

I feel a different kind of tension needs to be introduced - an ingredient that mystic science inextricably heads towards... from the harmonic to the demonic. The Devil calls the tune:

*"Learn first, O practicus of our aincient Order, that true equilibrium is the basis of the soul. If thou thyself hath not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?"* 10

*"And all the rays of the wheel stream out at me, and I am blasted and blinded with the light. I am caught up with the wheel. I am one with the wheel."* 11

*"See! I am dead! I am passed, I am passed  
Out of the sensible world at last.  
I am not. Yet I am, as I never was,  
A drop in the sphere of molten glass  
Whose radiance changes and shifts and drapes  
The infinite soul in finite shapes.  
There is light, there is life, there is love, there is sense  
Beyond speech, beyond song, beyond evidence.  
There is wonder intense, a miraculous sun,  
As the many are molten and mixed into one."*

**Aleister Crowley** (1875 - 1947) - *The World's Tragedy* 12

Before this introduction ends - I should like to bring in one last distinguished guide... the Austrian composer and music theorist **Arnold Schoenberg** (1874 - 1951):

*"Schoenberg was the first to have penetrated - systematically - the internal structure of individual pitches or tones, to have penetrated their subtle "tone colours" (or Klangfarben) and to exploit microscopic resonances (differences) within a single pitch, as small for example as 23/680 of the base, or fundamentals pitch. Moving this far away from the home note or pitch may well sound to the untrained ear as dissonance (or beyond the threshold of relatibility), but Schoenberg was explicit to point out that these types of manipulation do not produce dissonance at all, but rather, what he called remote consonances. Schoenberg believed that harmony, or harmonic relations, were not fixed things, but were historical (and conventional) and that these actually evolved. The analytical ear has the capacity to develop an increasing ability to perceive (to recognise) remote overtones and resonances, and with this development the concept of what is held to be euphonious or relatable continues to transform and expand, "Music" comes more and more closely to approximate the "sound"-spectrum of the natural world, yet loses none of its structure or cohesiveness for that. Rather the contrary."* 13

Hopefully this serves as a primer for Raydale's *Metamagical Themas*. For a Mystico Magic Mephisto Waltz, a deviant Raydiant Voodoo. A pageant of harmonious movements. I dream a ghost box at the CCA... I imagine *The Legend of Hell House* (1973) - the stand off



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Graham Domke

s and **Delia Derbyshire's** sonics. Superstition and magic  
gic delight.

## References

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- 2 Conversation in Bill Forsyth's film *Gregory's Girl*, 1981
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- 4 Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*, State University of New York Press, 1997, p59
- 5 *Ibid*, p154-155
- 6 Marcel Brion, *Dürer*, Thames and Hudson, 1960, p204
- 7 Hermann Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game*, Penguin, Middlesex, 1972 p19
- 8 Lucy Lippard, *Intersections*, in Ruth Vollmer 1961 - 1978, *Thinking the Line*, edited by Rottner and Weibel, Hatje Cantz, p210
- 9 Anna Vallye, *Ruth Vollmer's Science*, in *Ibid*, p140
- 10 Israel Regardie, *The Eye in the Triangle, An interpretation of Aleister Crowley*, Falcon Press, 1986, p148
- 11 *Ibid*, 166
- 12 *Ibid*, XXV
- 13 Sanford Kwinter, *Eyes in the Heat: Speculations on the predatory foundations of perception*, in Olafur Eliasson, edited by Joseph Jacquet, Paris Musees, 2002, unpaginated

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