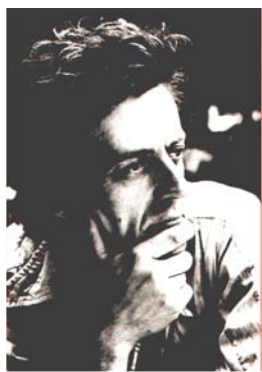


## Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival



**T**aking place on the 70th anniversary of the birth of Cornelius Cardew, the festival celebrated his life and music. It explored what made Cornelius such a significant musician, composer and politi-

cal activist.

The event took place on Sunday, May 7, at Cecil Sharp House in London, the home of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. The festival was assessed by all who participated

as significant, manifesting and creating a unity of purpose and mutual goodwill, and opening the path for future advances in the cultural sphere. It was attended by old friends and com-

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### Impressions

## The Welcome to London for Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez

**O**RIGINALLY, THE MEETING TO WELCOME CHÁVEZ HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR MAY 15. This was changed about five days before to Sunday, May 14, and it was very difficult to get true info about location and time of meeting. The impression was that many hundreds more people applied for tickets and either did not receive a reply or were turned down. It seems as if tickets had been supplied to those on one or more of the mayor's lists, leading trade unionists and progressive lawyers

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# May Day 2006 in Tyne & Wear

**O**n Saturday, April 29, the Tyne & Wear May Day March rally took place. Several hundred people gathered in Times Square, Newcastle, for the march to Exhibition Park led by Broughton's Brass Band.

At the Park the rally commenced after 1pm. Billy Hayes General Secretary of the CWU, said that it was good to see so many young people and he took up as the theme of May Day that our world is not for sale and he condemned the government for a policy of turning everything including our public services into a saleable commodity.

Janice Godrich, PCS President, also spoke about the campaign of the unions to keep public services public and not private and she concluded her speech by saying

that there was a crisis of representation and she called for the need to build the voice of the workers and bring about an alternative that will give representation to all the working people across the UK.

## Opposing government attacks

Doug Jewell, Liberty Campaigns Director, condemned the £19 billion that was being spent on identity cards and condemned the attack on the rights, civil liberties of the people and referring to the trials this week condemned the measure that those accused of terrorism were not allowed to attend their own court hearing to plead their innocence. He also went on to condemn the government's slide towards complicity the abuse of human rights and in torture.

Kate Hudson, CND national chair, opposed the threats against Iran over the nuclear issue and condemned the government's plan to spend £25 billion on new nuclear weapons to replace Trident and called on the



movement to further take up the demand that Britain scrap its nuclear weapons.

Mick Lemon, Tyneside Stop the War Coalition, spoke about the anti-war movement in Tyne & Wear and elaborated on the work of the coalition to oppose the so-called "war on terror" with its war on Afghanistan, Iraq and threats to Iran and other countries and he spoke about the work to oppose the racist islamophobia promoted by the government and media.

## Rights of the workers

Finally, Kevin Rowan, Northern TUC Secretary, addressed the rally speaking about the theme of the TUC campaign for the TUC Trade Union Freedom Bill which he was a minimal programme. He highlighted the right to strike and said that should be a right in a modern democratic society. He said with this minimal right workers could strike against attacks on asylum seekers against the war and occupation of Iraq and any attack on Iran, etc.

After the rally Billy Bragg who had been invited to perform as part of his *Hope not Hate* tour sang a number of his songs addressing the working class and people's movement finishing with

an unaccompanied performance of a modern version of the Internationale.

Following this event on Monday evening of May 1, a smaller May Day celebration took place in the Iona Club, Hebburn, organised by the South Tyneside May Day Committee. Simon Hall, a delegate of Unison to the World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela, in 2005 spoke about this important event and the positive situation for the movement of the working people in that area. And on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Jarrow march, historian Matt Perry spoke about the historical context, exposing the myths about the march. Both contributions inspired the further building of the resistance and the workers opposition to the anti-social offensive and defending the rights of all in Britain.

This years May Day in Tyne & Wear was once again a time for workers and activists in the working class movement to reflect, discuss and exchange views and very much reflected the sentiment of the working class movement to identify their interests and develop the movement for the defence of those interests as well as address the most important questions facing the working class.



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# Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival

## With Cardew in PCA and RCPBML

**Intervention by Chris Coleman, National Spokesperson of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)**

I am very pleased to be able to say a few words here today, along with so many close friends and collaborators of Cornelius, and encouragingly considerable numbers of much younger people than us who are part of a renewed interest in Cornelius's life and work.

I knew Cornelius only in his last ten years. We worked together in the Progressive Cultural Association (PCA); he was Founding Secretary, I was Chairperson. We were both founding members of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) (RCPBML) and elected to its first Central Committee. We lived near each other in East London and worked closely together in both the cultural and political fields. As everyone else, I have vivid and cherished memories of those exciting times.

It is my opinion that all the different stages of Cornelius's development led logically to him becoming a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary. And the remarks earlier by Michael (Parsons), Eddie (Prevost) and Howard (Skempton) seem to me to reinforce this opinion. When someone makes a radical break, they do not necessarily throw the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak, and I think this was the case with Cornelius. I see Cornelius in the tradition of the great artists of the Renaissance, of Beethoven, Prokofiev and others, who saw their art as part of the struggle for enlightenment, for the emancipation of the human spirit, for the rights of humankind at the

particular historical stage. The Party, Marxism-Leninism, provided I think an organised focus, a perspective for the concerns that Cornelius had always had, for the cause of the working class and people, for the youth, for the women, about racism, fascism and war, and the struggle, among others, of the Irish people for their sovereignty and freedom.

I am one who thinks that perhaps the most significant part of Cornelius's work was in the joint work of PCA and the Canadian Cultural Workers Committee (CCWC) between 1978 and 1981. Here we see Cornelius working fully as part of a collective, guided by the most advanced ideas, carrying out planned work with a clear aim. We see one of Cornelius's greatest qualities: his modesty and his willingness to subordinate himself to the collective. He was of course a pathfinder in his own right and a man of immense talents. But in this work he was a contributor along with others, and especially Hardial (Bains), whose leadership was marked by this same great quality. As we heard presented earlier, some works of great beauty, revolutionary, partisan and of the most advanced ideology, came out of this work. But perhaps most importantly, they provided the threshold for a whole new development. The works were primarily Party music, but they opened the way for music and other cultural forms that were truly mass, of popular appeal and opening the entire path to progress.

Tragically, of course, at this

precise point Cornelius was violently struck down and taken from us. I share the view that Cornelius was a potential giant, and would have been a true giant at that. As many have suggested, his greatest work was still to come, his great potential was tragically never realised. One can only speculate what he would have achieved.

We live today in a different period to that when Cornelius left us. He worked in a period of what we term flow of revolution. The Vietnamese and other peoples were winning great victories. In Britain the fascists were driven from the streets, when the state was attempting, in violation of all its treaties from the Second World War, to create a parliamentary fascist party. Cornelius, as we know, made an important contribution to this very work.

Now we are in a period of transition, a period of retreat of revolution, when I think it is no exaggeration to say that the forces of reaction are trying to destroy all the achievements of progressive humankind since time immemorial, and especially since the Renaissance, to create a world akin to medievalism and the bestiality of the Nazis. The great international statutes coming out of the victory over fascism in 1945 are set aside. Torture is openly justified as an instrument of state policy. But I think it must be pointed out that retreat of revolution is not synonymous with retrogression. The retrogression which the dark forces of reaction are trying to impose on the world does not have

to be accepted. In fact it cannot and is not accepted. Millions of people on a world scale are increasingly standing up against it, from governments like Cuba and DPRK who refuse to bow the knee, various Muslim countries, governments in Latin America taking up the interests of the poor, to a movement in this country against war unprecedented in its size and broad scope.

The times cry out for culture to serve this whole broad movement against the Anglo-American agenda of fascism, war and neo-liberal globalisation which can lead the world only to catastrophe. No matter how small this movement is in historical terms, however it is abused and ridiculed, however much disinformation is spread about it, nevertheless it is this in all its diversity which represents the future, the new coming into being. And the efforts on the cultural front to serve it, however modest, producing some CDs or presenting operas against the war to some dozens of people, nevertheless represent the new as well. And in such work what better role model could there be than Cornelius, his dedication, his enthusiasm, his willingness to put all his talents in the service of the collective. In the life and work of Cornelius, tragically cut short as it was, we nevertheless see all the beauty of the new world coming into being, the other world which is possible, and I think this is what we have in our minds when we mark his 70th birthday.

Thank you.



## Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival

# The spirit of the New and the movement which Cornelius Cardew joined

By Michael Chant, a fellow composer and political activist of Cornelius in the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

**M**usic is expression. It can be destructive to the spirit and society, or it can be constructive. It can reflect what is best and what can be, or it can do the opposite and contribute to corruption and retrogression. What should be created today, what is consistent with the aspirations for something new and advanced? In his time, Cornelius worked to solve this issue, his life represents that search, and the work took root. What was cut short was the flowering of these solutions, this creative work in the context of the movement of society and the striving for a better humanity in a better world, a different world, a world which we can envision coming into being. One thing about this different world is that everyone's culture will find its own pride of place. The new project is nothing less than renewal of everyone's cultural programme as the path widens out as the perspective is concretised. It is the rejection of falling back on whatever exists, and abandoning aspirations for what is new, beautiful, popular and inclusive.

What did Cornelius join and why? His whole mature life was

**Music is expression. It can be destructive to the spirit and society, or it can be constructive. It can reflect what is best and what can be, or it can do the opposite and contribute to corruption and retrogression. What should be created today, what is consistent with the aspirations for something new and advanced?**

one of putting the human factor at the centre. First in reaction against the performer as automaton, setting the performer in motion, then in the social form which was the Scratch Orchestra, making music together, and then having to address the question, for whom, and what to do with one's life, a

decision which led inexorably to becoming involved in the struggle to change society, to bring about a society which is healthy and is not beset with hysteria, setting people at each other's throats. What was sidelined should take pride of place in the mainstream, and this is the motion of history, which the present retrogression which the ruling elites are imposing on the world is trying to block. The international bourgeoisie is pushing the world back to medievalism, before enlightenment smashed medieval irrationalism and obscurantism. The humanism which came to the fore then and which opened up the path for civilisation to advance, putting man at the centre of things, flowered in the 20th century into the humanism of the collective, of the whole society. No one can doubt when looking at Cornelius' life, his music and his writings that this is the path which he embarked on with full vigour. This path did not disappear with Cornelius' death, however great the setbacks were when Cornelius was taken from us.

What is a unifying factor in this festival is the conviction that there is a culture where the individual flourishes in not being subservient to the aims that retrogression tries to impose at this present stage of history, but in working together, opening a space where people can operate and get relief from the pressure of oppression. It is a space which incorporates what is best from the past, from the people's traditions, from the experience of music making and other cultural activity to gladden the people's hearts, where the conditions for the flourishing of the individual is the flourishing of all, not the opposite, a culture which is consonant with the liberation of modern productive forces and the best levels of expertise which society has attained.

Cornelius set his aims and tasks in the context of the collective work and the demands of the time. It could be said that this was the flowering of what he had tried to achieve with setting the performers in motions and instigating

# Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival

the social forms which would express a truly modern culture, representing the strivings and aspirations of the most advanced forces in society, rather than those who preach individualism and

**Cornelius celebrated the human spirit, the best of what humanity has given rise to, the striving to overcome obstacles, to give birth to a new world. That is why he joined the progressive and revolutionary movement and why this was his whole life, with no hiatus between his words and his actions, between his political commitment and his cultural activity.**

and in celebrating the International Brigade who fought in the Spanish Civil War and of the martyrs who gave their life in this cause. There is too the movement against state-organised racist attacks with which Cornelius was so closely associated and in which he played a forefront role. There was his work in organising the youth, in bringing out the best in them, in inspiring them to take up the struggle for a new society under the leadership of the working class and taking control of their own future.

His collaboration with Hardial Bains, leader of CPC(ML), and the Canadian cultural workers, including the joint work of the PCA and CCWC, was something very precious and important, both to him and to the international movement. This capturing and reflection of the spirit of the entire movement is a quality and spirit which we hold very dear and continue to celebrate and attempt to embody. It continues not only in the continued joint cultural work, but in the profound relations of proletarian internationalism which continue to exist between the Party in which Cornelius militated, RCPB(ML), and the Marxist-Leninists of Canada and their leadership. It continues as, with Cornelius' example in mind, we uphold the Not-In-Our-Name cultural project to reflect and advance

self-aggrandisement. In this respect, Cornelius represented and celebrated many of the best virtues of what is advanced. His internationalism, for example, started by paying attention to the best of the anti-fascist traditions in terms of honouring the life of German communist Ernst Thaelmann, in his support of the struggle of the Irish people for self-determination and the reunification of their island and against the oppressive dictate of Britain,



the broad movement against fascism, aggression and war, against the criminalisation and attempts to illegalise whole sections of the people, and to plant the alternative and create a new culture, a culture of our own, and to restore the dignity of the peoples everywhere.

What is this exciting work? It is realising the progressive potential in all those who wish to make a contribution. Cornelius' life became wholly dedicated to opening up this path, it became a programme to unite everyone of different shades of opinion in following what was new and human centred. It became a life which provides an inspiration and an example, a role model, to all who

wish to make a contribution to the progressive movement, both culturally and politically.

Certainly, the aim of this Festival has been to allow all who knew Cornelius or are keen to find out more about the kind of contribution that Cornelius made to have a space for celebrating Cornelius. In this, the converging point is to look profoundly at the reality of his contribution to a music which has humanity and serves humanity's progress. It is not so much to put Cornelius Cardew on a pedestal as to recognise what his greatest contributions were. It is to recognise that no musician or cultural worker

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## Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival

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rades of Cornelius, as well as by many people who have been attracted by his work in the 25 years since his death, so that during the day around 200 had either participated as audience, performers or both. The event was organised in such a way that formal and informal discussion permeated the proceedings, so it

could be said that very few people attended simply as spectators, but all contributed to its success.

The Festival was organised so that everyone who wanted to had space to celebrate Cornelius, a person who early on had made the decision as to what to do with his life, and had found his outlook within the progressive and revolutionary movement, the

movement for the emancipation of humanity, along the high-road of civilisation. The day created an excitement, a palpable sense that the future is before us, that these are new times and there is a golden opportunity for all to contribute to the path of renewal, to the bringing into being of the new culture.

Cornelius Cardew was always a pathfinder, who from his younger days to his final compositions put the human factor at the centre of his work. His commitment to upholding the spirit of the new led him uncompromisingly to become political and to write music which he firmly believed contributed to the progressive and revolutionary

movement. He did not see this as a sectarian activity. Far from it – this to him was part of opening a path which was of benefit to all, as an integral part of life. In this, he is widely regarded as being a role model and an inspiration to progressive musicians and others. Cornelius Cardew was an internationalist, and his life and work were about that new culture which gives expression to the lives of all as one people.

The whole Festival – the Symposium with live music in the afternoon, and the Concert in the evening – was inspirational. It celebrated a music that is in the service of life by a composer who saw his place in the struggle of humanity for a new society.



# Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival

## Message on the Occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Birth of the British Composer Cornelius Cardew

Canadian Cultural Workers Committee,  
May 7, 2006

I am pleased to be here on behalf of the Canadian Cultural Workers Committee and the Canadian working class and its party, the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), to celebrate with you the life and music Cornelius Cardew on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of his birth. I am pleased because his life and music are dear to the heart of the Canadian working class and people. Cornelius and the founder and leader of our Party, Hardial Bains, became the closest collaborators. Cornelius shared weal and woe with us, and his life and music belong not merely to the working class and people of Britain, but also to the working class and people of Canada, and indeed, to the working class and people of the world.

I was still a student in 1979 when Cornelius Cardew first led a delegation of the Progressive Cultural Association from Britain to Canada to collaborate with the Canadian Cultural Workers Committee, led by Comrade Hardial Bains. The songs, poems, and music which resulted from this collaboration were unprecedented in both quality and quantity. Although it happened 27 years ago, more than half my lifetime, and much has happened since then, including the untimely deaths of both Cornelius Cardew and Hardial Bains, the memories of the concerts at which those pieces were first performed are as fresh as if they happened yesterday. Those concerts were, so to speak, the proof of the pudding: a new world is possible, a world without exploitation and oppres-



sion, a world where the talent of every individual in every field of endeavour is encouraged to flourish in the service of humanity, both in the collective sense and in the personal sense of our humanity.

It is well known that the history of music, like that of other genres of art and literature, reflects the development of human society. The roots of music can be traced to the rhythms of human life, especially the rhythms of collective work, but also the rhythms of collective joy and the rhythms of collective sorrow. But it is far more than just an expression of what already exists. It also gives expression to what is coming into being and, most importantly, to what the best humanity has given rise to thinks should be. In our opinion, this is rare, but it is where Cornelius was striving to solve the main problem facing the field of musical composition today — to compose music which expresses the advances the peoples of all countries are striving for.

One of the most beautiful songs written by Hardial Bains and put to music by Cornelius is appropriately titled “We Sing for the Future.” It showed the efforts that both were making to provide this problem with a solution. It required paying attention to the

dialectical relationship between form and content and dealing with the pressure that music is merely a matter of perfecting form, rather than renewing its content by bringing it on par with the requirements of the times, including the appreciation of the contributions of all humanity. I have been told that a lot of brainstorming involving all the musicians went into the creation of that song and it was very exciting — and all the more so because it was all in the context of ongoing live performances attended by hundreds of people. At the end of the day, this living content can only be expressed in forms of content.

Music is a form of communication which, at its best, transcends the limitations of language in unifying the people. As such, music is an expression of the human spirit.

Cornelius, who himself represented the finest human spirit, contributed to the development of music as an incarnation of that human spirit, the very essence of what humanity stands for, fights for, and strives to become. After so many years since his passing, we are even now only beginning to realize in small measure the debt we owe Cornelius. It is up to us to appreciate his legacy by mobilizing not only ourselves but the younger generation to carry his contribution forward.

Thank you very much.  
*David Gershuny, Canadian Cultural Workers Committee*



**Cardew's arrangement of Verdi's "Va Pensiero" sung by the Health and Calm Choir**



# The Welcome to London for Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez

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such as Gareth Peirce.

The meeting was scheduled for 15:00, and at 14:00 there was a rally outside the Venezuelan embassy. There was a carnival atmosphere with a samba band and many people with Venezuelan flags and a number of banners with welcomes and slogans in Spanish – prominent was the Global Women's strike, as Chávez has taken a particular interest in how women are exploited under capitalism and taken many steps to involve women in Venezuela and break their chains. There were

around 200 people overall – a lot of youth, but people of all ages and nationalities and many from Latin America.

Over the next hour people moved on to the Camden Centre where there was a similar very positive upbeat atmosphere. Hundreds of people both with and without tickets queued to get into the meeting in a very good-natured way and there was no negativity when people could not get in although people voiced the opinion that a much bigger venue should have been chosen – some suggested Hyde Park or a football stadium. The crowd increased and there was a lot of political discussion about both the very positive situation in Latin America and the situation that people are facing here, particularly the attack on human rights and the increasing fascisation of the state being carried out by the Labour government. There was much discussion on how people could organise by coming forward to take up the struggle themselves rather than rely on politicians of the big parties.



**Hundreds of people queued outside the Camden Centre in order to get into the meeting to hear Venezuelan President Chávez speak. Many people held banners welcoming Chávez to London.**



Chávez arrived about 16:15 to much cheering and shouting and waving of flags. Many people still stayed around and the Venezuelan TV van allowed people to look at their monitors to watch Chávez peak.

The meeting was due to finish at 19:00 and most people went off to eat in-between and returned at the end. The crowds grew and Chávez finally came out around 20:30 to great cheering and flag waving again. He stopped and talked to many people and took

some time to speak to some anti-war women who asked him to visit Brian Haw in Parliament Square. The British security showed disquiet at the unscheduled halt, although his own security seemed unruffled – the feeling was that he had the protection of being amongst the people and therefore this negated the risk.

Again, the most enthusiastic support greeted him particularly from Latin American people and he left us with a feeling he is really a man of the people.



## MAY DAY 2006





# Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival

## The spirit of the New and the movement which Cornelius Cardew joined

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can turn aside from the path which is the high road of humanity, which Cornelius himself so fearlessly marched along.

There is no doubt about where Cornelius Cardew would have been now. He would have been in the thick of the struggles of the people, going against the prevailing stereotypes of what a composer should be, and demonstrating for all that politics is life, life is culture, and that there is no false dichotomy between culture and politics, because just as everyone lives their life as a form of culture, in a definite society, with definite outlook and ideology, and so on, so too the needs of the times demand that for humanity to progress, life must be lived to the full – in the fullest meaning of the term! He would have been encouraging everyone to follow his lead, to move forward along with him, not to get left behind!

Cornelius was a political organiser as well as a consummate musician. Far from giving up his political organising, it was being stepped up as the political work to be accomplished was also mounting. Those that knew him primarily through his political work loved and respected him precisely for this work, sometimes never even being aware of his standing as a composer. Equally it can be said that sometimes his fellow musicians did not appreciate the extent to which his abilities as an organiser and aptitude as a leader were put at the service of the political requirements of the times, and how his life was inseparably bound up with the all-round work which his Party had set, including on the cultural front, and was developing and to which he contributed immensely.

Cornelius celebrated the human spirit, the best of what humanity has given rise to, the

striving to overcome obstacles, to give birth to a new world. That is why he joined the progressive and revolutionary movement and why this was his whole life, with no hiatus between his words and his actions, between his political commitment and his cultural activity. Cornelius had found the way forward, and his music served life, and was life, and his life was reflected in his music and the music expressed the politics of humanity, an expression centred on the worth of human beings.

I am sure that if Cornelius had been alive today, this event on his 70th birthday would have been completely different. For one thing, there would be so much music to celebrate, and the celebration would be as much for the movement as for Cornelius – there would be one celebration! Cornelius would have been here, singing of the dawn of a new world, of a new human person, of which he was an example. Together we would have been celebrating the love of humanity for humanity, a new society, the worth of the mass of human beings and their collectives, and upholding the spirit and politics of “Not In Our Name!”, “No One Is Illegal” and “One Humanity, One Struggle!”

As well as being integrated into the movements of the people, putting his talents in their service, organising in their – that is, OUR! – collectives, Cornelius was a composer for humanity as a whole, and would have developed new forms of music-making, with no culture being second to any other. He would have dismissed with contempt the attempts to marginalise the struggles of the people for their emancipation, the creation of a hysteria so that it is considered sectarian or extreme to give expression to values other than the so-called “civilised values” which are declared to be uni-



**Performance of Cardew's Octet '61**

versal. Cornelius marched on the high road, and rejected these attempts to trivialise culture, to reduce it to side-line entertainment divorced from the high-road, to reduce its expression to an adjunct in the project of Tony Blair et al to try and remould individuals in his own divinely-inspired and chauvinist image, that declares all cultures are equal as long as they adopt imperialist values.

This is not to speculate on what Cornelius might have become. It is to acknowledge Cornelius significance and what he stood for all over again after 25 years. Cornelius died precisely at the point in his life when the issue of the false dichotomy between politics and life would have been settled once and for all. This is not because Cornelius would have settled it as such, but because Cornelius had the marked characteristic of being in the service of the ends of the times. It can be said that the need to oppose all the stereotypical renderings of life, including the issue of politicising music (its stereotypical rendering and rejection), is one of the crucial needs of today.

In the course of letting people know about this festival today, I got an email from a friend of ours in the US, who said: “You [meaning those who have come out of the Scratch Orchestra and remain comrades to this day] have been such a positive force in my life on a day-to-day basis, helping me constantly to keep honest by thinking of your integrity and interest in a music that is in the service of life.” This is Cornelius’ significance today, in demonstrating what was possible, in that change is possible and necessary, not only in people’s lives but in society, and that there can be no higher aspiration for musicians and other cultural workers than the immersion in this work, of advancing the progressive movement and the movement to halt retrogression. His life and work are the embodiment that one should not be afraid or embarrassed to aim high, to work collectively with one’s peers, and that it is the human spirit which we celebrate as we strive to actually live life as human beings, to release that human quality.

Cornelius, your example lives on!

## Workers' Daily Internet Edition

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