

Richard Barrett

codex XVI

2015

6 or more improvising musicians and electronics

performing score

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for 6 or more improvising performers (2 equal-sized groups of 3 or more each) and electronics

duration 13 minutes approximately

for Glenn Cornett, Peter Evans, Gleb Kanasevich, Christopher McIntyre, David Shively and Milana Zarić
first performance: 30 June 2015, Spectrum, New York City

Timings given in the score are approximate and indicate only general proportions. The sections should be cued by the performer responsible for playback of the electronic sounds (who may also take part as an instrumentalist). It's more important to create a sense of musical "logic" in the transitions between sections than for the proportions to be exact. Most of the transitions are suggested to be abrupt, but this doesn't necessarily mean blunt and unsubtle. The transitions are where the most engaging and memorable moments could happen.

The two groups must contain the same number of performers each. Group 1 is intended principally for melodic instruments (winds, bowed strings) and group 2 for percussive/harmonic instruments (tuned/untuned percussion, keyboards, plucked strings...) although this refers more to the kind of material played than to the mechanics of playing. Electronic instruments, for example, could be assigned to either group.

The electronic part consists of four stereo soundfiles which are played back at the indicated points in the score. Cues 1, 2 and 4 are played back without pauses (but with specific dynamic indications/changes), and consist of sustained dyads as notated in the score; cue 3 is irregularly paused and resumed so that it becomes rhythmically unpredictable, and consists of a sequence of percussive chords based around the notated pitches.

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(0'00")

1'40"

group 1

improvise freely within the range E \flat -G (mostly) in a general gradual crescendo with internal variations

p *f*

group 2

TACET

electr.

sound 1
fade in gradually

ppp *p* *f*

(+ slight variations in dynamic within the crescendo, responding to group 1)

(1'40")

1'20"

(3'00")

40"

group 1

TACET

group 2

begin together with single dense and resonant attack

then independent attacks every 5-8 seconds, gradually slowing...

as the attacks become further apart, they spread out in time by the addition of fragments (echoes?) between them

sfffz *mf*

(main attacks gradually become quieter)

electr.

cue other players and cut off sound 1 abruptly!

TACET

one member of group 1 cues

become part of the interstitial fragments of group 2 (not the main attacks!)

(3'40")

30"

(4'10")

2'00"

group 1

TACET

group 2

improvise freely within the range A-G \sharp (mostly)

mf f sempre

tutti:
improvise freely within the dynamic range

subito ppp p sempre

electr.

sound 2

cue other players and cut off sound 2 abruptly!

TACET

(6'10")

(7'30")

1'20"

one member of group 1 cues

1'20"

♩=30-90

(individually fluctuating tempo) - each member of the group begins at a different point in the "loop". Specified pitches alternate with unspecific sounds which may or may not be pitched but instead explore the entire timbral, registral, articulation and dynamic range of the instrument, while all sounds remain brief and separated by silences.

group 1

pp ff

group 2

TACET

one member of group 2 cues

suddenly group 2 joins the texture of variegated points of sound as an extension of the music of group 1, abruptly doubling the average density of the texture

pp ff

electr.

TACET

(8'50")

50"

group 1

group 2

tutti:
improvise freely, including sustained sounds alongside anything else, BUT each player should only be active about half of the time, using chords in the electronic part as synchronising cues to start playing, or stop, or make a change within a sustained sound or texture. As the electronic part slows down, the rate of textural change will slow down alongside it.

mp fff

cue other players at start

electr.

sound 3

highly irregular and unpredictable repetitions (and variations) of this chord (pausing and resuming continuous soundfile), gradually slowing

mp fff

cue other players at end

(9'40")

(10'30")

(13'00")

50"

2'30"

group 1

group 2

each member of group 1 is paired with a member of group 2. Each pair plays around 50% of the time, in events of between 3" and 15" (mostly). Each pair plays independently. Each entry is cued by the group 1 member of a pair, each exit by the group 2 member of the pair. Attempt to erase any distinctions between group 1 as "melodic instruments" and group 2 as "percussive".

p

(perhaps follow the electronic part towards pitchless sounds?)

ppp

electr.

sound 4

ppp

pp sempre