

# New Musical Figurations: Anthony Braxton's Cultural Critique, 315 pages, University of Chicago Press, 1993, Ronald M. Radano, 1993, 9780226701950

New Musical Figurations exemplifies a dramatically new way of configuring jazz music and history. By relating biography to the cultural and musical contours of contemporary American life, Ronald M. Radano observes jazz practice as part of the complex interweaving of postmodern culture—a culture that has eroded conventional categories defining jazz and the jazz musician. Radano accomplishes all this by analyzing the creative life of Anthony Braxton, one of the most emblematic figures of this cultural crisis. New Musical Figurations gives the richest view available of this many-sided artist. Radano examines Braxton's early years on the South Side of Chicago, whose vibrant black musical legacy inspired him to explore new avenues of expression. New Musical Figurations exemplifies a dramatically new way of configuring jazz music and history. By relating biography to the cultural and musical contours of contemporary American life, Ronald M. Radano observes jazz practice as part of the complex interweaving of postmodern culture—a culture that has eroded conventional categories defining jazz and the jazz musician. Radano accomplishes all this by analyzing the creative life of Anthony Braxton, one of the most emblematic figures of this cultural crisis. New Musical Figurations gives the richest view available of this many-sided artist. Radano examines Braxton's early years on the South Side of Chicago, whose vibrant black musical legacy inspired him to explore new avenues of expression. The Falling River Musics were a new type of composition after the Ghost Trance Musics, where Braxton began to work on "image logics", resulting in graphic scores with large paintings and drawings with smaller legends of various symbols. The performers are forced to find their own meanings in the symbols and to construct their own path through the score, as a way of balancing "the demands of traditional notation interpretation and esoteric inter-targeting." [45]. New Musical Figurations: Anthony Braxton's Cultural Critique. University of Chicago Press. p. 38. ISBN 9780226701943.