

Laurence Crane

2-Metre Harmony: Uncertain Chorales

for 3 performers

(2020)

Co-commissioned by Pinguins for 'Drive-In' (with funds from Arts Council Norway) and the Norwegian Academy of Music (on behalf of 'Performing Precarity')

All 3 performers sing, play harmonicas and pitch pipes, and play back pre-recorded sine tones

First performances:

Pinguins

(Sigrun Rogstad Gommæs, Ane Marthe Sørlien Holen and Jennifer Torrence)

Ultima Festival, Oslo, Norway

18 & 19 September 2020

Duration: c.10 minutes

Notes for performance

The 3 performers are positioned at a distance of at least 2 metres from each other. The performers all use their voices and all play a pitch pipe, 2 harmonicas and pre-recorded sine tones via smartphones. Once the individual instruments are allocated to the performers, they should only be used by those performers. In the event of instruments having to be transferred between performers, the instruments should be quarantined for a period of 72 hours.

Voices: untrained, preferably in the octave notated, but can be in another octave if necessary.

Pitch Pipes: use a Tombo P-13E chromatic pitch pipe, with a range of E4 to E5.

Harmonicas: use 10 hole diatonic harmonicas. Performer 1 plays harmonicas in G and A, performer 2 plays harmonicas in E and F#, performer 3 plays harmonicas in C and D.

The single pitches notated in each part are those which arise from either blowing or drawing on the hole indicated. So, for example, on a harmonica in C, a draw on hole 2 will produce the note G4. But for untrained harmonica players, it's possible that their embouchure will result in some adjacent pitches also being activated. If this happens, it is to be embraced in this piece.

In the score, 1b denotes blow on hole 1, 2d denotes draw on hole 2, and so on.

Sine Tones: there are 10 pre-recorded tracks, which are operated from smartphones and played through bluetooth speakers, all placed close to the performers. Each smartphone has its own bluetooth speaker. Performer 1 uses tracks 2, 5, 8 and 10, performer 2 uses tracks 1, 3, 6, 9 and 10 and performer 3 uses tracks 1, 4, 7 and 10.

The playback level for the sine tones should be just a tiny bit below the live sound. The place of performance will also be a factor here, for example, if the piece is performed outdoors. The sine tones should be present and very audible but should never overwhelm the live sounds. The performers do not need to do any manual fading in or out; all fades are built in to the tracks, so the appropriate level on smartphones and speakers needs to be agreed and set before the performance.

The sine tones are present continuously from just before letter B to the end of the piece. They go through various shifts, which are activated in 4 transition bars. A transition between chords takes c.10 seconds and is started in each transition bar by the performer who is not playing any sine tones at that point; for example, performer 1 at 4 bars after letter B. As soon as that performer starts to activate their file, the next performer (number 2 in this example) must perform their action. Finally, the performer holding on to the previous sine tone chord turns off their file and becomes the non-sine tone player until the next transition bar.

The shift between chords will depend on this succession of performer actions; it may not always be predictable but this is also to be embraced. Towards the end of each transition bar, the new chord should sit for a good few seconds before the musicians play the next bars. In the final bar, when all 3 performers have the sine tones for the first time, the fade out is staggered.

For Jen, Sigrun and Ane Marthe

2-METRE HARMONY: UNCERTAIN CHORALES

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Dynamic level is consistent throughout; always in the 'mezzo' range, there should be no extremes of dynamics. Playback should never overwhelm the live sounds.

1

voice* c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" pitch pipe*** c.3" , c.3" , c.3" , c.3" ,

playback**

2

voice* c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" pitch pipe*** c.3" , c.3" , c.3" , c.3" ,

playback**

3

voice* c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" c.4" c.2" pitch pipe*** c.3" , c.3" , c.3" , c.3" ,

playback**

* Five possible wordless vocal articulations: 'aa' as in the 'a' of 'far'/'oo' as in the 'o' of 'do'/ hum with closed mouth/ hum with slightly open mouth/ whistle. Collectively choose 2 or 3 of these and allocate a single articulation to each chord, repeating 1 or 2 where necessary. It should sound hesitant, as if trying through various options to see what works best.

** Pre-recorded sine tones (see 'notes for performance')

*** Tombo P-13E chromatic pitch pipe (see 'notes for performance')

A ♩ = 54 (independent tempo)

1

2

3

♩ = 60 (independent tempo)

♩ = 66 (independent tempo)

play track no.1 at some ** point during last repeat

play track no.1 at some ** point during last repeat

B ♩ = 60 (collective tempo)

1

2

3

c.10"

play track no.2

harmonica *** in G

1b

2d

x3

c.4"

stop track no.1, play track no.3

harmonica *** in E

1b

2d

x3

c.4"

stop track no.1

harmonica *** in C

1b

2d

x3

c.4"

* Short pause to allow all 3 players to finish.
 ** Sine tones continuous from here to the end of the piece.

C

1b c.12" harmonica in A 1b c.12" c.4" 1b 2d x3

stop track no.2, play track no.5

stop track no.5

1b c.12" harmonica in F# 1b c.12" c.4" 1b 2d x3

stop track no.3

play track no.6

1b c.12" harmonica in D 1b c.12" c.4" 1b 2d x3

play track no.4

stop track no.4, play track no.7

D

harm. in G 1b 2d 2b 3d x3 1b c.12" 2d 2b 3d x4

harm. in E 1b 2d 2b 3d x3 1b c.12" 2d 2b 3d x4

harm. in C 1b 2d 2b 3d x3 1b c.12" 2d 2b 3d x4

