Richard Barrett

# *codex XX*

2018
8 improvising musicians

performing score

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2018
for 8 improvising musicians
duration 18 minutes approximately

The eight players are divided into two groups. Group 1 must consist entirely of sustaining instruments/voices that can sustain pitches in at least one of the three lines of pitch material shown below. There are opportunities within the sections, and especially during section 2.5 which doesn't involve Group 1, for doubling instruments to be used to expand the player's range. As many of these opportunities should be taken, especially by woodwind players. Group 2 may also contain sustaining instruments but does not need to since its music contains no specified pitches. It might therefore contain percussive, plucked and/or electronic instruments. The two groups do not need to be separated or otherwise distinguished on stage.

**The score** consists of three components: (a) this explanation, whose contents should be internalised by performers before and during rehearsals and (b) the formscheme of the composition. Before rehearsals begin, players should be allocated to the parts 1-8. At any point during the piece, one of the players is responsible for specified kinds of cueing. This is indicated by a black triangle in that part in the formscheme. The temporary "leader" is thus also responsible for overseeing the temporal proportions shown in the score. While of course it isn't intended that timings be followed to the detriment of ongoing musical (improvisational) considerations, this proportional scheme should be borne in mind.

**Dynamics** are often shown as ranges, which should be fully explored. Where none is shown it may be freely chosen/varied.
The ∞ symbol indicates "free improvisation", sometimes with additional suggestions.

**Group 1**: the performing indications always apply to all four players in the group. Apart from these indications, most sections have a selection of pitches (generally three at a time), suggestions for whose deployment are given around one or more circles below the staves. Each player begins a section at a freely-chosen point on one of the circles shown for that section, then proceeding clockwise or anticlockwise to the next one, according to timing directions given above the staves, until all points around the circle have been used. The player then moves to a freely chosen point on another freely chosen circle (or the same one if there is only one) and so on. The suggestion "take up and transform" a sound/event played by someone else may take many forms, from sustaining/resonating it, through echoing/imitating it, to using it as a point of departure towards something quite different, depending on the (constantly changing!) context.

**Group 2**: mostly, only points of entry and exit (generally for each player individually) and some very general additional suggestions are given. It isn't necessary to play continuously during indicated period of activity. The "solos" aren't intended to mean "play in a particular way" but instead to indicate a particular kind of relationship between players, namely where the "soloist" plays freely without necessarily thinking about relating to the musical environment, while the "accompanists" might relate more to the soloist than to each other by means of supportive or imitative (or perhaps even disruptive) activity, within the context of any other indications.

The suggestion of some type of material or behaviour somewhere in the score in no way precludes its appearance elsewhere (at points where it is not mentioned). The score is intended as a starting-point rather than a goal to be aimed at. Spontaneous variations on or even contradictions of its suggestions may be made at any time, always however bearing in mind the individual's responsibility not to compromise the composed structure or the contributions of others.

**Sections 1.1-1.3**: player 1 cues the beginning and also the changes between Group 1 pitch materials (and Group 2 entries). Wherever possible, each member of Group 1 should play a different pitch from the triad at each entry that specifies the use of one of the pitches. During section 1.3, player 8 makes a gradual transition towards his/her solo.
**Section 1.4**: player 8 has a solo accompanied by Group 1 only, mostly with irregular isolated points of sound
**Sections 2.1-2.4**: Group 1: as for sections 1.1-1.3, except beginning on either of the circles (and moving to the other when the first is completed, etc.) and moving around the circles on the cues from player 8. Group 2: whatever you're doing, coordinate stopping, starting or changing it to the cues from player 8, most but not all of the time. Player 8 gives small cues for movement around circles (Group 1) and start/stop/change/ignore (Group 2), large cues for change of chord for Group 1. Player 8 continues to give cues after he/she has stopped playing. Player 6 should disregard all the cues during his/her solo.
**Section 2.5**: player 5's solo continues, players 6-8 accompany it mostly with sustained sounds, Group 1 plays quiet almost regular pulsations (swells within a sustained sound, sequences of staccato sounds, anything between these) in a gradually attenuating harmonic field
**Sections 3.1-3.5**: Group 1 has similar suggestions to sections 1.1-1.3, Group 2 consists of a series of improvised duos followed by a solo for player 7
**Section 3.6**: player 7's solo continues, players 5, 6 and 8 accompany it freely, Group 1 plays repeated diminuendi on a decelerating series of 8 triads
**Section 4.1**: player 6's solo consists of irregular splashes of sound, which all the others use as cues to stop/start/change/ignore
**Section 4.2**: cued by player 6, everyone suddenly switches to the quiet texture described in the score.
**Section 4.3**: cued by player 3, Group 1 plays in rhythmical unison, each player freely choosing the octave register of each pitch so that their entire range is used. Group 2 throws random sound-droplets into this sequence. Little or no variation in dynamic.

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| 1.1 (50") | 1.2 (50") | 1.3 (50") | 1.4 (2'00") | 2.1 (45") | 2.2 (45") | 2.3 (45") | 2.4 (45") | 2.5 (1'30") |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0'00" | 0'50" | 1'40" | 2'30" | 4'30" | 5'15" | 6'00" | 6'45" | 7'30" |

Group 1

1 player 1 cues movement between the three triads used in sections 1.1 - 1.3
no octave transpositions!
all other timings are individually chosen
stay on each point of the circle for between 5" and 25"

2 mostly irregular isolated points of sound
maximum variation in timbre, pitch, articulation
responding to player 8

3 *f fff*

4 player 8 cues movement between the pitch materials used in sections 2.1 - 2.4
AND ALSO movements around and between the two circles!

mostly pulsations at various independent speeds
and articulations, almost regular,
choosing one pitch for between 2.5" and 7.5"

*pp-p*

37.5" 27.5" 17.5" 7.5"

take up and transform
a sound/event from another player
(in either group)

tacet
sustain one pitch of the triad
varying timbre and/or intonation each time
use one pitch of the triad
as starting point for ∞
tacet

take up and transform
a sound/event from another player
(in either group)

tacet
sustain one pitch of the chord
varying timbre and/or
intonation each time
use one pitch of the chord
as starting point for ∞
tacet

start a glissando
on one pitch from
the chord
∞
tacet
tacet
single loud sound
perhaps with
resonance
rapid group of sounds
consisting of at least
3 pitches from the chord
tacet

Group 2

5 ∞ ∞ as player 7 ∞ SOLO ignore cues!

6 ∞ as player 7

7 ∞ ∞ respond to cues ad lib. (stop/start/change/ignore) mostly sustained sounds

8 ∞ SOLO (non solo)

*f fff*

irregular cues every 3-15"

stop playing, continue cueing...

3.1 (42") 9'00" | 3.2 (42") 9'42" | 3.3 (42") 10'34" | 3.4 (42") 11'06" | 3.5 (42") 11'48" | 3.6 (1'00") 12'30" | 4.1 (3'20") 13'30" | 4.2 (40") 16'50" | 4.3 (30") 17'30"

5

1
2
3
4

player 2 cues movement between the five triads used in sections 3.1 - 3.5
~~no octave transpositions!~~
all other timings are individually chosen
~~stay on each point of the circle for between 5" and 25"~~

on player 3's cues, choose a pitch
and play it with a diminuendo
and possibly a glissando

***mf*** **>** ***pp***

player 3 leads: rhythmical unison,
each pitch in any available octave
so that the entire range of the instrument
is used

♪=24

***mp*** sempre

♪=84

♪ x 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

take up and transform
a sound/event from another player
(in either group)

tacet
sustain one pitch of the triad
varying timbre and/or
intonation each time
use one pitch of the triad
as starting point for ∞
tacet

start a glissando
on one pitch from
the chord

∞
tacet
tacet
single loud sound
perhaps with
resonance
rapid group of sounds
beginning and ending on
one pitch of the triad
tacet

tacet
∞
almost regular pulsation]
on one pitch of the triad
crescendo dal niente
tacet
tacet
∞

**tutti** except player 6: respond to each of player 7's splashes by
starting something
or ending something
or starting *and* ending something (a brief event)
or changing something
or ignoring it

**tutti**: begins suddenly
on cue from player 6:
continuous texture
of unpitched sounds
made up of individual
breaths, scrapes, clicks etc.

***ppp-pp***

5 ∞ duo with 6 | ∞ accompany 7

6 ∞ **duo with** 5 duo with 8 | ∞ accompany 7 | ▼▼▼▼▼▼ ... etc.SOLO splashes of sound every 2.5-15", all different... | ▼ | throw in random sound-droplets

7 ∞ SOLO | ***mp*** sempre

8 ∞ duo with 6 accompany 7 | ∞ accompany 7