Else Olsen S.

Open Form –
An Expanded Performer's Role.

A Handbook.

Program for kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid

Griegakademiet

Thank you!

Thank you very much to each one of the composers represented in this project, for enigmatic and cryptic instructions and the joy of discovering each work's unique world. Being able to work closely with Christian Wolff and Pauline Oliveros in both playing and research, has been of vast significance. Their mentorships have given me an experience that I will carry with me in my performance and general understanding of Open Form. Thanks you very much, Pauline and Christian, for the opportunity to experience the past and present through interpretations and conversations, concerts and diverse emails.

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Preface

Although Open Form is based on an ideology of freedom, performing it still requires insight and knowledge from the performer. This handbook is for performers, especially encountering an Open Form work for the first time. This is not a book for theoreticians – it is intended to be a basic guide in your work with Open Form as a performer.

My inspiration in creating this handbook was my own quest for knowledge and experience in performing these works. There was no tradition for performing Open Form in the institutional milieu where I studied, and I had difficulty finding anyone who could help answer my questions concerning these works. The existing literature on the subject is not written by performers or composers, but by academics. Obviously these are valuable sources, but they are not necessarily good sources of practical information for a performer. In 2003, I got in touch with Christian Wolff and later with Pauline Oliveros, and both have been my mentors and tutors in working with Open Form.

This handbook provides a brief introduction to Open Form. It should not be read as a blueprint, but rather as a map that shows where the mountain is, ready to be climbed. I want to make practical information available to and useful for performers. I also hope that teachers at various music institutions will find inspiration here. I would like to see a higher level of knowledge about Open Form at educational institutions, in the hope of inspiring students to experiment and perform Open Form. With performances and teaching, tradition and genre are not only preserved but also kept alive, as the nature of Open Form.

This handbook has evolved alongside my own work on the interpretation and performance of a number of Open Form works, in a variety of ensembles. I have worked exclusively with Open Form for over 10 years, and I have performed many works, many of them repeatedly, in my experiments – each work in its own world.

Contents

Introduction

If you have not worked with Open Form before, you may be both frightened and inspired in your first meeting with an Open Form composition. If you're a classically trained musician, accustomed to traditionally notated music, you might experience the frames of an Open Form piece as too extensive. If your background is in improvisation, on the other hand, you might experience the same piece as strictly limiting. An Open Form work is both extensively open and strictly limited; it has open, but clearly defined frames: a kaleidoscope of possibilities.

One of the challenges with these works, because of the way they are notated, is that many performers believe that they are allowed to do anything. But this is not the case, and to approach the work that way can turn it into something the composer never intended.

The term *Open Form* is used as a designation for a type of work, but it also addresses a genre. Many works belong in this genre, as well as the works of several contemporary composers.

Several composers have been involved in developing Open Form as a genre. They are all composers with distinct but different ways of notating. What their compositions have in common is that the performer must explore improvisation and composition in varying degrees during the interpretation process and performance. I say *explore* because there are not any set requirements for you to be an educated or skilled composer, or a professional performer, to perform these works. Being perceptive to new ideas of what a sound, a composition, and form might mean is perhaps more relevant. (It is, nevertheless, preferable and practical that you are able to make some kind of sound or action to use in an interpretation.)

I seek to illuminate Open Form in this handbook through selected composers. Other examples would provide a different picture. The composers covered in the handbook are:

Christian Wolff (1934)
John Cage (1912-1992)
Pauline Oliveros (1932)
Cornelius Cardew (1936-1981)

Earle Brown (1926-2002)
Morton Feldman (1926-1987)

Also presented are two contemporary Norwegian composers:
Bjørn Thomas Melhus (f. 1976)
and myself.

Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928 – 2007) is generally associated with 'closed' form; but his diverse production also includes Open Form, including compositions like *Aus den sieben Tagen* (1968) and *Für kommende Zeiten* (1968 – 1970), which are both collections of several works. As a student I was told that these were Stockhausen's 'hippie-compositions', a way of composing and notating which he abandoned in favour of something better. When I asked Stockhausen about these compositions, his immediate response was eye rolling and head shaking. At first I was disappointed, seeing this as a confirmation of the hippie theory. But why did he get so upset when I asked about these compositions? When he explained, I could well understand his frustration: 'The performers do not practice enough on these pieces, but, in fact, these pieces need more practice than any other others'.[1]

Stockhausen also spoke about his experiences of poor performances, and said how sorry he was that performers would include one of these compositions in a concert programme in order to include something eccentric in a conventional concert programme, but without taking it seriously and making the necessary preparations. Stockhausen conveyed a seriousness and great care for the process of performing these works, which illustrates the essence of what I am trying to convey in this handbook.

Working with Open Form, you will need methods and techniques other than those usually given in a conventional instrumental training program. You will face new challenges – different ones from those met in a conventional composition. Through the many hurdles, it's possible to acquire knowledge and experience, in order to present Open Form to the audience in a respectful manner.

[1] Conversation with Stockhausen, 27 August 2005.

The examples used in this handbook are derived directly from my own experiences. This applies in all showcases.

PART 1

1. How do we perform Open Form?

Classification

The different notational techniques in Open Form can be classified by using the following four categories:

1. Text notation
2. Graphic notation
3. Number notation
4. Extended conventional notation

An Open Form composition is often notated with a combination of two or more categories. In the following section, I will give examples to illustrate the different categories.

1. Text notation.

Example: Pauline Oliveros, *Dissolving your earplugs* (2006).

Dissolving your earplugs: For classically trained musicans and anyone else interested.

1) Take some time - no matter where you are - sit down and close your eyes for a while and just listen - When you open your eyes consider what you heard as the "music". Later try to remember what you heard and express it with your instrument.

Do this practice often until you begin to hear the world as music.

2) Another time - sit down with your instrument and just listen with your eyes closed. As you realize that whatever you are hearing IS "music" allow your instrument to enter this musical stream. Stop when the music is over. This is supported improvisation.

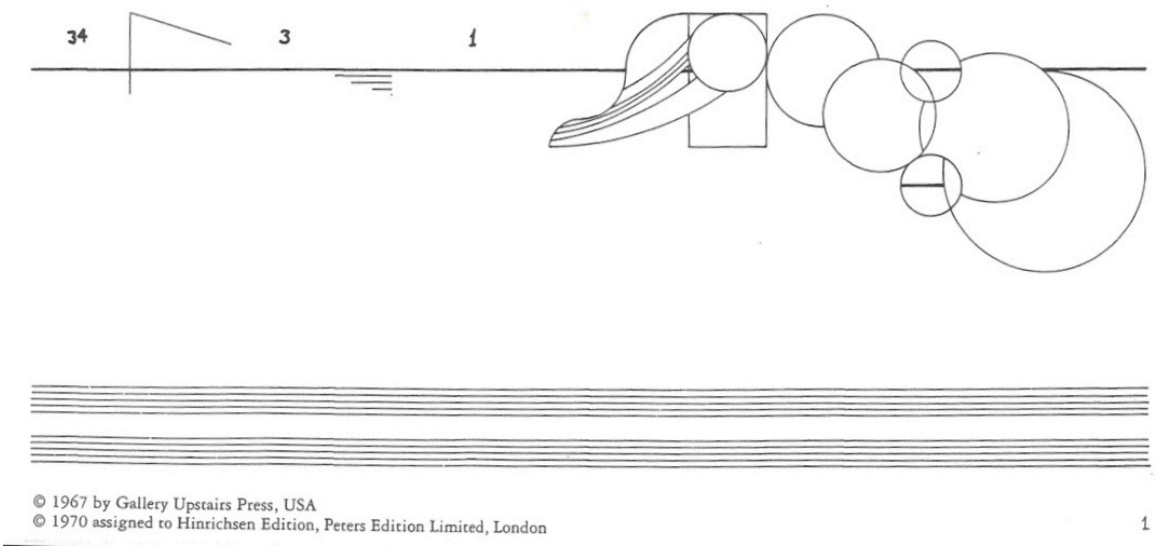
3) Listen to a favorite machine and play along with it.

4) Listen to a favorite natural soundscape and play along with it.

Print courtesy by Pauline Oliveros. Excerpt from *Anthology of Text Scores*, Pauline Oliveros, Deep Listening Publications 2013.

2. Graphic notation

Example: Cornelius Cardew, excerpt from *Treatise* (1963 – 67).

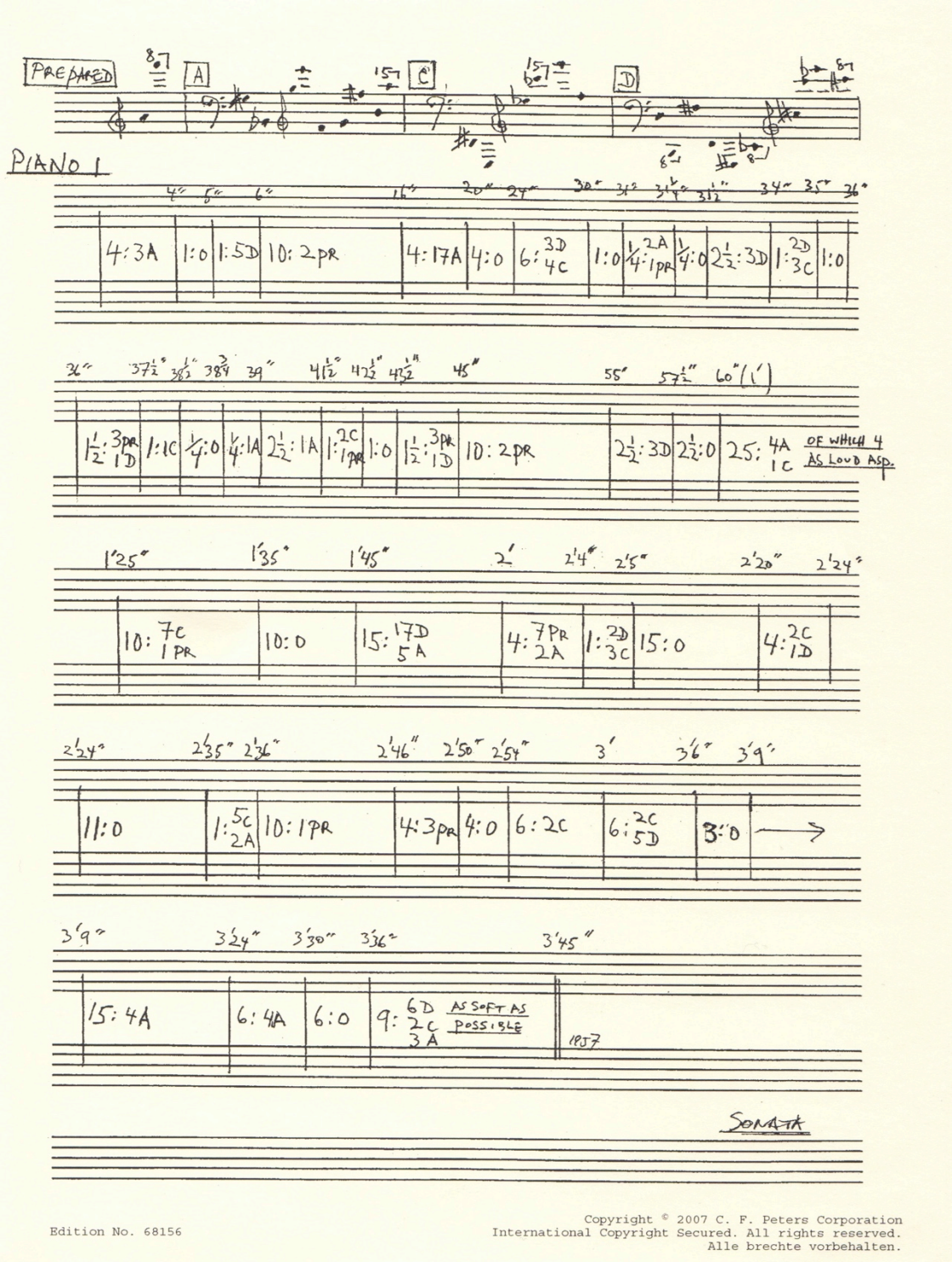


1

Print courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation.

3. Number notation

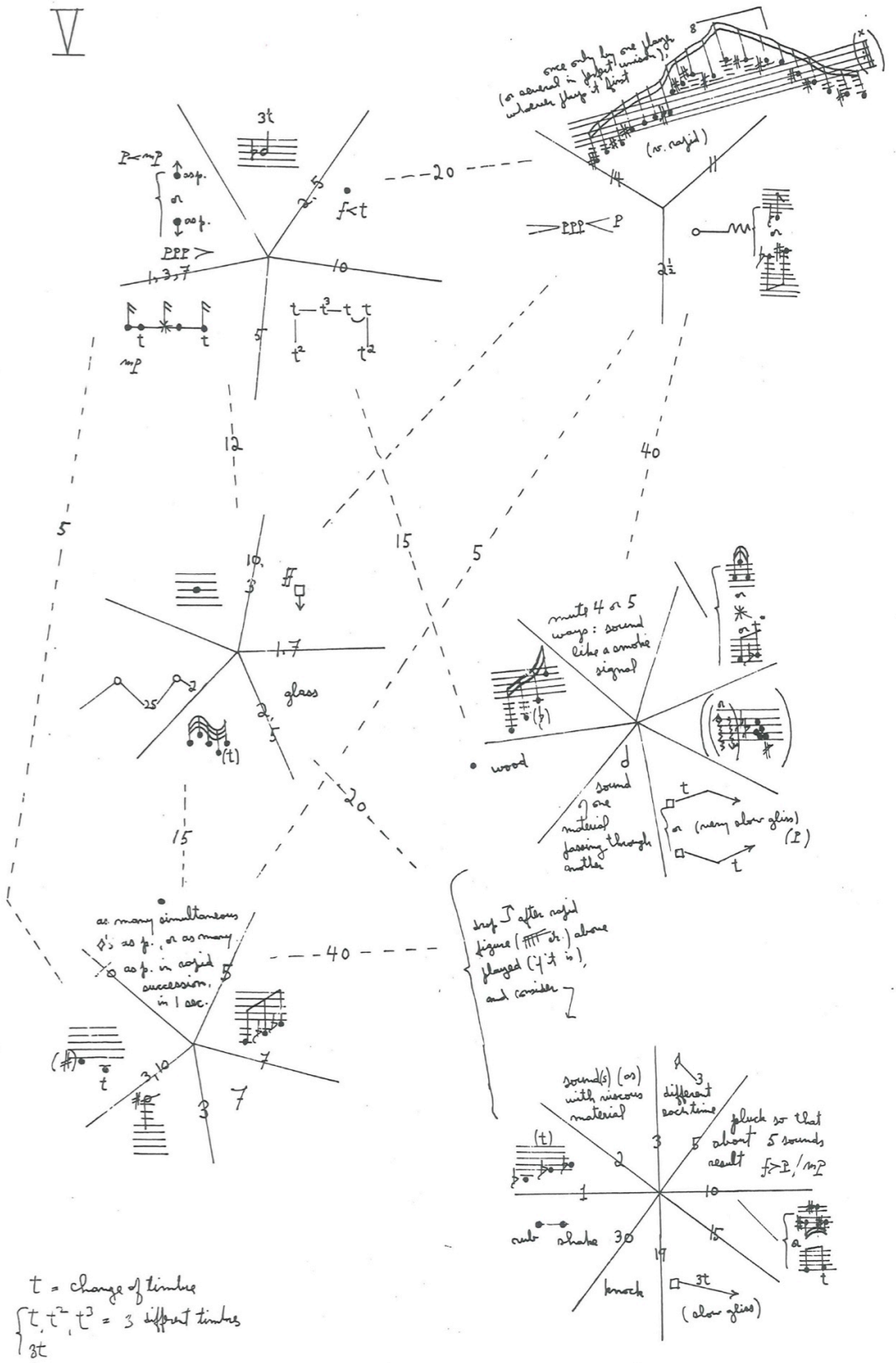
Example: Christian Wolff, *Sonata for Three Pianos* (1957). The work is notated with *time brackets*



Print courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation.

4. Extended conventional notation.

Example: Christian Wolff, excerpt from *Burdocks* (1970 – 71).



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A Basic Recipe

We begin with one possible way you might work towards an interpretation of an Open Form composition, through a basic recipe.

As the ingredients in the recipe can vary, depending on the work, on you yourself, and on the rehearsal situation, the steps outlined here will be subject to rearrangement and adjustment. Some elements may be irrelevant for some works, and some works may need more or different ingredients. It is important to remember that every work always needs its own formula.

Nevertheless, I offer here a basic recipe for you to work with as a base for experiments with each work. The recipe adopts the way in which you might work your way through the different aspects of an interpretation of a conventionally notated work, and provides a reminder of the relationship between the performance of Open Form works and those works that are not Open Form.[2]

The underlying principle of the recipe is to be as faithful as possible to the identity of the piece. At the same time, it's important to take into account that your interaction with the work is vital and indispensable for the outcome, as well as the work itself.

[2] Earle Brown uses the term closed form works. See Brown, 1987, p. 57.

The basic recipe I describe consists of four main ingredients:

1. Analysing the score.

2. Making a Bank of Ideas.

3. Testing ideas and practice performance.

4. Performance.

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

In order to categorize the work we first have to observe the score and detect which techniques have been used to notate it. The four categories each reflect a different notational technique. To help contextualise the principal categories, I add a fifth notational technique, which might also form part of an Open Form work.

1. Text instructions
2. Graphic notation
3. Number notation
4. Extended conventional notation
5. Conventional notation

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

This is a little like a child's game. Everyone involved must follow the rules or instructions in order to maintain the game, or else it will fall apart and collapse.

    - Does the work have an instructional text? If yes: What does the instruction say?

Is the instruction clear and logical, or is there any individual need for interpretation of the instructions?

Is there anything that the instructional text does not deal with?

This may include aspects of the work that the composer has deliberately omitted, so as to give you responsibility for it as a performer. Or there may be possibilities or aspects of the work that the composer didn't think about. You can find examples of both in Open Form works.

Cardew originally had a handbook accompanying his *Treatise* (1963 – 67). In the handbook he describes the fact that a performer has to interpret the instructional text provided by the composer, followed by transcribed versions, conventionally notated. He also discusses the paradox of a performer interpreting the instruction, *Treatise Handbook*, itself.

> […] in the work of many composers (including Feldman, Wolff, Cage, myself, Rzewski, LaMonte Young and even Stockhausen if he himself happens to be absent) the interpretation of the *instructions* for a piece has a decisive influence on the performance. We have seen that to say that the instructions govern the performer's interpretation of the notations does not cover the case. Very often a performer's intuitive response to the notation influences to a large extent his interpretation of the instructions.[3]

This may indeed be the reason why Cardew withdrew the Handbook. He wanted to give more room for the performers to interpret. Their interpretation has its own value, and should be uncompromised by a handbook. An alternative is to notate the work in a conventional manner (*Treatise Handbook* actually presents us with examples of this), instead of open notational techniques.

- **Descriptive analysis of the score.**

Does the score state anything specific concerning:

Instrumentation

The instrumentation of many Open Form works is open. You may already have an ensemble that is established and ready to perform, but if not, you must determine an appropriate ensemble.

The instrumentation may as well be stones, tins and cans, or 'circuit bent' instruments, as well as conventional instruments. Just as important as the instrumentation is that the performers have a good base for interacting with each other.

Length

[3] Cardew, 1971, p. xv

Development

Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level? A micro level concerns the sound's

Timbre
Texture
Duration
Dynamic
Pitch
Spacing/complexity[4]

Spacing the events is easier with a smaller ensemble than a larger one. Even with a quartet the performers can get in the way of each other, or make the space between the events very dense. The larger the ensemble is, the more important it is to let there be space for fellow performers' events. All of those factors requires good discipline and Deep Listening, but can be rehearsed.

Rhythmic structure
Development/structure

The material that you use for interpretation does not need to be sounds. It can also be kinaesthetic, for example, performance[5] or dance. 'Sound interpretation' means you are doing an action using sound. 'Kinaesthetic interpretation' means you are doing an action without using sound, which brings you into the field of visual arts, with impact in the field of performance art.

In a kinaesthetic interpretation, your actions will correspond to the same elements as with sound, but will, of course, need some adjustments according to the tools used, for example timbre or rhythmic structure.

Example:
John Cage, *Variations III* (1963) is a typical example of an Open Form work where it's not given that you're going to make sounds. In the instructional text you are asked to perform an action: *Make an action or actions* [...]. This stands in contrast to, for

[4] Spacing and complexity refers to the space between different events, for example, between two sounds.
[5] Not all Open Form works give you the possibility for non-phonetic interpretations. Examples of some works that do allow this are John Cage's *Variations III* (1963), Wolff's *Edges*, and Earle Brown's *December 1952* from *Foilo*.

example, *Four*[6] (1992), where you are asked to make sounds: *Choose twelve different sounds* [...]. In Cage's own performance notes for *Variations III*, which are preserved at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, he has created a list called *Things I can do*. The list contains many different sound events and non-phonetic actions. Here is a small excerpt from the list:[6]

> [...]
> *Smoke*
> *Write*
> *Think*
> *Put on or take off my glasses*
> *Drink water*
> *Leave the room*
> [...]

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Another example of a work than can be done kinaesthetically is no. 10 in Wolff's orchestral work, *Burdocks* (1970 – 1971). *No. X: Flying, or possibly crawling or sitting still.*

[6] From John Cage Music Manuscript Collection, at The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, JPB 95-3, Folder 333.

Wolff flying. Interpretation of *No. X: Flying, or possibly crawling or sitting still*, from *Burdocks* (1970 – 1971). Performed at the Open Form Festival, Oslo, 2007, under the leadership of myself. Private photo.

- CAN I RELATE 100 % TO THE SCORE?

Sometimes it can be difficult to relate 100 % to the score at all times. A score might give you an instruction that is challenging to fulfil, or even impossible.

Example 1:
Bjørn Thomas Melhus (NO), *U – The Play* (2007). Excerpt from the instructions in 1st movement, *Utopia*, for instrument I (piano):

Instrument VI:
Available notes: D - D # - F # - G - Bb - H (optional distributed on two octaves)
Maximum simultaneous tones: 3
Total number of tones in this movement: 50

You should focus on playing/developing interesting motifs/themes. Instrument I will constantly trying to "steal" your material. You should try to prevent this by taking surprising twists so that Instrument I cannot so easily understand the development, but each motif/theme can not be more than 20 tones (but it could contain as few notes as you want, this means of course that it becomes easier for Instrument I to"steal" the motif. You decide the length of each tone, and possibly pauses between, yourself. Because of your limited resources, Instrument I is eventually able to understand and take over the development of the motif/theme. When that happens, you should stop playing, take a10-20 seconds break, and then start a new motif/theme. Your playing should however also try to adapt to Instrument III and IV. After playing 50 notes, stop playing. If Instrument I is still playing, you walk off stage – if not you remain seated.

These instructions are very open, but detailed. As a pianist, you are given an extensive range of pitches to keep track of in your head and hands. At the same time you are provided with a framework for how the pitches should relate to each other. The framework describes the number of pitches played simultaneously, and how some of them can to be played. In addition to this, you have to deal with, and react to, the other performer's actions at all times. It is very complicated to relate to this instruction 100 %, and the performer has to make a compromise between his capacity and the demands of the work. You might think that one option could be to prepare a pre-determined material, and write a pre-determined and more conventional score to use in this part. This is, however, not possible because of the 'stealing' that should take place at the same time. The pianist must have their attention tuned to what it is possible to steal from the other performers, and customize all musical choices to this.

Example 2: Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946 – 48), and his music for prepared piano in general. The instructions for preparing the piano are very detailed and accurate, with a precise measurement for each preparation's placement. Cage's instructions fit perfectly in the grand piano he composed and worked on in his apartment, but lose much of their value in another piano. The construction of one grand piano might be sufficiently different from another to make a real difference. Cage commented on this himself. Wolff says that these tables of preparations were mainly Cage's notes, rather than intended as instructions for another performer. Perhaps it should have been published in another manner than as it is today, to serve the work and the music in a better way. (To see a preparation table, see *Table of Preparations* in *Showcase 6 John Cage, Four*[6] *(1992)* p. XXXX).

Through the showcases, you will find that the frames in an Open Form work sometimes have to be stretched a little in order to make a good performance. Adjustments have to be made for each work, based on knowledge about the composer, the work, and the time it was written in.

Read more about this in Part 2, *1. Authentic performance, or not?*

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

With the term 'Bank of Ideas' I mean a set of chosen material, on either a macro or micro level. This material might be a frame for instrumentation, form, dynamic, timbres, or something similar.

- What possibilities and what limitations does the score give for a realization?
- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises.

In many situations it might serve the work and the performer very well to make small exercises in order to practice and interpret the work or parts of the work. An exercise in this context is an exercise custom made for the work, where the performer makes limitations and boundaries for each exercise. Working with different exercises allows you to experiment and study the possibilities of the work. My experience with my

interpretations and teaching students is that exercises like this also trigger unrealized potential within the performer. An exercise may also very well work as a base for a performance.

The duration of an exercise may vary each time the exercise is played, depending on the performer's experience of what is a good length. The performer can and should adjust the exercise as they go, and make new exercises.

Making exercises will also be part of the experiment of searching for ideas that will work for your interpretation with the exact group of performers involved. Working with exercises are not as usual to do in a group as it is for a single performer, but in Open Form, making exercises for your group might be essential for the process of interpreting the work.

It's ok to have some parameters open in an exercise. Too many fixed parameters might be too difficult to relate to. This is, of course, also a matter of practice. During the practice, you will be able to relate to several parameters at once, and at the same time listen and be a part of the work itself.

As well as on a macro level, it makes sense to create exercises on a micro level. Making an exercise on a micro level involves the same process as described above, but with only one symbol or event.

The musical answers that will spring out of these exercises, will be a part of your Bank of Ideas, which will also be a part of your palette in your interpretation.

Exercise example: Can I find 10 different ways to interpret a sign or a symbol?

- Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?

While preparing and experimenting with the work, some things will prove to be interesting, while other things fall apart almost before they have been tested.

Example: Sometimes an exercise or a pre-determination seems exciting while being planned, but works poorly when tried out in practice. This depends on several factors, including the performers and their interaction, and how much experience the performers have with Open Form. This will be unique for each ensemble. An exercise that does not work for one ensemble may work quite well for another.

I have yet to find that my pre-determinations are followed 100 %, especially when playing with others. In my experience, a score needs to be prepared in a manner that allows the performer to let go of their focus on the practical and technical performance. You should instead be able to focus on Deep Listening, interacting spontaneously with other performers about where and when to place the events, and just follow the intuition that the score invites you to form.

This is important, even if the work does not necessarily have any intentional co-play (read also Interaction below, in *Authentic performance, or not?* p. XXXX). It might be small adjustments that give a sound just enough space, or an adjustment of your playing that makes a non-intentional sound give meaning after all, when placed amongst other non-intentional sounds.

- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

Some works require this. While the audience usually sits on chairs in rows in a conventional concert setting, an Open Form work may very well be better presented by placing the audience in a non-conventional way. Cages *Musicircus* (1967) is an example of a work involving the audience without the traditional concert chairs. *Musicircus* is a work that invites performers, including performers from the audience, to act on what they desire. The performers, or ensembles, are playing in the same space at the same time but not together. This work is suitable for large-scale performances at large venues, perhaps with several rooms and floors, depending on the number of performers. The audience can move freely between the different circus events, between several rooms or floors, regardless of what happens in the various localities.

There is always an ethical aspect present in involving the audience, or the public, in art. If you choose to make a kinaesthetic, or performative, interpretation of a work which will include the audience in your interpretation, this must be done very carefully. There are no written rules for how to deal with this, but a sensible attitude would suggest you should not touch the audience, and place limits on how you involve the audience. Example: If you take a picture of a random person passing your camera and allow for the picture to be displayed somewhere else, as part of an artwork, the person passing by is not given the opportunity to choose to be part of the

audience or to be part of a piece of art. Not everyone wants to be part of a piece of art, which should be taken into account.

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- **Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the realization.**

To test and practice the ideas forms one aspect of rehearsing. Another is the phase that comes after the rehearsing with exercises: practice of the work leading to a performance. This phase stands in contrast to the work of The Bank of Ideas, when new ideas are welcome. It is practising on the already accrued Bank of Ideas that goes on here, without opening up for too many new ideas.

By this, I don't mean that you are going to rehearse a particular version of the work, as you might do to a greater extent with a conventionally notated work. In your preparations, you will get into the core of the work through rehearsing, closer to understanding how it works. Brown talks about this in his depiction of his preparations for a performance of *December 1952* (1952), which is also the first showcase in this handbook:

We rehearsed a way of performing, not a performance itself.[7]

He also talks about how different two performances can be and how his recording of a rehearsal right before the concert was a very different version to that of the actual concert.

- **Selection.**

When practice has passed the first phase, it's time to stop and make the necessary limitations for your interpretation. This includes 'killing your darlings', at least some of them. In this phase, you have to limit the palette that has been created through your preparations. In other words, you make decisions, select, and deselect.

Some performers call this phase *The Red Phase*. This expression captures the need to close up the previous phase, which is typically more vigorous and flourishing.

In The Red Phase, the performer has to ask new questions, for example:
- Are there any exercises or ideas that have been exceptional?
- Are there parts of The Bank of Ideas that should be rejected, or perhaps kept for another performance?

[7]Earle Brown, 1970. Sound recording.

- How can your experiences from your practice create a good frame for a reliable interpretation that ensures the identity of the work?
- Are there any special considerations to take care of in the meeting between you and the work on stage? One consideration might be having a copy of the score during the performance to guarantee a continuous communication between the score and the performer.

The Red Phase is very often underestimated in the planning of an artistic project. Some artists might recognize the situation that often occurs close to a performance. The need for The Red Phase is screaming at the performers, who become hectic as the result of not planning enough time for this phase. In my experience, I have found The Red Phase hectic no matter how I plan for it, and I consider this natural in any artistic process.

- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

An Open Form work may require that you relate to the other performers in ways that you are not used to. In a conventional piece, such as one by Haydn, this is not something we think about when we play together. We play together as much as possible and try to be in the same place in the score during the entire performance. In an Open Form work, the performers might receive instructions that demand you do not play together, rather than playing together. You might be instructed to play parts from the score regardless of what the other performers play from the score. This instruction allows for you to play simultaneously, but not together. In Wolff's *Edges* (1967) the instructions allow you to use a co-player's music as a cue for your own interpretation: *You can also use the signs as cues: wait till you notice one and then respond.*

This instruction requires your listening to the other performers and your interpretation of whatever they play. You will connect your colleague's playing to a specific sign, though it's not certain, nor is it necessary, that your interpretation is correlating with the sign that is actually being played. The instructions give you no frames for how you should respond. How you choose to respond is up to you. Read more about *Edges* in 'Showcase 3 Christian Wolff, *Edges* (1967)', p. XXXX

In most works, the work demands that the performers play together. If you have not played an Open Form work before, this will appear a rather cryptic sentence. Playing together is, for most performers, the obvious way to interact with one another, but it is not an invariable part of the interaction in an Open Form work. Some works actually require that the performers do not play together at all, but rather simultaneously. With the exception of the earliest works, this is true for almost all the works of John Cage. His compositions invite the performers to an interaction where they play simultaneously, and do not respond or interact actively with what the other performers are doing. *Musicircus* would not have been a circus if the performers had adapted themselves to each other and ended up playing together instead of performing their own works independently. (More about this in *Authentic performance, or not?,* p. XXXX)

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

It's most important to examine the venue, especially if you choose an unusual one. You should at least visit the venue and preferably test the acoustics with instruments. Testing like this is not always an achieveable option, but just being in the space will give you some important indications of what to tackle in your preparations. A conventional scene will in most situations be a good choice (and perhaps the only possible choice). Nevertheless, sometimes it is compelling and uplifting for the work, the performers and the audience to experience music, and especially Open Form music, in unconventional surroundings.

Sometimes the work demands that the venue is organized in a way that can enhance the experience of the work and the performance for the audience.

Example: Feldman's piano music, after his earliest works, often has very soft attacks followed by a natural sustaining of it, keeping the dampers up at the same time. The long reverberations create overtone structures that emerge as mobile sculptures for the pianist's ears. This physical experience of Feldman's music can easily remain the pianist's experience alone since this phenomenon is most apparent close to the instrument, where the pianist sits. If the audience gets the opportunity to sit fairly close to the piano, in a room that can carry the timbres well enough, these fragile, sonic sculptures will be more likely to touch the ears of the audience as well as those of the pianist.

4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

During the performance, it's important to be focused on the work and its peculiarities. The performer should be intuitive enough to pay attention to any changes that might be needed. This focus is important not only in meeting the work and fellow players, but also in meeting the audience.

Example:
The sounds of silence[8] during a performance can be perceived very differently from the way they are perceived during a rehearsal. They are experienced differently partly because the sounds on stage can be quite different from those of a rehearsal room, and because the sound in a room also changes with an audience present. I have experienced a few occasions on which a performance has changed significantly in character due to unexpected sounds that turned out to be in the performance room. Once, the sounds of the lighting system on one stage were so prominent that it changed our way of playing in the ensemble. The lighting system made regular, small snaps with different volumes and with different time intervals. Because of the acoustics of the room, the snaps had a nice sustain and a fine reverberation. Our ensemble ended up listening to the lovely snaps, letting them bear meaning in the musical context. The snaps became part of the performance. The snaps affected the complexity of the work and the music turned out entirely differently to what we were prepared for. An Open Form work may provide the performers the opportunity to make intuitive changes like these.

Listening to all the sounds that might occur without any kind of hierarchy is a fundamental aspect of Deep Listening, although Deep Listening also involves a way of listening that includes more than just sounds. (More on Deep Listening in Part 1, 'Showcase 5 Pauline Oliveros, *Horse Sings from Cloud* (1979).' p. XXXX)

[8] With the *sounds of silence*, I mean the unintentional sounds that are in the room or who find their way to the listeners (performers and audience) when no one is playing. It could be the sound of a passing brigade, an ambulance, or even your own breathing. See also *Showcase 6 John Cage,* Four[6] *(1992).*

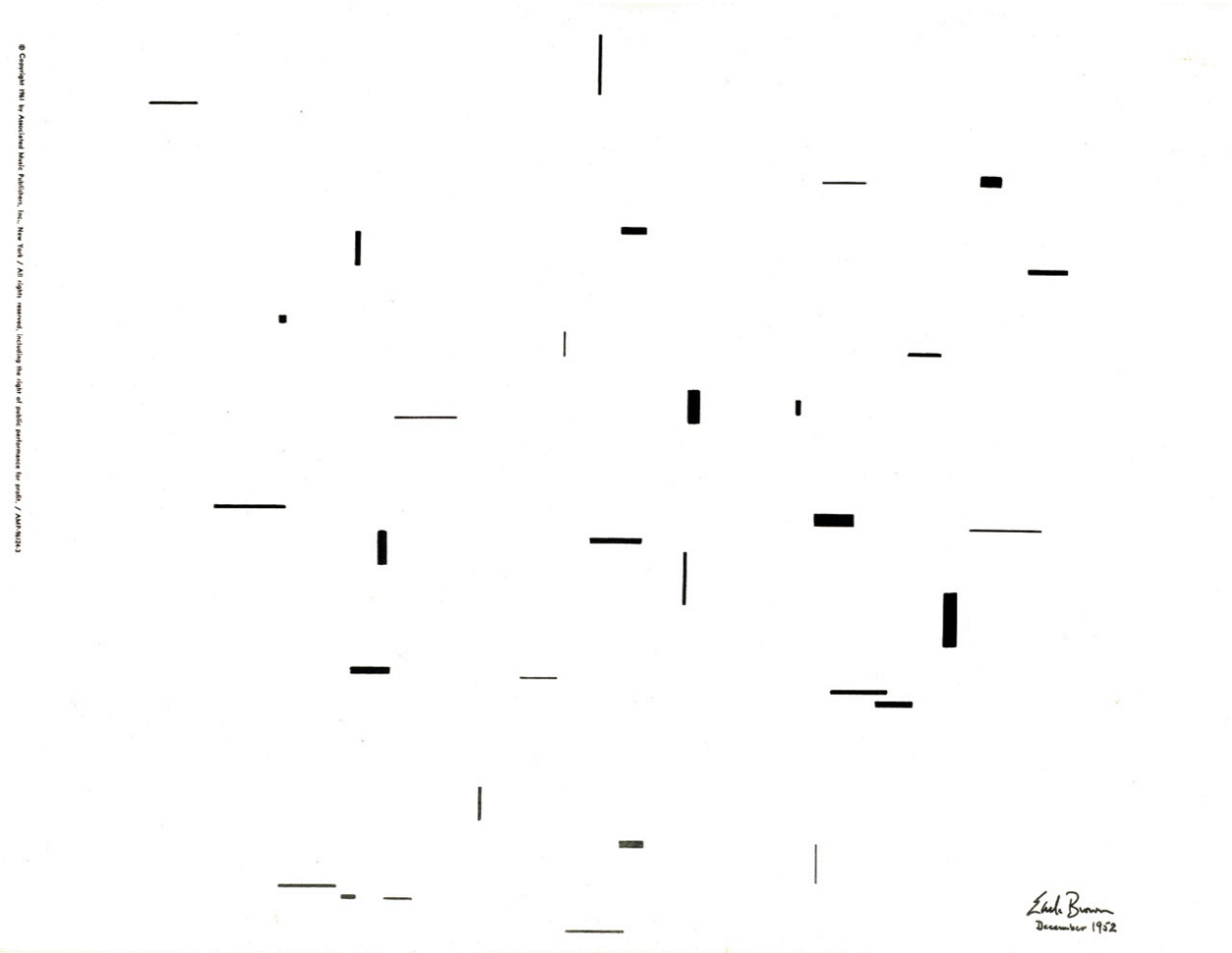
2. Showcase studies

The next section is a showcase study for different Open Form works. The examination of the first showcase work, *December 1952* (1952) by Earle Brown, correlates with quite a few general elements that are common to other works. Matters which have already been discussed will not necessarily be repeated in all the showcases.

The recipe or any procedure for realizing a score should always be customized for each work. Some aspects of the recipe will be off topic for some works and will, therefore, be omitted. The order in which elements are discussed will also sometimes alter, depending on the work.

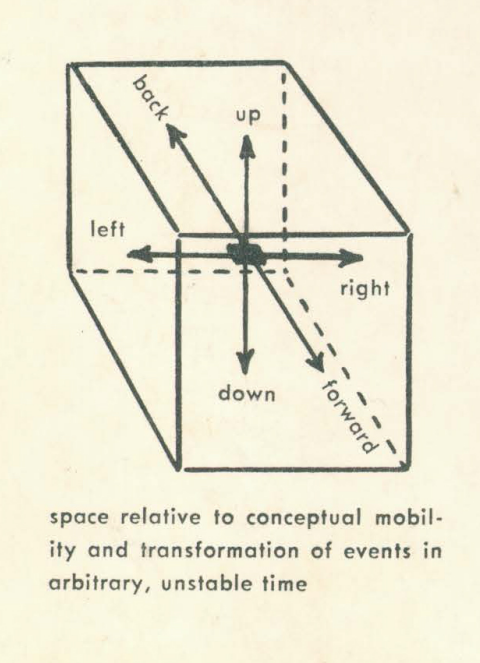
Showcase 1 Earle Brown, excerpts from *Folio* (1952/53); *December 1952*
Showcase 2 Morton Feldman, *Intermission no. 6* (1953)
Showcase 3 Christian Wolff, *Edges* (1967)
Showcase 4 Cornelius Cardew, *Schooltime compositions* (1967)
Showcase 5 Pauline Oliveros, *Horse Sings from Cloud* (1979)
Showcase 6 John Cage, *Four*^{6} (1992)
Showcase 7 Bjørn Thomas Melhus, *U – The Play.* (2007)
Showcase 8 Else Olsen S., *Lotto* (2010)
Showcase 9 Christian Wolff, *Brooklyn* (2015)

Showcase 1 Earle Brown, excerpt from *Folio and Four Systems* (1953); *December 1952* (1952)



December 1952, excerpt from *FOLIO (1952/53) and 4 SYSTEMS (1954)*

Print courtesy by The Earle Brown Music Foundation



December 1952, excerpt from 'Prefatory Note,' *FOLIO (1952/53) and 4 SYSTEMS (1954)*

Print courtesy by The Earle Brown Music Foundation

Instructions

In the 'Prefatory note' in *Folio and Four Systems*, there is a text called *December 1952.* The text carries vital information for the interpreter. All markings in the quote are Brown's.

'For one or more instruments and/or sound-producing media.

The following note and sketch appear on a notebook page dated Oct. & Nov. '52, but they are the basis of the composition "December 1952" as well as being particularly relevant to "Four Systems".

"...to have elements exist in space...
space as an infinitude of directions from an
infinitude of points in space...to work
(compositionally and in performance) to
right, left, back, forward, up, down, and
all points between...the score [being]
a picture of this space at one instant,
and/or transitory...a performer must

set this all in motion (time), which is to
say, realize that it is in motion and step
into it...either sit and let it move or
move through it at all speeds."

"[coefficient of] intensity and duration
[is] space forward and back."

This composition may be performed in any direction from any point in the defined space for any length of time and may be performed from any of the four rotational positions in any sequence. In a performance utilizing only three dimensions as active (vertical, horizontal, and time), the thickness of the event indicates the relative intensity and/or (where applicable instrumentally) clusters. Where all four dimensions are active, the relative thickness and length of events are functions of their conceptual positions on a plane perpendicular to the vertical and horizontal plane of the score. In the latter case all of the characteristics of sound and their relationships to each other are subject to continual transformation and modification. It is primarily intended that performances be made directly from this graphic "implication" (one for each performer) and that no further preliminary defining of the events, other than an agreement as to total performance time, take place. Further defining of the events is not prohibited however, provided that the imposed determinate-system is implicit in the score and in these notes.'

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

December 1952 is a graphic score. The score also has written instructions and notes from the composer as a supplement. This composition is Brown's most abstract work and has a particular place in history because of its character and the time it was written.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?
    - What does the instructional text tell you?
        - Is the instruction clear and logical, or is there any individual need for interpretation of the instructions?
        - Is there anything that the instructional text does not deal with?

You should read the *Prefatory Note* before you start to work with the graphic picture.

What does the *Prefatory Note* tell?
The *Prefatory Note* can be divided into three parts:

Part 1: Instrumentation

Part 2: Brown is quoting from his notebook. The world of ideas of this work is manifest for the performer here.

Part 3: Descriptive instructions that present the framework for interpretation.
The instructions tell the performer to choose either three or four dimensions recording to the Prefatory Note and give the performer two different viewpoints for the realization. If one chooses to go with three dimensions, the thickness of an event represents intensity. If an event is thick, then the tone should be relative intense, and clusters should be used if the instrument allows it, as a piano does, for example. If the performer chooses to use four dimensions, the maths will look like this: the three dimensions of the event, where one is in the performer's imagination, plus time, all together makes four dimensions.
Further on, the instructions tell the performer that when all four dimensions are present all the sounds and their characteristics are *subject to continual transformation and modification*. *Transformation* and *modification* implies that the performer should reconstruct or change the tone somehow, due to what happens in the four-dimensional box.

It is primarily intended that performances be made directly from this graphic "implication" (one for each performer) and that no further preliminary defining of the events, other than an agreement as to total performance time, take place.
This part of the 'Prefatory note' means that each performer should have a copy of the score and that there should not be any notes on how to perform the events. A performer that is used to a more detailed score might be tempted to pre-compose the events and notate this in a traditional notational system. Brown is ahead of the performer and gives a clear message about where the framework is. The openness of the work regarding form is somehow preserved with this instruction.[9]

[9] David Tudor did, however, pre-compose the material for his interpretation of the work. This was typical for Tudor, and Brown stated that he had no objections to Tudor doing it this way. [Brown,

Besides this, Brown explains that other preliminary definition of the events not is prohibited: *Further defining of the events is not prohibited however, provided that the imposed determinate-system is implicit in the score and in these notes.* This permission gives the performer an ocean of possibilities regarding practice and preparations for the piece, and also regarding the final interpretation of the work. *The performer has to determine how to perform the piece.*[10]
The last instruction (*Further defining…* and so on*)* also guards the identity of the work by making sure that the performer stays within the overall frames of the work; like an insurance. A substantial responsibility is laid on the performer in this part of the instruction. The composer asks the performer to be concerned and accurate.

- **Descriptive analysis of the score**

December 1952 consists of horizontal and vertical lines with uneven measurements. In the 'Prefatory Note' the performer is asked to leave the impression that the score is two-dimensional, and to imagine that it is three-dimensional. Brown is in fact describing four dimensions for the performer to interpret: Height, width, depth and time.

The height, width and depth of the events make the graphics of the score, whereas the depth is in the performer's imagination. For me, these events have been like floating, black wooden planks. Around the planks is the space between them; the space that makes the planks, or the sounds, float.

You can read the score both vertical, horizontally, or both. Or you can move about in it freely. Brown calls this *physical mobility*.[11]

At first, Brown's plan for this work was to create a motorized box that could be placed in front of the performer, for example on top of a piano. All events inside the box would constantly be moving, in different directions, in different gears, at different speeds. The performer would have been able to observe the movements of the event in this three-dimensional box, some floating away and others floating towards the performer. The image meeting the performer would be in constant movement. The graphical picture that represents the score is more or less a photograph of a certain rendition of the box. Brown makes a good attempt at describing all these dimensions

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1970.] (Sound recording)] Because of this, one can argue for other performers doing it this way as well, despite Brown's warning. This subject will be discussed later.
[10] Brown, 1970. (Sound recording)
[11] Ibid.

for the performer in the Prefatory Note, in addition to illustrating it visually with the figure, shown above.

Like the other New York School composers, Brown was very much inspired by the visual artists of their time. Alexander Calder (1898 – 1976) is perhaps the clearest reference to *December 1952*. Calder's soaring mobiles dance in the air, accompanied by lights and shadows in continuous motion. The earliest mobiles of Calder were motorized. In *December 1952*, the performer is asked to imagine the work as a mobile. [...] *I rely on the performer and his conceptual mobility potential two create the changeability of the score.*[12]

Some of the open aspects of *December 1952* will be described in the following section. The recipe here is custom made for *December 1952* and differs slightly different from the original.

December 1952 provides

- Instrumentation and duration: open
- Development: open to a certain extent

The events are placed in relation to each other with some geometrical symmetry. The different measurements of the events together with the spacing between them form a dynamic diversion. The imaginational depth becomes the fruit of the performer's interaction with the score and possibly other fellow players.

Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level? A micro level concerns the sound's

- Timbre, Texture, Duration, Dynamic, Pitch, spacing/complexity, rhythmic structure: Open
- Development/structure: Partially open

- Can I relate 100 % to the score?

[12] Ibid.

The instruction text is quite explicit, but this work still depends on many decisions made by you. There is a wide range of what can be considered within the frames of this work. Many different versions have been, and will be, made of *December 1952*, and many of them will despite their diversity, be within the framework as much as another. It's possible to relate 100 % to the score of *December 1952.*

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- What possibilities and limitations does the work possess for a realization?

The possibilities in this work are numerous, but there are also precise limitations. The events in the score and their placement in relation to each other and their spatiality are important parameters to consider in your interpretation. Another aspect of these events is that they have something stabilising about their presence, despite their hovering attendance. They hold a mathematical-like distance from each other and create a geometrical but arhythmical symmetry. It's important to work with these limitations to keep the identity of the work intact and vital.

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for my realization?
    - Working with exercises

Some of the open factors of *December 1952* are pre-determined through the exercise examples in the following section. Making pre-determinations through an exercise narrows the work. You and the work are now beginning to approach one another.

Exercise No. 1 for *December 1952*, for ensemble.
Duration of exercise: 10 minutes.

Pre-determinations are:
- **Texture:** Let the height of the event decide if the texture is dense and grainy (high lines), or if the texture is smooth and even (low lines).

It might be helpful to note that the high lines coincide with short (not wide) lines and low lines coincide with wide lines. The performer has to take this into account when working with the exercise.

- **Duration:** Imagines the third dimension (depth) of the events intuitively when playing the exercise. If the depth is long, your sound becomes long. The virtual depth ensures that the sounds are in *continual transformation and modification*. For example, the sound may be formed in a diminuendo if the event has a long depth as one possibility. Or the sound may be transformed by letting the timbre shift delicately between two different characteristics.

- **Dynamics:** The width of the events decides the dynamic:

    Thin line = pp.
    Wide line = ff.

In between the edges, there are variable degrees of dynamic.

- **Spacing**: The score gives indications for spacing through the structure of the score. There is a certain amount of space in the graphic picture, and you can reflect this in your interpretation.

- **Complexity**: Let the stability of the events be reflected in your interpretation by using only one attack (can be cluster) for each event, or single stroke roll if you play percussion.

- **Development/structure**: Let the stability of the events be focused on and reflected also in the development and the structure. The virtual length of the events defines if the sound may change its character.

Open parameters in this exercise:
- timbre
- pitch
- rhythmic structure

Exercise No. 1 for *December 1952*

Exercise 1a: Can I find ten ways to interpret one event?
Exercise 1b: Can I find ten different ways to make a stable, dark sound, when the texture and the dynamics vary?

Exercise 1c: Can I find ten different ways to make clusters (or single stroke roll if percussion)?

Exercise 1d: Can I find ten different ways to play a diminuendo?

Exercise 1e: Can I find ten different ways to make a grainy texture?

Exercise 1f: Can I find ten different ways to make a smooth texture on my instrument?

Exercise 1g: Can I find ten different ways to make a smooth texture?

Exercise 1h: Can I find ten different ways to go from one texture to another texture? This exercise is especially thrilling on a piano because the instrument is constructed like a percussion instrument, with hammers that hit the strings. The piano can't sustain like, for example, a voice or a string instrument, and you will have to experiment with alternative playing techniques.

Exercise No. 2 for *December 1952*

The starting point of this exercise is Earle Brown's depictions of one of his own performances with ensemble, which he talks about in 'On December 1952' in *Earle Berlin Monologue*, a sound recording of Brown from 1970.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Pre-determinations are:

- **Timbre, texture, and duration**: open
- **Dynamics**: The thickness of the events, horizontal or vertical, decides the dynamic like this:

Thick event = f

Thin event = p

- **Pitch**: The upper part of the graphic picture represents the upper part of each instrument's register. In the same way, the middle part and the lower part represents the middle and lower register of the instruments. The result will be completely different on a piccolo from a double bass because of their different ranges in register.

- Spacing: This exercise will be played in a rapid tempo, which means that the events will be placed relatively close to each other. The spacing becomes more compact.

- Complexity: As in the previous exercise, the stability of the events will be reflected in this exercise as well. For each event, there will be only one sound used, or one cluster that is perceived as stable.

- Rhythmic structure: Open, but because of the rapid tempo the rhythmic structure will also become more complex.

- Development/structure: The performers will start by playing only the thin lines and let the beginning be quite soft and quiet. The tempo may be slightly slower at the beginning.

Exercise No. 2a: Can I find five different ways to interpret thick events in the upper, middle and lower register of my instrument?
Exercise No. 2b: Can I find five different ways to interpret thin events in the upper, middle and lower register of my instrument?

- Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?
- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

3. Test ideas and rehearse the performance

- Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas works in the realization.
- Selection
- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

Brown himself was a performing musician with a background in jazz. He enjoyed practising and playing with others. He was very much involved in performances of his own works and often played the role of conductor. His background as a jazz musician was one of the things that was unique about him, compared to the other New York School composers. His background in jazz tells us something about how Brown related to co-play and interaction with other performers. While Cage often requires an interaction where the performers play simultaneously rather than together, Brown prefers playing together.

In *The Berlin monolog*[13], Brown talks about how Cage was very dubious about Brown's interest in graphic scores, where performers have to improvise together. In 1951 Cage composed with chance operations. He was very much concerned about music being originated far from anyone's taste. With chance operations, he avoided using his taste when making musical choices. Chance procedures may entail a high degree of control from the composer and do not necessarily allow the performer to make multiple interpretations, in the way that a graphic score might. In a work like Cage's *Music of Changes* (1951), for example, the performer cannot be flexible to the same degree as in *December 1952*. But this flexibility was just what Brown was interested in. He wanted to create a work that could encourage performers to work together. He wanted them to interact with their inherent poetics, pay attention to their immediate communication with the work and with each other in playing together.

Brown describes Cage's reaction to the notation in *December 1952*:

> "…You will find that everybody will play their own clichés". To this day I have not found performers take that liberty or fall into that kind of thing. The performer can be provoked to go beyond his clichés into working quite apart just the quotation of things. […] But it includes the possibility of quotation.[14]

[13] Brown, 1970 (Sound recording.)
[14] Ibid.

In other words, Brown was not afraid of the performer's clichés, unlike Cage. He describes his works as completely different from the works of Cage, and with a completely different character than chance music.

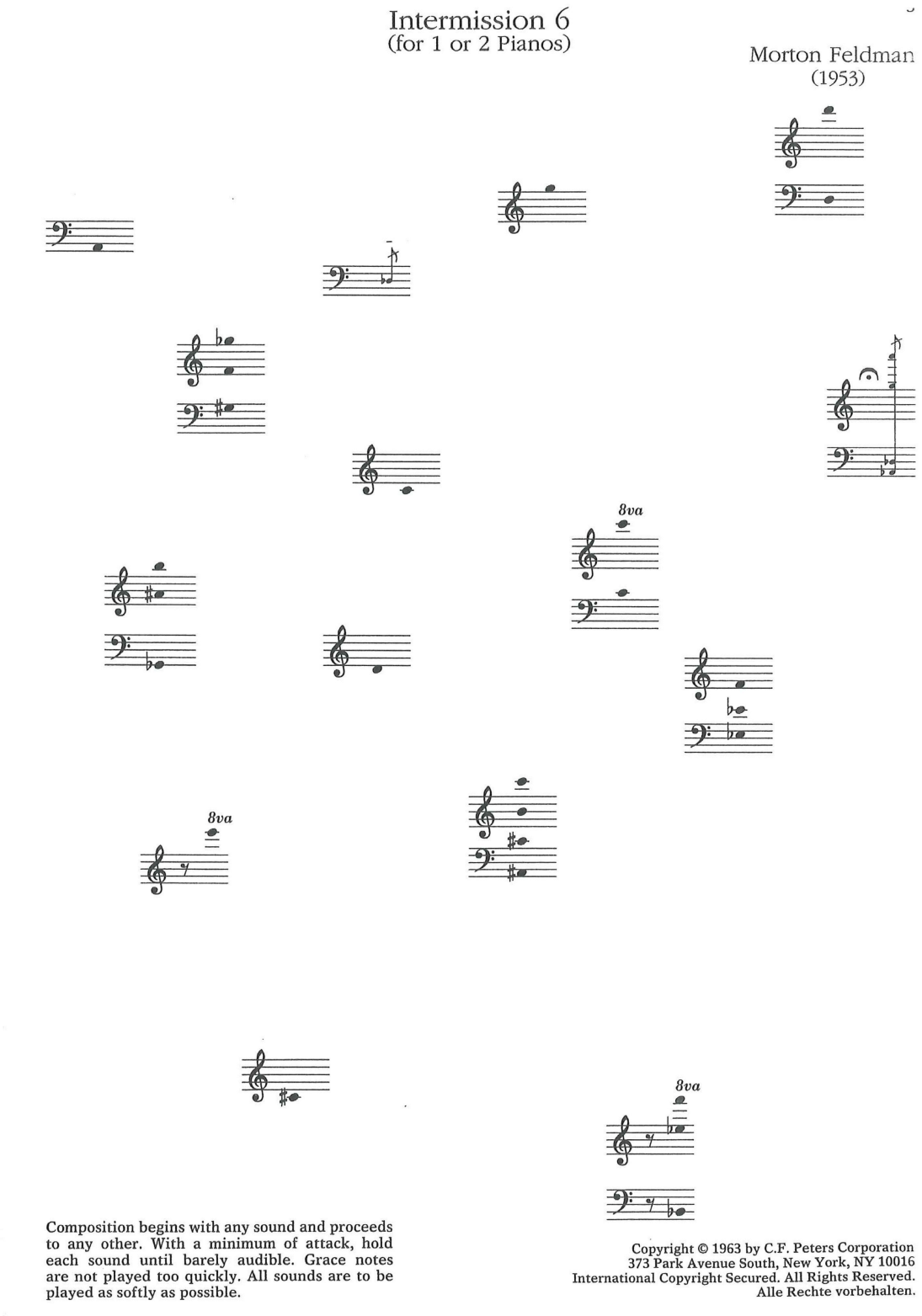
I do not want to give any definitive answer concerning interaction in Brown's works. Even so, it may still be meaningful to know about these elements in preparing for *December 1952*, and for his works in general.

- Consider, possibly test,, different venues.

4. The performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

Showcase 2 Morton Feldman, *Intermission no. 6* (1953)



Morton Feldman, *Intermission 6* (1953).

Print courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

Feldman's so-called graph pieces from the early 1950s are, together with Intermission 6, his most open works. Later, he left open notation in favour of conventional notation. Intermission 6 is mainly notated in a conventional manner but is nonetheless an unmistakable Open Form work.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

In a way, the score resembles Brown's *December 1952* with its floating planks. In Intermission 6, 15 small bars are fluttering, giving you the assignment of beginning each bar as softly as possible and let the attacks fade away until they are barely audible - until you start the next attack. You have control over what will happen then.

  - What does the instructional text tell you?

The instructional text:

> Composition begins with any sound and proceeds to any other. With a minimum of attack hold each sound until barely audible. Grace notes are not played too quickly. All sounds are to be played as soft as possible. This "Intermission" may be played with either one or two pianos.

    - Is the instruction clear and logical, or is there any individual need for interpretation of the instructions?

The instructional text has three parts:
1. Practical instructions: *Composition begins with any sound and proceeds to any other.*

2. Instructions that need your interpretation: *With a minimum of attack hold each sound until barely audible. Grace notes are not played too quickly. All sounds are to be played as soft as possible.*

3. Practical instructions: *This "Intermission" may be played with either one or two pianos.*

Part 2. Contains terms that depend on your interpretation, which will have an impact on your performance. *Minimum of attack, barely audible, quickly, and as soft as possible* are all terms that probably give you a strong sense of how the music should

be played. But in reality the meaning of such terms fluctuates, and perception of them will vary from one performer to another. The same variation happens if you ask ten different people to mix the colour green, all with their individual preferences. The definition of *green* will always be ten different greens, where each participant is experiencing their *green* as the ultimate *green*. Likewise, you must make an assessment of what constitutes a *minimum of attack, barely audible, quickly, and as soft as possible* in your performance.

In your interpretation of these terms, you should take into account that there are some aspects of them which can be referred to as intersubjective for any performance of this work. If you would like the audience to hear the music, you have to include that in your interpretation of *minimum of attack*. Feldman's music should be audible, for the audience as well as for the performers. This should affect the life of each attack, which commits you to make sure that the sound or chord does not fade out in the same moment as it is played.

The sound or chord should sound until it is *barely audible*. A sound or chord is audible to you as the pianist much longer than for the audience, which is necessarily placed further away from the instrument than you. I know it's tempting to wait until it's barely audible to you as a pianist – when I play this work it feels like I float along with every fluctuation of the strings until they have reached Nangijala. But if you let yourself drift for too long the work will be presented to the audience in a much more rough manner than Feldman describes in the instructional text. You have to make an evaluation of how audible the sounds and chords should be for you so that the audience can perceive them as *barely audible*.

Grace notes are not played too quickly. This must be seen in relation to the whole work, which appears slowly with its elongated sounds. You have to decide what is the right length for your grace notes to still be within Feldman's instructions.

All sounds are to be played as soft as possible. This instruction brings virtuosity into this work. Not only should the sounds be soft to some degree, they should be as soft as possible and performed evenly soft throughout the whole work. Feldman is as interested in the sustaining of each sound and how the sounds travel and disappear, as in the actual attack itself. The same requirements for virtuosity are apparent also in many other Feldman works. For example in *For Bunita Marcus* (1985), an 80

minute long piano work, some of the same elements can be found. A warning should perhaps follow as an instruction to *For Bunita Marcus*: The static use of the sustaining pedal may lead to cramps in the pianist's right foot.

- Is there anything that the instructional text does not deal with?

The score doesn't tell anything about the possibility of repeating the brackets. I'll allow repeats, which affects the work's length. But I avoid repeating the same bracket without visiting other brackets in the meantime.

Can I prepare a pre-composed score for my performance? The score doesn't have any instructions regarding whether or not this is a possibility. In my opinion, this is contrary to the identity of the work and should not be done. The openness in its form would disappear. Your approach to openness in the performance should have a function. By making a pre-composed score, you will lose some of the sharpness that you have to have when you are going to make these choices on stage. This sharpness is important for the music and for the audience's experience of the work. A performance of a pre-composed score would not have been a performance of *Intermission 6*.

- Descriptive analysis of the score.

Instrumentation: One or two pianos

Length: *Intermission 6* has no instructions with respect to its total duration, which indicates that you can decide this yourself. I usually play for as long as I feel that the work needs for each performance, and for each stage I'm at. Another possibility is to pre-determine an approximate length. Remember that you will need to have a watch of some kind to be aware of how long you've been playing. This is very often the solution one has to choose, since a concert programme has to be somewhat determined in advance. Other works may be included in the programme and the length of each work is important for the overall duration of the concert.

Development: Feldman's text and score give you thorough instructions which ensure that development of the work is kept to a minimum. There is no variation in dynamics, other than the vanishing nature of each attack. Only a few breaks,

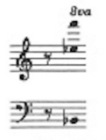
fermatas, and grace notes implement some variation to the notation, which require greater awareness as a response.

- Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level?

Intermission 6 is precisely notated, in a conventional stave system. The score gives precise instructions that along with the notation make the work very well recognizable from various performances. This applies to timbre, texture, length, and dynamics. Rhythm, structure, and complexity will also have some intersubjectivity from one performance to another, although these three parameters will be affected by the two possibilities of being performed on one or two pianos. Rhythm is also worth observing: All sounds are notated in the middle register or treble, where the sustain have approximately the same duration. A bass sound would have a longer sustain. The choice of register states something about the composer's desire for a certain stability in the sustain, reflecting the stability of the attacks.

Although there are no instructions given to the performer concerning dynamics and phrasing, in general there is still an ocean of shades in the Feldman world. If you are two pianists performing, notice how one sound gets a tiny crescendo just as the previous player's sound disappears into the inaudible. This is obviously a mental crescendo, but it is nevertheless audible to the human ear.

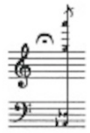
Intermission 6 consists principally of stemless note heads, but a few rests and one solitary fermata have also gained access to the score.



The breaks are just as much about the previous sound as that which is placed next to it in the score. To perform these breaks, you need to make an intervention in the space between two sounds. This means that in the previous sound’s journey towards being barely audible, the rest will interrupt the fulfilment of the sustain, and silence alone will carry the sound of the work for a little while. The rest, which is an eigth note

(quaver) rest, shorter than the stemless quarter notes [crotchets]. But ultimately, it is you who decide how much shorter.

The fermata is placed in front of a grace note bracket. In other words, it is placed above the space between the sustain from one attack and the following attack, which is a grace note. In my opinion, this is an instruction about how to time the grace note. The fermata creates a release, or a rest, of the previous sustain before the grace note finally is allowed to sound. A space is created before the grace note, different from the space between other brackets. The fermata brings silence to vibrate. In reality, the fermata is placed over an un-notated rest. The rest is invisible in the score but definitely audible.



NB. A note concerning the performance of a grace note: you should be ready to play the next sound before you perform the grace note which introduces it. This way, the work will continue being performed fluently and without hesitation. Between the other brackets, you have more time to choose where to go after a sustain.

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- What possibilities and what limitations does the text give for a realization?

The possibilities lie in what route you will find between the different brackets, and how you time the breaks and the fermata.

The work has a clearly defined framework with its conventional notation, despite the lack of clefs and the hovering brackets.

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises.

The point of the exercises I have proposed below is for you to practice how to spontaneously choose which bracket you will proceed to after its predecessor, without thinking too much.

Exercise no. 1: Practicing the transition from one bracket to all other brackets. Repeat this exercise with all sounds to be familiar with all the transition possibilities.
Exercise no. 2: Practice the transition from all brackets to the rest brackets.
Exercise no. 3: Practice the transition from all timbres to the fermata bracket.

- Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?

- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

Some might argue that the duration of Feldman's works is an excessive challenge for the general audience. But something happens to the listener if you can facilitate their transcendental journey into Feldman's world. It is as if your ears extend farther and farther towards the music; eventually it feels as if they touch the sound itself. Performing an excerpt from a Feldman work can, therefore, be unfair to both the work and the listener. But in *Intermission 6*, you determine the duration of the work and thus have the opportunity to do a short, medium or long version, depending on how you perceive the tension and balance between the audience and the music.

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice.
- Selection.

The Red Phase:
- Do your experiences make a good framework for your interpretation? Is the work's identity well taken care of?

- Are there any special considerations to examine in the meeting on stage between you and the work?

You should bring the score onto the stage, to be able to make spontaneous choices concerning which route to choose through the brackets.

- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

If you are two pianists performing *Intermission 6*, you have to decide how you are going to relate to each other. Feldman's instructions give you both the same guidance for how to relate to the attack and its sustain, followed by the next attack. You are instructed to relate only to your own attack and its sustain, not the other pianist's attack and sustain. This means that the interaction leans more towards playing simultaneously rather than playing together. Chance will determine if the timbres of *Intermission 6* ever meet in any of your attacks, or whether they will simply merge into each other and into the reverberation of the room.

Feldman did not have any stated philosophy regarding interaction, like Cage. In Feldman's ensemble works it is, as in conventional chamber music, important to play together. In a six-hour long string quartet *String Quartet Nr. 2* (1983), playing together can be a pretty big challenge in itself.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

In this work it is worth thinking about what kind of experience the audience will get in different situations. The fluctuations that occur in Feldman's music, which creates the shimmering light in *Intermission 6,* is clearer and more transparent relatively close to the piano, and only a few metres distance from the piano frame, the overtone structure starts its escape towards silence. This means that if the work is being performed in a large concert space the audience will get a completely different experience of the work than if it is performed in a smaller room, where the audience can sit pretty close to the piano. Your choice of performance space is really important to the audience and to the way in which they get the chance to experience this work.

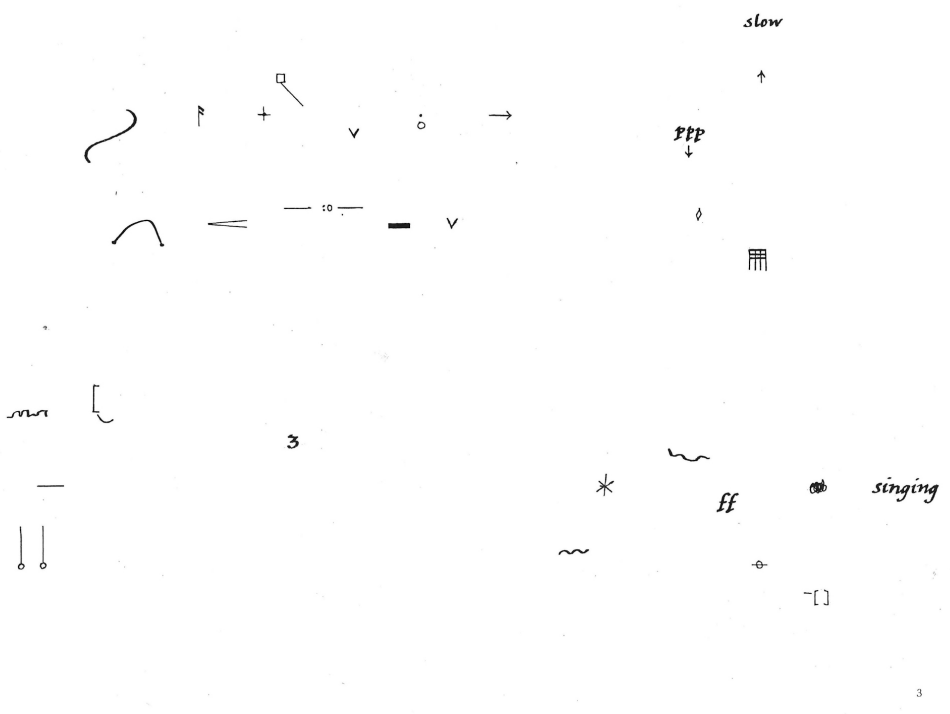
4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

The acoustics of the performance space are an essential element in any Feldman work, in a different way than many other works. The room may very well have a spatial acoustic with long reverberation, which is not always a good thing for other works. This means that if other works by other composers are to be performed on the

same occasion, you need to choose works that can cope with the same performance venue that your Feldman work requires.

Showcase 3 Christian Wolff, *Edges* (1967)



Christian Wolff, *Edges* (1967). Copyright © 1969.
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Wolff uses a wide range of notational techniques. They are extensive in a manner that makes it impossible to make a complete introduction to them in this handbook. Wolff uses notation in a consequential and logical way that enables you to bring your experience from one work along to another work.
Graphic notation, text instructions, and so-called time brackets often go hand in hand with extended conventional notation in Wolff's works.

1. Analysing the score

- How can the text be categorized?

The score consists of three parts:

Part 1. Instructions.

Part 2. Symbol description.

Part 3. The graphic picture, which consists of abstract symbols or signs, numbers, words and extended traditional notation.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?
    - Descriptive analysis of the score

This work appears as a graphic score despite the presence of other notational techniques. The instructional text is as important as the graphic picture, describing how you should interpret the graphic picture.

Part 1. Instructions

Each player should have a copy of the score. There can be any number of players.

The signs on the score are not primarily what a player plays. They mark out a space or spaces, indicate points, surfaces, routes or limits. A player should play in relation to, in, and around the space thus partly marked out. He can move about in it variously (e.g., in a sequence, or jumping from one point to another), but does not always have to be moving, nor does he have to go everywhere. Insofar as the signs are limits, they can be reached but should not be exploited. The way to a limit need not be continuous, in a straight line. The limits, or points, can be taken at different distances—for example, far away, like a horizon, or close, like a tree with branches overhead—but decide where at any given moment you are. You can also use the signs as cues: wait till you notice one and then respond. Or you can simply play a sign as it is, but only once in a performance.

Christian Wolff, Edges (1967). Instructional text. Copyright © 1969.

Print courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation

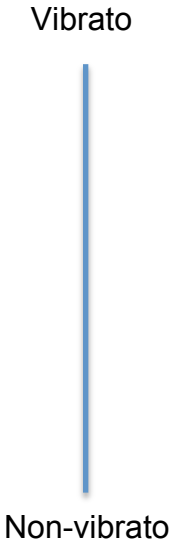
The text is instructional but has a poetic language with metaphors for the performer to picture in their mind. Wolff himself considers the instructional text as explicit and clear, but it is my experience that performers encountering *Edges* for the first time, including myself, need time to decipher the instructional text before the musical practise can begin. I know that you would just love to follow your immediate urge for experimentation as soon as you hold this work in your hands, but stop yourself and take the time it needs to read the entire instructional text first. Don't be fooled into believing that the symbol description and the graphic picture alone are enough. The instructions have very important information for you: I will break up the text a little in order to give a descriptive analysis of it.

Each player should have a copy of the score.
This is important because the symbols or signs in the graphic picture are placed in relation to each other, something to which you will have to relate during your performance. You also have to relate to the work as a whole, so you must bring the graphic picture with you onto the stage. If you don't it will be hard to capture the essence of the work, because there are several ways of interpreting the symbols and their relations to each other. Bringing the graphic picture on stage enables you to alter the relation between the signs during the performance, which assures the continuous openness of the work. The instructional text emphasizes these matters, and I will discuss this further in the analysis.

There can be any number of players.
This means that instrumentation is open, and so is the number of players.

Already in the first sentence of this section, a cryptic undertone is manifested: *The signs on the scores are not primarily what the player plays.* The fact that a sign shows something, but not necessarily what the performer should play, may seem paradoxical. Traditional notation, by contrast, shows as exactly as possible what the performer should play. But Wolff's instructions are not as paradoxical as they may seem at first glance. Rather, this sentence provides a framework for outer limits, a framework for edges. So if one imagines a scale, then the sign in the score represents one extremity while the other end of the scale represents the opposite extremity. In this way the sign does not necessarily show the performer what to play but suggests a framework for a scale: *a space or spaces*.

Here is an example of how you can imagine a framework for the sign vibrato:



Now that the first sentence is deciphered, the rest of the instructions will become meaningful to you. If you are far away from the edges, that is, close to non-vibrato, then you are *far away, like a horizon*. If you are near the edge of the sign vibrato, then you are *close, like a tree with branches overhead*.

The next part of the instructions provides you with another possibility:
You can also use the signs as cues: wait till you notice one and simply respond.
This is a well-known way amongst improvisers of making music. Simply stated, the performers listen and respond intuitively. This section of instructions indicates that the ability to improvise is an important skill in this work.

Overlaps between the signs will happen, which is fine. For example, if you play the sign *bumpy*, the sign may very well still include characteristics from other signs. For example, the sign *bumpy* may be played in a low register, and in an intricate manner, in which case *bumpy* is overlapping the two other signs *low, very low* and *intricate*. *Bumpy* is still the sign being played and interpreted in between the edges of its scale.

This overlapping is important to be aware of in order to understand […] *wait till you notice one and then respond*. For a sign to be noticed, it does not mean that it is the actual sign played by the other performer.

Example: Performer A could notice the sign *bumpy* from performer B, but what performer B is playing is, in fact, the sign *intricate*. Nevertheless, *bumpy* is the sign

performer A will respond to. What is actually going on in the heads of the other performers is not of any interest to you in a situation like this.

Another way to explain this is that signs can be played both consciously and unconsciously, through overlaps. Overlaps will not always happen, even though there's a significant chance that it might. Overlaps like this happen by chance.

[...] *and then respond* means just that: respond. The possibilities for responding to a sign that you notice lies in your imagination.

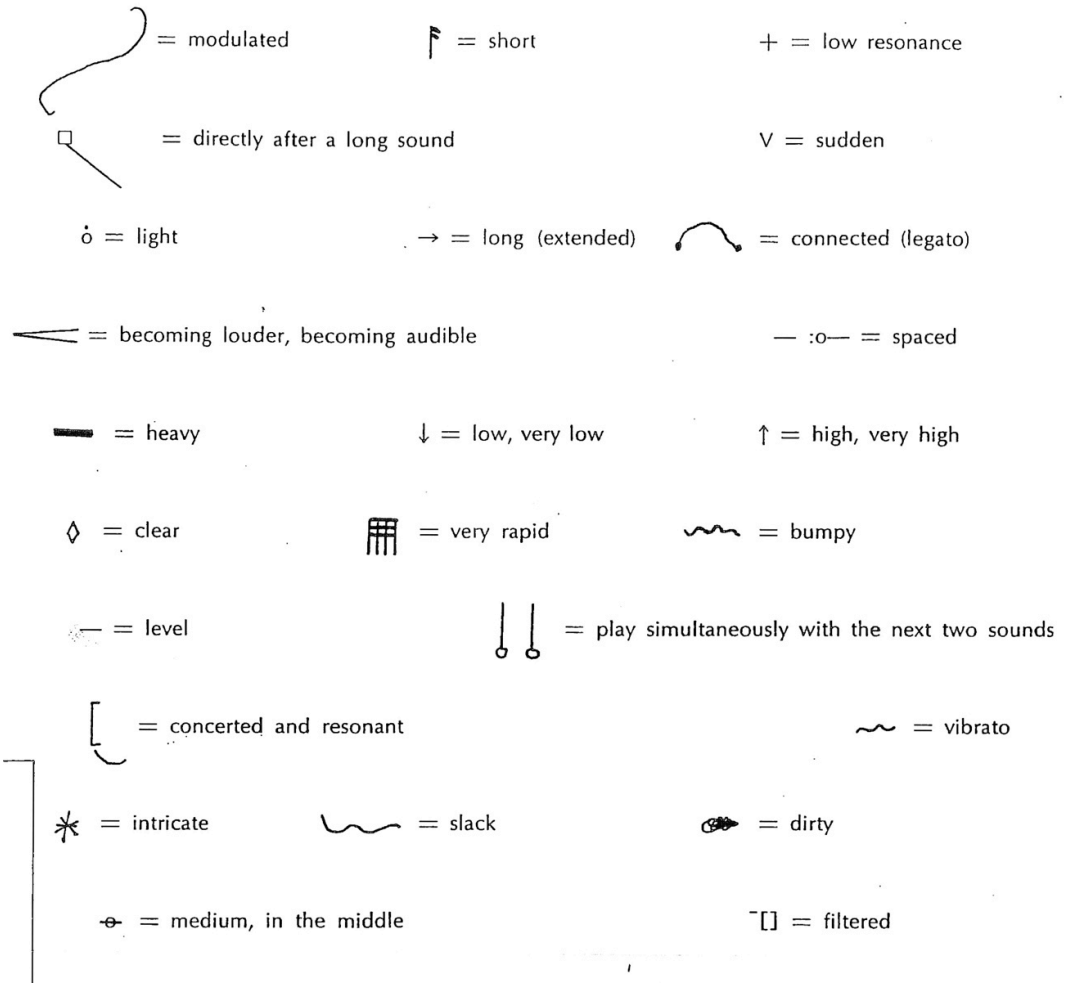
Or you can simply play a sign as it is, but only once in a performance.
This means that if you've played a sign as it is, so for example, not moving within the edges of a scale, you can only do this once for each sign. Example: The sign *ff*. You can choose to play *ff* as it is, and not move around in it to mf, f, and so on. Then you have played the sign *ff* as it is. You can do the same with another sign, but only once with this sign too. However if a sign is played within the borders of a scale, that sign can be played an unlimited number of times.

If you have played a sign *as it is*, you can still play the same sign as many times as you like if you interpret it within the borders of a scale, *as space or spaces*. In the first performance of *Edges*, pianist Frederic Rzewski was in the ensemble. He interpreted only one sign for the entire performance.[15] The work was first performed in London, most likely in 1968.
Wolff says:

> […] the first performance was at the International Student Center in London, not long after I made the piece in 1968 (I think). Along with Frederic Rzewski (who happened to show up in London the day before and just joined us) performers were AMM (Cornelius Cardew, Eddie Prevost, Keith Rowe, Lou Gare), Christopher Hobbs, I think Howard Skempton, and myself.[16] In the first performance Frederic Rzewski told me afterwards that he had only used one sign, the one that = "in the middle".[17]

This quotation illustrates some of the possibilities that exist in this work, and how it is possible to create a substantial interpretation from something small, like only one sign. It also gives an idea of the relationship between the work and the performer.
Part 2. Symbol description.

[15] Mail correspondence with Wolff 08 August, 2010
[16] Mail correspondence with Wolff 25 February, 2014
[17] Mail correspondence with Wolff 24 of February, 2014



Christian Wolff, Edges (1967). Instructional text. Copyright © 1969.
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This is a description of the signs used in the graphic picture that you bring on stage. However, there are signs in the graphic picture that are not explained in the symbol description: *3*, *ff* and *singing*. The reason for this, according to Wolff, is that the signs explain themselves. These symbols are signs on an equal footing with the other signs in the score.

Part 3. The graphic picture; the score.
As in Brown's *December 1952*, the work's instrumentation and its duration are open. A development in the work could manifest itself in different ways, depending on how you interpret the signs in relation to each other. In *December 1952*, the signs or events are pure and clear, whereas the signs in *Edges* are more dynamic and diverse.

The signs in *Edges* also relate to each other in a different way than the events in *December 1952* relate to each other. Both works have signs randomly placed in the score, but their relationships are different.
In addition to the obvious differences between the graphic signs of the two works, there is also a difference in the structure that the signs create together. Brown's 'planks' are floating and drifting, unaffected by each other, while Wolff's signs give the performer indications of various relationships or structures. For example, the signs in *Edges* are assembled in a way that can make the performer imagine two or four different movements, or a process that starts in one place, passes through an imaginary route, and ends up somewhere else. The performer could also choose to adhere freely to the placements of the signs, in the same manner as in *December 1952*. *Edges* carries no guidelines for any of these ways of approaching the work. They're merely possibilities. The two works are very different from each other visually, and you will find that the difference is also audible.

Edges is open to the possibility of being played in a more or less planned or pre-composed version. This means that the performer can to some degree plan or notate what should be played. This is stretching the work's limits pretty far, and it is debatable whether this is turning away from the work's nature and intention. However, if you should choose to do this, you should at least be aware of how far you are stretching it as you do it.

During a lecture at The Grieg Academy in Norway on 16 March 2015, Wolff talked about his experience of how a work's identity can be turned inside out by creating a pre-composed score. An ensemble was rehearsing one of his works while he was there. The work doesn't have conventional notation and eschews the traditional stave system. Wolff explains how he couldn't put his finger on what was wrong, but it just didn't sound right. He eventually walked over to the performers and found out that they had written out exactly what they were to play. Using a conventional stave system, they had notated notes, beats, tempo, everything that is usually notated within a conventional stave system.

- ***Edges* and improvisation.**

Wolff explains that the background for *Edges* was that the piece was intended as an exercise in improvisation, for musicians who otherwise were not accustomed to

improvising. In retrospect, this piece has become more than an exercise for improvisation, and Wolff himself has said that the piece requires that its performers should already be experienced improvisational musicians. [...] *One should really have (free) improvisation experience.*[18]

The instructional text says *wait till you notice one, and then simply respond*. Except for listening with the purpose of recognizing a sign, this part of the instruction reflects the concept of improvisation, which underlines Wolff's indication that the performers need to be able to improvise in this piece. Being able to improvise is not a stated requirement of this piece, but considering Wolff's concern about the issue, it has a certain importance.

- Can I relate 100% to the score?

The prolific diversity of this work results in a wide range of possible interpretations. The variety of the work is still present even if a performer should choose to select only a small part of it, for example, just one sign, as Rzewski did at the world premiere. Either you choose just a small part of the work or the opposite; you relate to the work equally either way.

One peril of this work lies in the already mentioned instruction saying: *You can also use the signs as cues: wait till you notice one and then respond*. My experience is that performers who are used to improvising easily drift away from the work and instead enter into something that is freely improvised. If you reach this point, you are no longer playing *Edges*. To be able to relate 100% to the work, it is important that you are constantly aware of where you are in the piece.

[18] Mail correspondence with Wolff 03 February, 2005

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- Which possibilities and constraints does the score provide for the performance?

As in Brown's *December 1952*, the possibilities in this piece are extensive, but with different limitations. *December 1952* is stable, with a common denominator between its events. *Edges*, on the other hand, has a vivid and kaleidoscopic design to its signs. The signs are mainly abstract, but each of the signs has a specific meaning, explained in the instructional text. Do not get confused and think that this explanation also means that the sound itself should have any semantic meaning to it. The sound is meaningful in itself. Acknowledging the sound's worth in itself means you should not add any additional phrasing, such as vibrato, rubato, diminuendo, and so on, which you would normally do in, for example, a composition by Edvard Grieg. You should do what you are asked to do, and not be tempted to do any life-saving gestures.

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises

With *Edges*, it's reasonable to practice small parts at a time. In the beginning, starting with only one sign at a time could be enough, and then two, three and so on. This enables you to get to know the signs and how each and everyone functions, while at the same time you can develop a palette for each sign. You could do this kind of practice on your own, but it is also a good exercise to tackle as an ensemble. The performers don't have to work with the same sign at the same time, but isolating one, or a few signs is wise at this point.

In an exercise like this, there is a question about how many times one sign can be played. This is very important for each performer's Bank of Ideas. If you are a skilled improviser, you might find your experience useful in this part of the preparations. But you will still have the same great dividend in working with just a few signs at a time if you are not a performer with very much experience in improvisation.

Exercises for *Edges*

With *focus* I mean to pay attention to, to be aware of.

Exercise no. 1: Play only one sign: Can I find ten different ways of realizing one sign?
Exercise no. 2: Focus on spacing and silence.
Exercise no. 3: Focus on contrasts.
Exercise no. 4: Limitation: Only two performers can play at the same time.
Exercise no. 5: Limitation: Only three performers can play at the same time.
Exercise no. 6: Divide the work into movements, for example four movements.

- **Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?**

You and your fellow players should be aware that many unforeseen things can and will happen in this work. The work has a diverse notation and is so diverse that to adhere to pre-determined frames can be difficult. To deal with your pre-determinations is often only possible to some extent. This diversity is part of the core of *Edges*. You have to be on the carousel that the work has invited you to join, and you have to expect to end up in places you did not intend to be.

Examples: If you have made a pre-determination that divides the work into four movements, as in Exercise no. 6, you still have to be prepared for this not happening. Two of the movements may have been ‘glued’ together, for some reason. If it happens like that, then that’s how that performance is. I have also experienced making pre-determinations for the work concerning spacing. The complexity was to be kept pretty low, to allow space and silence into the performance. On stage, the realization became everything but spacious. It became complex and dense, and as worthy as any pre-determined version.

Being prepared to follow the ensemble, or to follow other factors affecting the interaction between the performers, is not synonymous with letting go of either the piece’s identity or your integrity. On the contrary, it reflects rather a vigilance and spontaneity, with respect for all indeterminate situations that may occur, which is part of the essence of *Edges* and other Open Form works. This unpredictability also reflects the graphic picture in the score.

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the particular realization.

Edges is a work that in my experience needs to evolve through a lot of rehearsals and performances, more than many other works.
Because of its embellished notation, this is a piece that can change and develop a great deal during the rehearsal process.

In the rehearsing of *Edges*, some traps may befall you. Because of the large number of signs, you are in danger of unconsciously choosing signs that have an immediate appeal to you. The result may be that some signs are less rehearsed and, therefore, less used. If you are aware of this and take it into account in your practice, you can avoid creating unnecessary limitations for yourself, instead daring to open up opportunities in both the work and yourself.

- Selection.

- Have any of the exercises been functioning exceptionally well?

- Are there parts of The Bank of Ideas that should be rejected, or kept for another performance?

- Does your experience from your practice create a good framework for your interpretation? Is the work's identity being well cared for?

- Are there any special considerations in the meeting between you and the work on stage?

- The score will be with you during the performance.

- The explanations of the signs can be useful to have available in addition to the score, depending on how well you know the signs.

- Do you have notes that may be useful to bring along during the performance?

- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

In *Edges*, a framework for co-play is created where there is interaction between the various signs of the work. The signs relate to each other in a way that can make the work recognizable from one performance to another, although this does not always happen. One element which may create something recognizable is the way in which the performer moves about in the imaginary scale between the edges of each sign. The interaction between the performer and the sign creates an audible bubble around each sign as it is performed. In a cloud of bubbles, some are suddenly lost, while new ones are created. In between the bubbles are only breath and air, just as in the score.

There are two issues for the performer to recognise in dealing with what they have initiated: on the one hand, it is important to be committed to the sign that you perform, while on the other, the same rule applies as in improvisation: a bad idea need not be developed, and should be discontinued as soon as possible. This can, of course, happen in Open Form as well as in improvisation, especially in a work like *Edges* where improvisation plays such a big role. As in a jumble of bubbles, the interaction between the performers in this work can certainly be unintentional, but does not have to be.

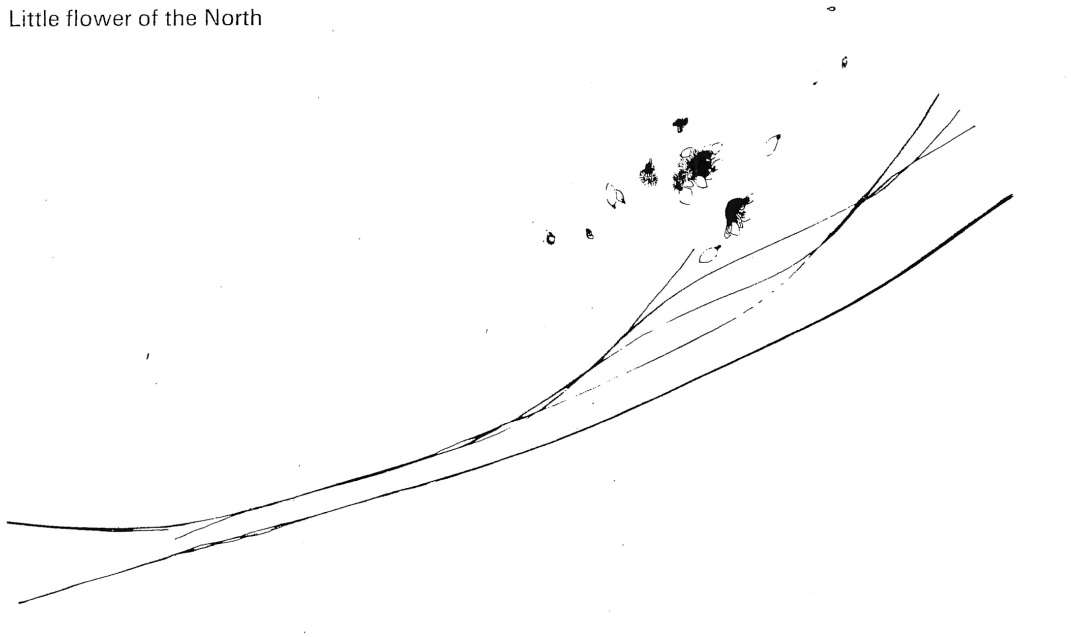
The question you need to ask yourself regarding interaction is:
To what extent should I play together, or simultaneously, with my fellow players?
(See also *Authentic performance, or not?* p. XXXX, where I refer to some of Wolff's reflections on interaction.)

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

4. The performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

Showcase 4 Cornelius Cardew, excerpt from *Schooltime compositions* (1967), *Little flower of the North*



Print courtesy by The Cardew Estate.

Cardew's life as an artist was linked to his political involvement. He was an uncompromising Marxist-Leninist and activist. He was radical in both music and politics, and his life ended tragically in a hit and run accident: it has been wondered whether his death was an accident or a politically motivated murder.

Wolff often speaks about Cardew as one of the main Open Form composers. His magnum opus *Treatise* (1963 – 67) is a 193-page long graphic work, and stands as a pole in the genre of Open Form composition. A less well known work is *Schooltime Compositions* (1968), still an important work in his production, just like *Treatise*. *Schooltime Compositions* is an opera book, a commission from Michael Sargent of Focus Opera Group in Spring 1968. This was just before the Scratch Orchestra was founded, in July the same year. The score resembles a notebook, like those used in an elementary school, which reflects the educational aspects of the piece. Cardew's students performed the work, first, on 11-12 March 1968, along with operas by György Ligeti and Mauricio Kagel.[19]

[19] Tilbury 2008, p. 366

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

Little Flower of the North consists of graphic notation and text.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

The work has no instructional text of any kind. The notation is alone in representing the score, and you, as a performer, have to experiment with your role in the work. [...] *In* Schooltime Compositions, *as with* Treatise*, there was no prescription; both were printed and distributed without any accompanying notes on interpretation; the performer was left to sink or swim.*[20]

[…] *in* Schooltime Compositions *the performers are characters in an opera who discover their roles* […].[21]

Below is Cardew's own description of the work, from hiss article in *The Musical Times*, 'Sitting in the Dark':

> Each of the Schooltime Compositions in the opera book is a matrix to draw out an interpreter's feelings about certain topics or materials. These pieces plus their interpreters are the characters in the opera. They undergo dramatic development in the book; in performance they may. [22]

How are you to deal with the notation when there are no instructional texts or commentary notes to guide you, as in many other Open Form works? Perhaps it is not as free of instructions as it may seem. Cardew describes notation that appears to be free and without instructions in his 1961 article, *Notation – interpretation, etc.:*

> Here we are in a similar situation to that where things are left 'free', and then the composer tells the player afterwards that he played well or badly ('used' the freedom well or badly). If there exist criteria for making such a judgement, then there is no freedom. Playing a piece in which the dynamics are free, it should make no difference whatever to the piece (its identity) (its value) if I play mp continuously.
>
> 'Rules' and 'notation' are inextricably intermingled, and it is misleading to separate them. There never was a notation without rules – these describe the relationship between the notation and what is notated. [23]

That means that you have to consider the notation as the instruction itself, just like any other Open Form work that has an instructional text in addition to another form of

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid. p.363
[22] Cardew 1968, p. 233
[23] Cardew 1961, p. 30

instruction, like a graphic picture. You need to interview the score, and its notation will give you answers.

Schooltime Compositions was written for Cardew's students. This fact, together with Cardew's article in *The Musical Times*, 'Sitting in the Dark', highlights the question of whether the performers should be trained performers or not. I will come back to this issue later in the handbook.

One year after the first performance, the work was played again, on 23 March 1969 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). By this time, the work had found its way from students to trained performers.

> On this occasion, *Schooltime compositions*, like *Treatise*, had been off-loaded into safe harbor, into the hands of mainly experienced, performance artists – the same expert hands into which both the European and the American avant-garde, with a degree of circumspection and worldliness not unrelated to their instinct for artistic self-preservation, had entrusted their own music. […][24]

On this basis, I believe that both uneducated and educated performers could play this work (otherwise I would not have had the pleasure of performing it!). Although it is debatable whether Cardew's art is deprived of an important political aspect in doing so. The unschooled performers are part of the work's manifestation of a rejected hegemony, which for some may be an important part of the dissemination of Cardew's compositions. In your realization of the work, it is up to you to take this matter into consideration.

- Descriptive analysis of the score.
  - The various components of the work

The exact part being discussed in this section is *Little Flower of the North*, and not *Schooltime Compositions* as a whole.

1. Text: *Little Flower of the North*.

This poetic text is an essential part of the work, but in what way?

Could the text be representing the work's title alone?

Could the text be a poetic instructional text?

Could the text be part of the graphic picture and thus only to be considered as part of the score that you perform?

[24] Tilbury 2008, p. 363f

2. The graphic picture:
- lines
- flowers

3. Air. By that, I mean that the score consists of quite a lot of air in relation to the amount of graphics that are used.

- Does the score tell anything about

- Instrumentation: Open
- Duration: Open
- Development: This is also an open aspect, but there is a flow in the design of the lines, together with the arrangement of the flowers with their various sizes. This flow, or development, may be the basis for different interpretations, as one possibility.

When Cardew himself describes the work, the term *development* is precisely the one he uses: *They* [the performers] *undergo dramatic development in the book; in performance they may.* [25] Cardew does not say that the work should have a certain musical development or progress, even though there is a suggestion that it may. He rather describes a fundamental aspect of it that concerns some kind of drama or interaction between the work and the performers.

- Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level?

All aspects of interpretation concerning micro level are open.

- Can I relate 100 % to the score?

In this work you will be able to stay well within the score's framework, through what you define as your role in the opera. As in Wolff's *Edges*, it is utterly important to know where you are in the score in order to relate to it 100 %.

[25] Cardew 1968, p. 233

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- What possibilities and limitations does the score provide for performance?

Unlike Brown's *December 1952* and Wolff's *Edges*, the graphics in *Little Flower of the North* are less abstract. Both text and graphics create a framework for interpretation with clear references to the figurative content. That does not mean that the work is narrative, it's something other than that. The other parts of *Schooltime Compositions* are also generally non-narrative and this must be taken into account. A non-narrative opera may seem paradoxical if you approach the work with an attitude that opera is narrative. If you manage to put aside this view for a more abstract approach to what opera is, then you come one step closer to this work.

In 'Sitting in the Dark' Cardew portrays his frames for what opera is: *My plan is based on the translation of the word 'opera' which means 'many people working'*.[26] In the same article, the reader gets an insight into the performer's possibilities in the work:

> Some matrices serve as a measure of probity (cf La Monte Young's 'Draw a straight line and follow it'); others as a measure of virtuosity, courage, tenacity, alertness and so on. They point to the heart of some real matter, mental or material. The interpreter knows the general area of his potential action; he wishes or has talent to play, or sing, or construct, or illumine, or take exercise of one sort or another. He can draw out his interpretation in that direction. The interpreting route from matrix to action is what determines the condition he arrives in, the spirit in which he undertakes his action.[27]

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
  - Making exercises.

During the process of making exercises, it is wise to rethink these questions (and perhaps you have even more):

1. Can I interpret the score both musical and kinaesthetic?
2. Can I interpret and perform parts of the work, for example, only the flowers?
3. If I interpret and perform only one part of the work, does this part need to be interpreted in context with the rest of the score?

Example: If I interpret the flowers, does it have to be in a particular relation to the lines and the text?

[26] Cardew 1968, p.233
[27] Ibid.

Pianist John Tilbury, who was also a good friend of Cardew, tells us in his substantial biography on Cardew, *Cornelius Cardew – A Life Unfinished*, that *visual interpretations* were performed, describing one example. This quotation will provide some answers to these questions:

> The residual sounds of visual interpretations can occasionally be identified by those who were present and whose memories are still functioning reliably – such as the painter Tom Philips' typewriter and 'Little Flower of the North'. Philips interpreted 'Little Flower' as representing 'hair' and projected slides of snippets of his own hair onto a screen. This was accompanied by himself typing out the phrase 'Little Flower of the North' over and over, as a schoolboy might write out lines.[28]

Exercises for Little *Flower of the North*

Exercise no. 1: Can I find ten different ways to realize the lines?

Exercise no. 2: Can I find ten different ways to realize the flowers?

Exercise no. 3: Can I find ten different ways to realize the words?

Exercise No. 4: Which flower is Flower of the North? How can I use my answer in the interpretation of the work?

Exercise No. 5: Make a short version of the work, for example one minute.

Exercise No. 6: Make a long version of the work, for example 15 minutes.

Exercise No. 7: Make a complex and dense interpretation of the work.

Exercise No. 8: Make a simplistic version of the work, with a lot of spacing.

- **Can I relate 100 % to my own pre-determinations?**

This depends on which frames you choose for your performance with the audience. By that, I mean that if you choose to do an authentic performance in Cardew-style, with an interactive audience (see below), you have to be prepared to relate to your pre-determinations in a most flexible manner.

If you choose a more conventional approach to relate to your audience, which is quite possible, then you also have a more conventional and stable relationship to your pre-determined limits.

- **Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?**

As already mentioned, Cardew's opera book does not carry any immediate hallmarks

[28] Tilbury 2008, p. 364

of what is usually associated with a conventional opera. The framework that Cardew has given to his opera reflects his approach to the phenomenon of opera and theatre in general. Cardew had a non-theatrical attitude. For Cardew, the phenomenon of conventional opera and theatre was a symbol of a hierarchical system: some (the performers) are centered on stage *in a pool of light*, while others (the audience) are sitting in the dark: *You* [the audience] *sit in the dark absorbed in action proceeding in a pool of light.* [29] In 'Sitting in the Dark' Cardew also draws lines to the relationship between teacher and student in the same roles, an idea from which the title *Schooltime Compositions* springs.

In other words, Cardew did not embrace the conventional roles for the stage, its performers and audience. At the first performance of the work, these two groups were mixed and became one group in one arena.

> The performance at the ICA (Cardew, stoically, was performing with a strained back) resembled a market or bazaar (without the cash nexus), creating an aura which stimulated a wide range of shifting relationships involving performers and public, as individual members of the audience moved around observing, pausing, questioning, participating, moving on […].[30]

Associations of Cage's *Musicircus*, written the year before, can easily be recognised in this description, which confirms Cardew's obvious and pronounced respect for Cage and the New York School composers, a sign of respect that was reciprocated.

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the realization.
- Selection.
- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

Unlike Cage, Cardew relates to feelings and taste. This is significant and affects how you relate to both the score and to other performers. It indicates that the performers should relate to each other and play (or perform) together. At the same time, Tilbury's portrayal of the first performance as a *bazaar* is very figurative and clear, and must be taken into account if the whole opera book of *Schooltime Compositions* is to be

[29] Cardew 1968, p. 233
[30] Tilbury 2008, p. 364

performed. Interaction is present on three levels in *Schooltime Compositions*:

1. The interaction between the performers within one part.
2. The interaction between the various parts.
3. The interaction between the work, including its various parts, and the public.

1. The interaction between the performers within one part; *Little Flower of the North* being one part.

Interaction: playing together.

2. The interaction between the various parts.
There will be various performers or groups of performers who perform the various parts. Two different groups may very well perform the same part, but interpreting it in different ways.

The interaction between these groups: playing simultaneously.

That means that the performances of the various parts happen simultaneously, independent of one another. In this way, the bazaar construct is emphasized and each section is as important as another.

3. The interaction between the work, including its various parts, and the public.
The interaction between the work and the audience was strikingly anarchist in the world premiere. This kind of interaction is also manifested in ‘Sitting in the Dark.’ So we can conclude that a performance in Cardew's spirit would include the public in the same sphere as the performers. They can move about freely, amongst unobstructedly placed performers, stop, ask questions – rise up from the darkness and be a part of the bazaar, in the light.

Unlike Brown’s intentions for *December 1952*, in which the performers are encouraged to have an improvisational approach to interpretation, Cardew urges his performers to make pre-determined choices to some degree. Tilbury writes:

> […] it was his [Cardew’s] desire and intention that, irrational, intuitive and evanescent as these pieces appear to be, their performance was to be controlled by aesthetic judgement, taste and criticism; reflection, not indiscrimination, was to be

> the guiding principle. Nor were they necessarily improvisational; performances were usually measured and formal […].[31]

This means that you may relate to the work with an improvisational attitude, but you may and should also consider what possibilities there are for making pre-determinations – or a bit of both.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

[31] Ibid. p. 362

Showcase 5 Pauline Oliveros, *Horse Sings from Cloud* (1979)

Horse Sings From Cloud

For instruments and voices

Pauline Oliveros

Hold a tone until you no longer want to change the tone.

When you no longer want to change the tone then change to another tone.

Dynamics are free.

Commentary:

Listen carefully to each tone. This means listening to all the micro changes that are happening within the tone. If you are experiencing the desire to change the tone then stay with your tone until all desire to change the tone subsides - with no desire change to another tone. Desire to change your tone may arise when you hear the tones of others or simply your own internal musical restlessness. Be a witness.

If you are a string player try to minimize bow changes.
If you are a wind or brass player circular breathing is good or very slow soft attacks when repeating the tone.
If you are a percussionist use single stroke roll.

Print courtesy by Pauline Oliveros. Excerpt from *Anthology of Text Scores*, Pauline Oliveros, Deep Listening Publications 2013.

Oliveros is, like Wolff, younger than the other composers of The New York School. She is the founder of the Deep Listening Institute and has been developing and experimenting with electronic music since she was quite young. This pioneer's works are presented as both graphical and text scores; what they all have in common is that they instruct the performer to create a particular listening situation, a so-called Deep Listening.

The most typical Oliveros work is a text score like *Horse Sings from Cloud*. She has a poetic style in her texts, with a consistent tone with a reference to meditational techniques. Improvisation plays an important part in performing her works.

The title *Horse Sings from Cloud* has been changed a few times, from its first title *Rose Mountain Slow Runner* (1975) to the title it has kept until today: *Horse Sings from Cloud*. Its present title came from a dream in which a horse is to sing from the clouds. Oliveros: *I was wondering how the horse would get there, when some birds flew down with a blanket in their beaks and took the horse to the clouds to sing.*[32]

1. Analysing the score

- How can the text be categorized?

Horse Sings from Cloud is a text score. Oliveros has written several so-called *Sonic Meditations*, and *Horse Sings from Cloud* is one of them.

- What does the text tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

The instructions from Oliveros are clear and precise, and you are taken straight into Deep Listening.

The text tells you to hold a tone, which also includes silence[33] or a chord/cluster as a tone, until you no longer wish to change it. This means you have to listen to your immediate desire for the tone at all times, ignore it and do the opposite.

[32] Oliveros 2006, from cd booklet text.
[33] Considering *silence* as a sound is a straightforward matter for Oliveros, just as it was for Cage, and still is for Wolff. On several occasions, I have asked Oliveros about the possibility of using silence as a sound in her works. The answer has always been *yes*. For Oliveros, *silence* is a clear and natural part of the definition of *sound*. The *sounds of silence* are also discussed in *Showcase 6 John Cage,* Four[6] *(1992).*

Is your desire to hold the tone? Change it.
Is your desire to change the tone? Hold it.

- Descriptive analysis of the score.

- Instrumentation: Open

- Duration: Open

The score is divided into two parts:

1. The score:

> Hold a tone until you no longer want to change the tone.
> When you no longer want to change the tone then change to another tone.
> Dynamics are free.

2. A note concerning how to play: lower section, called *Commentary*.

Commentary:

> Commentary:
>
> If you are experiencing the desire to change the tone then stay with your tone until all desire to change the tone subsides - with no desire change to another tone.
>
> Desire to change your tone may arise when you hear the tones of others or simply your own internal musical restlessness. Be a witness.

- What does the text state about the material on a micro level?

- Timbre, texture, duration, dynamics and intonation/pitch: Open

Oliveros simply asks you to observe and listen to what happens with these parameters in your playing: *Listen carefully to each tone. This means listening to all the micro changes that are happening within the tone.*

- Spacing/complexity: Partially open. *Spacing* is not a relevant term to use describing this work. *Horse Sings form Cloud* represent the opposite of so-called *pointillism*, where short and abrupt tones are dominant. A small degree of pointillism provides a small degree of complexity.

The long tones that seem to appear consistently throughout this work have an effect on the complexity of the work, however. The overall sound of the work can be complex if the ensemble is large and everyone is playing simultaneously. But remember that silence is also a sound.[34] It is unlikely that all performers permit the sounds of silence at the same time, but it is most likely that only a few performers play simultaneously. Fewer performers will have an effect on the complexity of the work, which will be perceived as less complex, and more transparent in such circumstances.

- Rhythm: Partially open. Rhythmic patterns will unfold along the way, but the transformations in the overall sounds proceed so slowly that the audience will experience the music more as a landscape where the observation angle is gradually shifting, to different degrees. This is an intersubjective aspect of the work, and can be recognized from various performances.

- Development / structure: Partially open. Possibilities of vast changes are present in this work. This also has an effect on its structure, which for the listener will change and be different from one performance to another. What happens to the work's development depends on the performer's listening and where it leads each performer.

- Can I relate 100 % to the score?

The term Deep Listening is not mentioned in the score, other than in the note regarding the work's rights. But the work itself is a Deep Listening meditation, as is every Oliveros work. The work gives the instructions you need to perform it, but it's still useful to reflect a little over what Deep Listening is.

Crash course in Deep Listening:

Deep Listening means that you listen to all aspects of what's around you and what's in you, not only sound waves that hit your ear. You listen to your inner self and to everything that surrounds you; *Listening at all times to all sounds inside of me and*

[34] See 'A Basic Recipe', p. xxxx

around of me.

In Oliveros' article *The Earth Worm Also Sings: A Composer's Practice of Deep Listening*, dedicated to John Cage, the reader gets a poetic introduction to Deep Listening. Here is an excerpt from the article: [35]

> I hear
> I am
> I receive what is.
> Listening
> No argument
> My body is sound
> Listening guides my body
> Sound is the fiber of my being and of all sentient beings without exception
>
> Is sound intelligence?
>
> The earth is also sound
> guided by sound
> and so are all things of the earth
>
> Rocks are her ears recording all of her events from the beginning
> My earth body returns to hers
> where the earth worm also sings
> Inside/outside vibrations
> My bones resonate
> My stomach, spleen, liver, kidneys, lungs and heart resonate
> These organs are sound
> contain sound
> […]

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- **What possibilities and what limitations does the score give for a realization?**

Possibilities: The score, including the commentary, provides you with a clear framework to deal with in your interpretation. Within this framework, there is infinite potential and great possibilities for what could happen in the work. The parameters that are open, such as dynamic or texture can have such great an effect that the entire work can change character towards different extremes.

The size of the ensemble and the choice of instruments are also affecting the frames for these possibilities.

[35] Oliveros 1993, p. 35.

When you step into a state of mind where you do Deep Listening, possibilities will be revealed, unique for each performer and influenced by the circumstances present.

Limitations:

1. To refrain from changing a tone when you spontaneously want to change it, and vice versa, is a precise limitation. This is the core of the entire work and constitutes the framework for the score.

2. Through the commentary, Oliveros makes sure that the performers have soft attacks, circular breathing, a minimum of bow changes and single stroke rolls for percussionists. She makes sure that the long sounds are given the care they need in order to give stability to the performance.

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises

Horse Sings from Cloud is, as mentioned, an exercise itself; a Deep Listening exercise. Yet it is definitely possible to benefit from practicing through exercises in this work.

Exercises for *Horse Sings from Cloud*

Exercise no. 1, solo

Can I find ten different ways to play a long tone on my instrument?

Exercise no. 2, solo

Can I find three ways to play long tones that I have not played before?

Exercise no. 3, solo

Can I find five different ways to change each of the long tones from Exercises nos. 1 and 2?

Exercise no. 4, with ensemble

Duration: 10 – 15 minutes.

Everyone chooses one tone and makes all variations, according to the score, in relation to the chosen tone.

Play this exercise over again with a different tone.

- Can I relate 100 % to my own pre-determinations?

When you're on stage to perform this work, it is only the work's own framework and your Deep Listening that should be in the centre. The exercises are with you because you've practiced and prepared for the performance through them, but your focus should be entirely on the score itself.

- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

Deep Listening is not necessarily for the performers exclusively, but also for the audience. There are most likely several people in the audience who have no relation to Deep Listening. A small introduction to the concept and a brief introduction to it will help them gain a greater appreciation of the work, in my opinion.

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the particular realization.
- Selection.
- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

Deep Listening is about listening to absolutely everything that admits you and your mind. You can respond to something you listen to, which might be on a mental plane as it is a musical gesture from a fellow player. Deep Listening does not necessarily encourage you to respond to what you listen to with sounds, but it obviously allows you to do so. The main interaction in this and other Oliveros works is between you and Deep Listening – and your response to that. In addition to Deep Listening, in *Horse Sings from Cloud* you are asked to observe and relate to your own desire (and perform the opposite!).

- Are there any special considerations in the meeting between you and the work on stage?

If you know the score well enough, it's ok to not bring it onto the stage. The chance is that you'll learn this work by heart during your preparations.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

Location of the performers and the audience in the room:

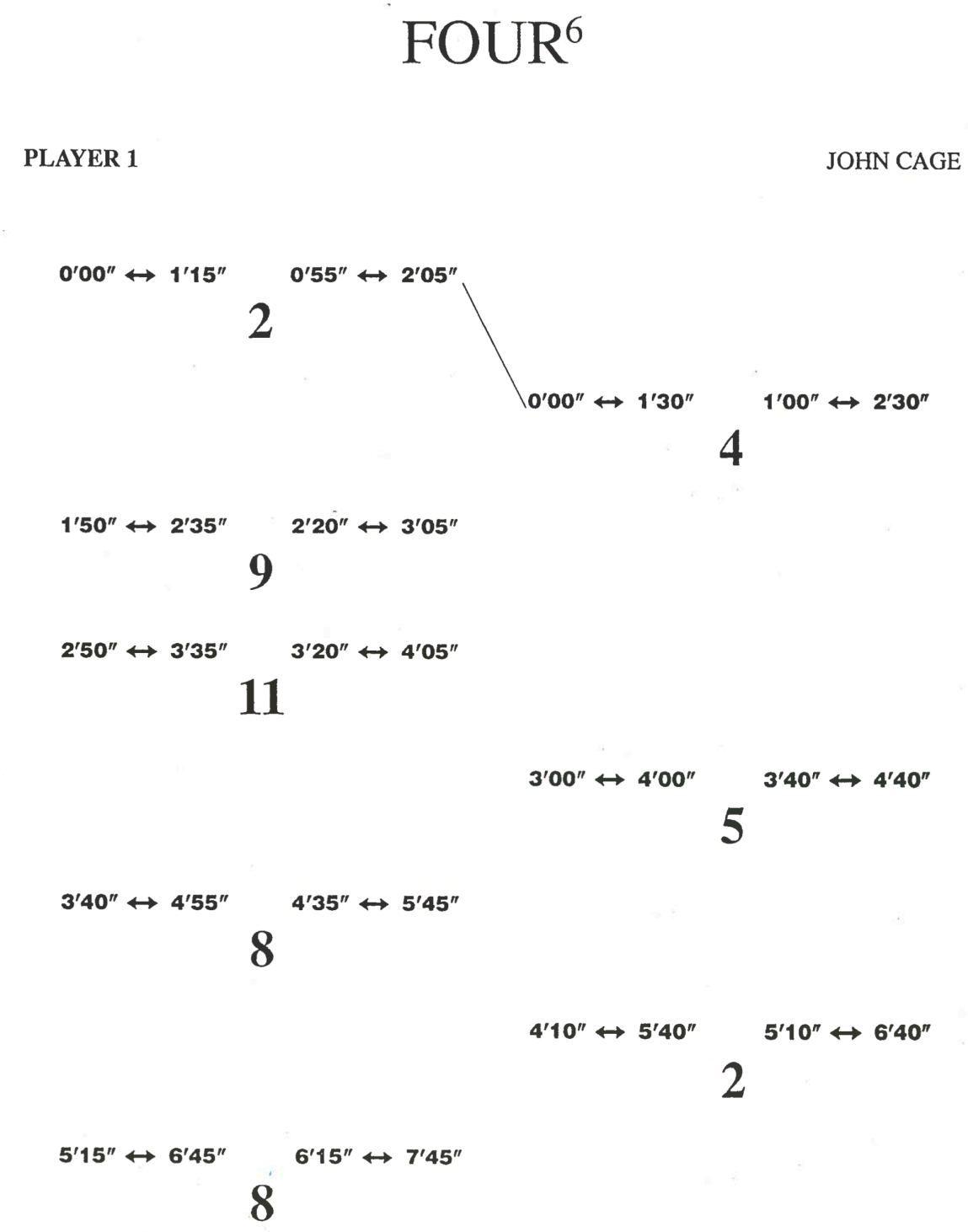
If you can experiment with how the audience is placed in the room, I recommend doing so. One possibility is to let the audience move freely around the room during the performance, not unlike in Showcase 4 and Cardew's opera book *Schooltime Compositions*. Another possibility is to have an arrangement for the audience to lie down. If the performers, and the tones, are placed around the room, the meetings between music, performers and audience will occur in a different way.

4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

See *Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?* above.

Showcase 6 John Cage, *Four*[6] (1992)



Excerpt from *Four*[6] (1992). Print courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation.

Compared to Wolff's notational techniques, Cage's notational techniques are extremely diverse and distinct. His way of notating embodies intricate notational techniques, often entirely without relation to conventional notation. Many of his works are, nevertheless, detailed, with a strict structure, and with a more rigid framework for you than is usually the case in an Open Form work. This means that many of Cage's works do not belong under the Open Form umbrella, even though they might look like Open Form works because of his notational techniques. This accounts for some of the sensation of paradox you meet in Cage and his works.

But Cage's production is vast and many of his works are Open Form works. I have included this particular work to give a presentation of this kind of one of his many so-called number pieces. Christian Wolff used this kind of notation as early as 1957, in Sonata for Three Pianos (see excerpts from the score p. XXXX).

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

The score consists of two parts:

Part 1. Instructional text and play instructions:

Initial instructions:

> for any way of producing sounds (vocalization, singing, playing of an instrument or instruments, electronics, etc.)

Four[6] is dedicated to several performers:

> for Pauline Oliveros to celebrate her sixtieth birthday
> and for Joan La Barbara, William Winant, and Leonard Stein.

Key instructions:

> Choose twelve different sounds with fixed characteristics (amplitude, overtone structure, etc.) Play within the flexible time brackets given. When the time brackets are connected by a diagonal line they are relatively close together. When performed as a solo, the first player's part is used and the piece is called *ONE*[7].

Part 2. You need to bring the score onto the stage. This part consists of time brackets and number instructions. To follow the instructions, all performers must have silent stopwatches.[36]

Four[6] can also be played as a solo. If so, the title is changed to *ONE*[7]. If you have two (or more?) quartets, they may perform the work simultaneously, in the spirit of Cage.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

In the instructions you are given the assignment of finding the twelve sounds which meet the criteria provided. In the score, Cage has carefully structured when you will play your sounds. Each time bracket has its own open outset and conclusion.

  - Descriptive analysis of the score.

- Instrumentation: Open. *Four*[6] is a quartet where the voices are named as players 1 – 4.

If you choose to use performers with different musical backgrounds, as I have done many times, you will be able to enhance the imprint of your own time in addition to making a performance of a work from a bygone time.

Cage himself used performers with different backgrounds, including untrained performers. In many of his works, for example for percussion, he used dancers as well as untrained musicians, to perform.

- Length: The total length of the work is 30 minutes.

- Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level?

The instructions ask explicitly for sounds. This means that you cannot choose to do actions that don't have any sound, as you can, for example, in *Variations III* (1963), as described on p. XXXX. The concept of sound, read in the light of the New York school aesthetics, also includes silence as a sound. Cage was particularly concerned

[36] It is practically impossible to find stopwatches that don't make sounds. To make a stopwatch silent, you can disassemble it and cut the wires to the speaker. If the connection is wireless, you can easily tape over it with a good adhesive tape.
I do not recommend the stopwatch on your cell phone. On stage, a cell phone may create problems with both sounds and actions as well as its overall light, which may take too much attention away from the work.

about silence, and his book Silence is one of many manifestations concerning this. The ultimate manifestation of silence is found in his work *4'33''* (1952), a major highlight of Cage's production. This is a work in three movements. In this work the scene is set only for all the unintentional sounds that occur during the work's silence. By playing this work, you will experience Cage's assertion that silence does not exist. It is not the silence you really listen to in *4'33''*, but the sounds that are emitted in silence. You just have to open your ears and listen. Cage tells about the first performance of the work:

> There's no such thing as silence. What they thought was silence, because they didn't know how to listen, was full of accidental sounds. You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement. During the second, raindrops began pattering the roof, and during the third the people themselves made all kinds of interesting sounds as they talked or walked out.[37]

This quotation from Cage makes it a little easier to understand what he meant by *sound* and *silence*:

> People expect listening to be more than listening. And so sometimes they speak of inner listening. Or the meaning of sound. When I talk about music it finally comes to people's minds that I'm talking about sound that doesn't mean anything. It's not inner, but it's just outer. And they say, these people who understand that, finally say: You mean it's just sounds? Thinking for something to just be a sound to be useless. Whereas I love sounds just as they are. And I have no need for them to be anything more than what they are. I don't want them to be psychological, I don't want a sound to pretend that it's a bucket, or that it's a president or that it's in love with another sound. [loud laughter] I just want it to be a sound. The sound experience, which I prefer to all others, is the experience of silence. And the silence almost everywhere in the world now is traffic. If you listen to Beethoven or to Mozart you see that they're always the same. But if you listen to traffic it's always different.[38]

In conversation with Mia Göran (Norwegian flutist and artistic researcher), Joan La Barbara describes her experience with interpreting *Four*[6] together with Cage in 1992, which would prove to be Cage's final performance.

> This measuring [that David Tudor did] is more similar to a classical piece. The difference between me and David Tudor, I suppose, would be that while I'm strict to a certain extent in following the directions, I still feel as if it was Cage's intentions that there would be some space. And if you should fill up all these spaces with measurements it becomes in a way an artificial space. If he wanted things on a grid, he would have made a grid. If he gave you a big empty space, I think he wanted you to have experience of that big empty space. …If you're counting these micro-seconds you're not experiencing a big empty space, you're experiencing the passing of micro-seconds.[39]

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[37] Kostelanetz 2003, p. 70
[38] Cage, John, 1991. *John Cage about Silence.* (Video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcHnL7aS64Y
Retrieved 19 May, 13:25.
[39] Göran 2009, p. 142. La Barbara in conversation with Göran, 2008.

The quotation says something about the spatiality in *Four*[6], and how important this aspect of the work is. With *spatiality*, I mean the space that every time bracket provides for you to make a sound. But *spatiality* also means granting the same importance to the sounds of silence.

How will you interpret *sounds with fixed characteristics*? What did Cage mean by *sounds with fixed characteristics*? There is not necessarily any conformity between these two questions. Either you can interpret this yourself, or you can try to understand what Cage meant. It may very well be that your interpretation of this instruction will reach the same outcome as Cage. I'd still like to put some focus on interpreting this instruction since it's not necessarily evident to the performer what is meant by *fixed characteristics*.

You need to ask yourself some questions to reach an understanding of the gist of *fixed characteristics*:

- To what extent should the sounds be fixed?
- What are the limits between the definition of a sound, a motive, or a phrase?
- Can a rhythm be a sound?
- Can a sound be developed or varied at all? If yes, where is the outer limit for such variations?

The answers to these questions will be significant for your interpretation of the work. In my interpretation, every sound should reflect the instruction in the best possible way. To me this means that the sound should be stable enough for the listener to able to perceive it as one sound, not a phrase or a melody. By that I mean that the sound will not be stopped and started again within one time bracket. If the sound is stopped and started again within the same *time bracket*, you are exchanging Cage's instructions about when the sound should start and stop with your own choice, and your own personal taste, which is in fundamental conflict with Cage's aesthetics. A sound should only be started and stopped in accordance with the original frames of each *time bracket*. Exceptions are obviously made for breathing or other physical impossibilities concerning the sounds.

When does a sound become a motif or a phrase? Or a melody? Personally, I'm willing to stretch the limits of this quite far so long as the instruction *fixed characteristics* is involved to some extent. *Fixed* indicates that something is fixed,

meaning that something is repeated to some extent. How many times and to what extent it is repeated, what speed, and how much variation there is in the repeated material, I have no answer to. This is something that you should experiment with on your instrument or sound object.

A rhythm may very well be one sound, despite the fact that a rhythm consists of several sounds put together in a row. The criteria for allowing a rhythm to be a sound have to be the same as described above, namely that the rhythm, or sound, matches the expectations of the instructions and their requirement for *fixed characteristics*. This means that the identity of the rhythm needs to be fixed to some degree.
Example 1: You can make a rhythmic loop, with all parameters as fixed as possible.

If you would like to add a little more action or some transition into the sound (rhythm), this can be done while keeping your sound within the frames of *fixed characteristics* at the same time.
Example 2: If you choose to do a rhythm where, for example, the volume is varied somewhat, it makes sense to allow as many as possible of the other parameters to remain stable.

I would rather not affect you with someone else's performances, but I will make an exception in this case since it may help you to understand the framework for the instructional text. The recording *John Cage that Summerstage* (the recording of Cage's last public performance, described above) gives some indication of what meaning Cage and the other performers have given the instructional text. This insight can provide an important penetration into Cage's relationship with his own work. This does not mean that you should take this performance as a blueprint. The openness of the work will, and should, live on for each performance, just as Cage describes listening to traffic:

> When I hear what we call music [like Beethoven or Mozart] it seems to me that someone is talking. And talking about his feelings, or about his ideas of relationships. But when I hear traffic, the sound of traffic here on 6th avenue for instance don't have the feeling that anyone is talking. I have the feeling that a sound is acting. And I love the activity of sound. What it does is it gets louder and quieter, and it gets higher and lower, and it gets longer and shorter. It does all these things that… I'm completely satisfied with that. I don't need sound to talk to me. [40]

In my opinion, the version of *Four*[6] in *John Cage that Summerstage* confirms that it is okay to have some variation in a fixed sound, and still be within the frames of sounds

[40] Ibid.

with *fixed characteristics*. A spartan variation, in for example dynamics, timbre, rhythm, structure or development, could be allowed and still be within the framework of *fixed characteristics*. Experiment with variations and explore the edges.

The openness of the time bracket system allows the spacing and density of the work to appear totally different from one performance to another.

Example 1: in a performance where all performers choose to make sounds as long as possible within each time bracket, the work will sound with a saturated density.

Example 2: in a performance where all performers choose to make their sounds as short as possible within each *time bracket*, the work will sound with much spacing and silence.

The performers performing in the same interpretation need not to relate to Cage's time brackets in the same way. The examples above simply show two extremes to manifest some of the possibilities present in the time brackets.

It is important to be aware of Cage's perception of silence as sound in the business of interpreting and performing his works. It is different for every performer and composer, how he or she relates to silence. For Cage, the sounds of silence were an important part of his entire relationship to music:

> […] nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated and those that are not. Those that are notated appear in the written music as silences, opening the doors of the music to the sounds that happen to be in the environment. […] There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear.[41]

[41] Cage 1973, p. 8.

- ### Can I relate 100 % to the score?

Dealing with *Four*[6] involves three aspects:
1) Interpretation of the instructional text.

2) Relating to the structure Cage has put together with *time brackets*.

3) The specific order of each performer's sounds.

As soon as you make an interpretation of any of these aspects, you introduce a variable into the work, risking exceeding the framework of the piece. This is a variable that work (and composer) must endure, and you as a performer must ensure that the work is able to bear your variable while preserving its identity at all times.

As already mentioned, it is important to have a general understanding of the aesthetics Cage that was concerned with. Allowing a sound to be just a sound, without adding anything, is an important perception which requires a different mind-set concerning the concept of sound, and it requires practice. My experience is that musicians who have little or no particular knowledge or experience in performing Cage find it easy to fall into the temptation, and use their acquired musical experience without somehow filtering that knowledge. Rubato, diminuendo and vibrato do not necessarily sound like Cage, but may instead sound a little Crumb-ish. They are incorrect, even though they might sound as musically as ever. The conclusion to this is that to relate to a Cage-work you need to be aware of, and apply, some historical context in addition to being able to make sounds.

So, is it possible to relate 100 % to the score? It's difficult to give a straight answer to this question because of the invitation to interpretation given in the instructional text, as I've discussed above. But it is, at least, possible to make an attempt. Several of Cage's works have an instructional text that requests interpretation. As always, what the score does not tell you about gives space in which you can experiment.

It may seem austere and ascetic to adhere to sound without any phrasing at all. The same goes for relating to fellow players without adjusting you playing according to them, especially if you have spent most of your musical activities striving to do the opposite. The work itself enhances the ascetic aspect of this work. Despite the possibility of considerable variables, the time brackets, and the order of sounds, are

strictly structured and accurately placed in the score. All the decisions you make have to be based on the premises of Cage's structure.

How did Cage relate to his own rules? Composers and performers who have worked with Cage have interesting experiences that provide new perspectives on performance practice concerning Cage's works – through stories about Cage's ideas and strategies relating to interpretation and performing.

Magne Hegdal, a Norwegian composer using chance operations, worked closely together with Cage during his stay in Norway in 1983. Hegdal performed *Music for Marcel Duchamp* (1947), for prepared piano. Cage was with him when he prepared the piano.

The score consists of instructions for preparing a grand piano, *Table of Preparations*. The *Table of Preparations* provides the pianist with what appear to be precise instructions for preparing materials, placement on the strings measured from dampers, as well as the conventionally notated music. Hegdal talks about how his accurate and prompt measurements for placing the objects were replaced by Cage's receptive and musical corrections: [42]

> Olsen: How did you prepare yourself?
> Hegdal: I had rehearsed the work and done thorough work with the preparations. I had prepared the instrument and measured the exact distances prescribed by Cage in the instructions.
> O: How did you work with the measurements together with Cage?
> H: Cage didn't talk about the measurements, nor did he make any big point out of it. He could prepare and adjust the tones without any considerations to the measurements. He focused on the timbre, not the 'recipe'. He had very subjective meanings about what it should sound like.
> He could say: 'Listen, doesn't this sound better?'
> O: Wolff describes specific overtones that he wants, or if the sound should be e.g. dry. How did Cage find his ideal timbre? Did he listen for places where the overtone structure was especially rich?
> H: No, he didn't look for specific overtones or places where the overtone structure was especially rich. But he had an idea about how it should sound, a very personal taste. He didn't relate to any strict 'philosophy' about following any specific rules. He would decide there and then, and suggested very quick completely new ideas. Feldman, who by the way is very unlike Cage, says that Cage is not a musician, but a philosopher. ... I have a completely different opinion. Cage was very musical, and he had really strong opinions. He broke his most sacred rules because of the musician in him.

[42] Storesund 2004, p. 52.

The rhythmic structure is 11 x 11 (extended) 2, 1, 1, 3, 1, 2, 1
The music was written for the Duchamp sequence of the film,
"Dreams That Money Can Buy" (Hans Richter).

Table of Preparations

Objects are placed between the strings of an ordinary grand piano, transforming the sounds with respect to all their charasteristics.

Distance from Damper in inches	Material
$7\frac{5}{8}$	Rubber
$2\frac{5}{8}$	weather stripping
$3\frac{7}{8}$	weather stripping
$6\frac{5}{8}$	weather stripping
$11\frac{1}{2}$	weather stripping
$4\frac{1}{4}$	weather stripping
$1\frac{1}{4}$	weather stripping
$1\frac{5}{8}$	weather stripping

Distance from Damper in inches	Material
$7\frac{3}{8}$	Small Bolt

The bolt is placed between the 2nd and 3rd strings

S T R I N G S

1 2 3

Place weather stripping and rubber over 2nd string and under strings 1 and 3.

John Cage, *Music for Marcel Duchamp* (1947). 'Table of Preparations'.
Print courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation.

Wolff describes Cage applying the same approach, supporting Hegdal's perception of Cage as a musical and attentive musician.

> […] it's exactly as Cage says: you pick…what you like.[43]

This is what you can relate to as open, but stylistic, in *Four*[6]:

1. Choice of sounds.
2. Start and end times for the sounds within the framework of each time bracket.

This is what you need to relate to as closed in *Four*[6]:

1. The number of sounds you need in your realization.
2. A certain stability in every sound.
3. Do not add any additional meaning beyond the meaning the sound carries in itself. That is to say: Do not add any phrasing or try to express something with the sound. Let it be presented solely as a sound.
4. Do not play together; play simultaneously (see *Authentic performance, or not?* p. XXXX).

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- **What possibilities and what limitations does the score give for a realization?**

The two open aspects, described above, are the choice of sounds and the start and end time for each time bracket. Each time bracket allows for the sound to be either very short or very long. In other words, your choice has a major influence on the work's final outcome.

The limits provided explicitly in the score are:

1. The number of sounds: twelve
2. A specific order for the twelve sounds. This is not entirely correct since the performer's choice of start and stop point within each time bracket somehow affects how the listener perceives the order of the sounds.

[43] Ibid. s. 53

A somewhat hidden possibility in the score is the chance of a sound ending before it has begun. La Barbara describes this:

> If I decide I'm not going to start my sound until 1 minute, and I decide I'm going to end it at 56 sec. – the sound never begins.[44]

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises.

This is what you should define and prepare before practicing as a quartet:

1. The twelve sounds
2. Relating to the *time brackets* and your chosen sounds, using the stopwatch.

Exercises for *Four*[6]

Exercise No. 1: practice getting in and out on time, without focusing on the quality of your sounds, listening or something else. Keep your focus on the different possibilities of each time bracket.

Exercise No. 2: practice with the sounds. Try to rearrange the sounds and evaluate whether changing the order of the sounds has any significance for the realization. By doing this, you involve your own musicality. You should absolutely be stepping carefully doing this, considering your own likes and dislikes (see above, where I talk about letting the sound be itself, without adding anything).

Exercise No. 3: play the work by doing short sounds.

Exercise No. 4: play the work by doing long sounds.

- In how many ways can I perform one sound?

Two underlying questions to *Four*[6]:

1. Are the twelve sounds I've chosen suited for the work and functioning well with the other performer's sounds?
2. Can I find five different ways to play each of my sounds on? Should I pre-determine as much as possible with the sounds I have chosen, or should I

[44] Göran 2009, p. 143. La Barbara in conversation with Göran.

open the possibility to choose how it's performed as I play? Will I manage to keep playing simultaneously if I allow for such an openness in the performance?

It is important to have all ears with you in the decisions in these questions. If one performer consistently chooses voluminous sounds, in addition to playing long and everlasting sounds, this would not be in harmony with the work's identity. All voices are equally important, which means the total variety of sounds gives meaning to the work together. A sound may very well drown another sound, but not throughout the whole realization.

Is it important to choose interesting sounds for *Four*[6]?

It is tempting to pull out the most interesting sounds you have in your musical palette in your selection of the twelve sounds. With this perspective, you can easily end up in a situation where you perform interesting sounds, according to your own taste, instead of performing *Four*[6]. Try to have a slightly anarchistic attitude to the selection of sounds.

Wolff talks about having a Feldman-ish approach to sound in this work. He talks about a sound being interesting not just because the sound is precious, but also because it gets the chance to be kept for a certain period of time, and repeated again and again. After a while, the sound becomes even more interesting, because it grows in its own persistence.

- #### Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?

You should relate to your pre-determinations as far as you can. This will help you ensure you ensure that the interaction in your quartet will be playing simultaneously. See also the section below; Interaction.

- #### Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: to test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the realization.
- Selection.
- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

The score itself says nothing about the responsibility you have concerning your interaction with the other performers. This is, nevertheless, an essential responsibility you have to take seriously in performing all of Cage's works. *Four*[6], and Cage's works in general, require that the performers play simultaneously as opposed to playing together. See *Authentic performance, or not?* p. XXXX, where this is addressed further.

Cage's last performance was, as mentioned, an interpretation of *Four*[6], with La Barbara, Winant, and Stein. This performance confirms that Cage could readjust himself to his fellow players, as any musical and experienced musician would do. This is interesting considering his anarchistic attitude, which implied that the performers should play simultaneously. On a few occasions during their performance of *Four*[6], I presume by chance, one of Cage's sounds began right after the outset of one of La Barbara's sounds. *Both times, he sang simultaneously with her but adjusted his pitch to match her pitch*.[45] This does not mean that you should use this example as a starting point for your interaction with fellow players in your interpretation of *Four*[6], but it is an example that illustrates the exception to the rule. It is useful if you are to face a similar situation, in a contrast to the typical Cage-interaction.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

To choose a venue for a performance is not always a luxury we can achieve. When we have the possibility of choosing, we would usually strive to get a venue accustomed to music, where the acoustics are adapted to a certain ideal. For example, it is not considered a benefit if a venue has sheer walls, which can allow the traffic outside to compete with the music being performed inside. I do not recommend seeking out a venue where traffic competes with Cage's music, but, in a Cageian world, all environmental sounds are welcome to be cherished as an equal part of the music being performed inside. If the environmental sounds are, however,

[45] Ibid. p. 144

notable to a degree where they dominate over the sounds on stage, it might be problematic. It's up to you to draw the lines when you have the option to choose the venue.

Example: An ambulance that happens to drive past during a performance of a Cage work will be an important part of the work. But if an ambulance, or more, drive past all the time, this will not necessarily be beneficial for the work. It might be fun and make an unconventional performance of the work, but you have to decide whether a scene close to an ambulance's emergency entrance is a suitable venue, or not.

4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

As in many other works, it is possible to perform excerpts from *Four*[6]. I have done this several times with great success. One advantage of an excerpt is that it may fit better in a concert programme where other works will be performed, as opposed to not being performed at all.

Performing an excerpt from a work of long duration is also friendlier to an audience, if this is an issue for you. It is, of course, debatable whether an excerpt is fair to the to work and the composer or not. Nevertheless, it must be regarded as a possibility.

When performing *Four*[6] in its entire length, you should consider whether it should be allowed to fill the whole concert programme alone. The work will certainly get special attention from both performers and audience. The total length of *Four*[6] gives a radically different depth than performing an excerpt of say 15 minutes. In my opinion, too many pieces are very often pushed together into the same concert programme. The risk with a long concert is that the audience may forget the enjoyable adventure of its opening.

During the performance, you will relate to environmental sounds and the sounds of silence, which are just as important as the work's 'self-inflicted' sounds. Other events may also interact with the work in various (and unexpected) formats.

Cage was very fond of these events of chance. He enjoyed the pleasure of relating to happenings that lived beyond his control, as the following quotation shows:

> When I first placed objects between piano strings, it was with the desire to possess sounds (to be able to repeat them). But, as the music left my home and went from piano to piano and from pianist to pianist, it became clear to me that not only are two pianists essentially different from one another, but two pianos are not the same either. Instead of the possibility of repetition, we are faced in life with the unique qualities and characteristics of each occasion. The prepared piano, impressions I had from the world of artist friends, studies of Zen Buddhism, ramblings in the fields and forests looking for mushrooms, all led me to the enjoyment of things as they come, as they happen, rather than as they are possessed or kept or forced to be.[46]

The quotation at the front of this handbook, *I don't hear the music I write. I write in order to hear the music I haven't yet heard*, is from Cage's *Autobiographical Statement*,[47] and tells us performers something about what Cage valued as a composer, musician and listener.

Daniel Charles, interviewing John Cage:[48]

> *Schoenberg, whose student you were, said that you were 'not a composer, but an inventor – of genius'.*
> *What have you invented?*

Music, (not composition).

[46] Kostelanetz 1999, s. 49.
[47] Cage 1990.
[48] Cage 1981, p. 50

Showcase 7 Bjørn Thomas Melhus,

U – the play: a story of three movements. (2007)

U - the play: a story of three movements

A piece for 6 musicians/instruments, Instrument I must be piano, Instrument V must be a wind Instrument. It is an advantage if some of the other instruments are polyphonic. The piano may well be prepared, but must have some strings that are not affected by the preparation.

The piece may be performed by 4 or 5 musicians. If it is performed by four musicians, the Instrument II and V or Instrument III and IV can be omitted. If the work is performed by five musicians, Instrument IV is omitted.

The piece examines different distributions of resources, and possible consequences of that.
Actual resources may be:
pitch
duration
number of notes one totaly can play in each movement
dynamics
breaks
melody
"Effects"
polyphony

I - Utopia:

All musicians have almost the same amount of material to play and interaction/cooperation/harmony prevails. It must be beautiful and fragile, all musicians should think about giving each other space. It should nevertheless be a growing tension in the air ...
The movement is finished when all have played all number of notes available. All musicians try to stop at the same time. This is though not the main focus, just a part of the interaction. How many times within the framework of the total number of notes you play each note, is optional.

In addition to the notes listed below every musician once during this movement have access to the notes E - F # - G - H (each note only once, a total of four). These are in addition to the given total tones. Each musician chooses when to play them, but coherence and harmony are important in this movement.

Instrument I (piano):
Available notes: D - E - F - A - H in all octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 10
Total number of tones in this movement: 50

20 of the tones can be strummed with your fingers directly on the strings, 5 of these should be mainly percussive. The remaining notes are to be played on the keyboard.

U – the play, excerpt from page 1.

Print courtesy by Bjørn Thomas Melhus.

U - the play was first performed in Oslo, at the Open Form Festival in 2007, together with three other world premieres by Norwegian composers. All four works were commissioned by nyMusikk, for the festival's Open Form Orchestra. In addition to being an Open Form work, *U - the play* has a distinct political agenda. The interaction settings in the work are a reflection of the interaction between different social groups. The terminology used in the instructional text highlights the socio-political agenda, with words like *unequal distribution*, *overrun*, *spasmodic*, *death*, *convulsive*, and so on. *U - the play* is an unusual Open Form work because of the peculiar way the performers have to interact with each other. They have to 'steal' from each other and try to win over the other performers, thus affecting the outcome of the composition, especially its ending.

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

U - the play is primarily a text score. In addition to text, it also includes some graphic notation and some numerical notation.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

This work has specific defined responsibilities for each instrument, with specifications as to what kind of musical elements you should have available, how to use them, and how you are to relate to the other instruments.

  - Does the work have an instructional text? If yes: What does the instruction say?
    - Is the instruction clear and logical, or is there any individual need for interpretation of the instructions?

The whole work is organized as a text score where a general instructional text is given with practical information. Each of the three movements has their own introductions and individual instructions for each instrument.

The instructions are quite detailed. Sometimes they are detailed to such a degree that they are on the edge of creating contradictions.

- Is there anything that the instructional text does not deal with?
- Descriptive analysis of the score.

The work has three movements:

I – Utopia

II – Unrest and doom

III – Infinite

The work is structured as a contest. The participants (the performers) each have their resources, as Melhus calls them, regarding tones or sounds they are allowed to use. Within the three movements, a development takes place during the play. This development creates a 'story', formed by the decisions the performers make.

- Does the score state anything specific concerning

- Instrumentation:

> A piece for 6 musicians/instruments, Instrument I must be piano, Instrument V must be a wind Instrument. It is an advantage if some of the other Instruments are polyphonic. The piano may well be prepared, but must have some strings that are not affected by the preparation.
>
> The piece may be performed by 4 or 5 musicians. If it is performed by four musicians, the Instrument II and V or Instrument III and IV can be omitted. If the work is performed by five musicians, Instrument IV is omitted.

From the general instructional text, p.1

- Length: Open.

- Development: Open, but the specific assignments to each contestant creates an intersubjective development between different performances. The story can have several outcomes in different performances, but there is a limit to how many.

I – Utopia

In the first movement, all contestants have fairly equally distributed resources. Everyone is instructed to interact within approximately the same time frame.

II – Unrest and doom

In the second movement, the resources are unequally distributed, and the competition arises. Instrument I (piano) has not been given any musical material and has to steal from the others. This is an unpleasant role to play in the light of social critique this work represents (but a very enjoyable role musically!).

Instrument I is constantly hunting for new material to steal from the others in order to keep their own play running. As long as Instrument I is playing, the other performers are forced to leave the stage whenever they have depleted all of their resources. This action makes it clear that they are out of the game. If Instrument I, at some point, is unable to continue its play while there are still other players on stage performing, Instrument I has to leave the stage.

The ‘thief’ goes on with the perpetual stealing, building everything they do on their stolen material. The ‘thief’ contributes nothing to the alliance, or to the ensemble. In my experience, the ‘thief’ is very often the one left on stage to finish the third movement alone – with the emptiness and lack of joy in her own achievements and fulfilments, which makes the very final duty quite difficult. Playing the ‘thief’ is, in fact, a very enjoyable and amusing role to play musically, despite what the role represents in a political context.

III – Infinite

In the last movement, there are two possibilities for who ‘wins’, and therefore who is allowed to play the last movement. This depends on who had to leave the stage in the previous movement.

Ending no. 1. Instrument I is the only performer left, still performing and developing stolen material.

Ending no. 2. The players who are left on stage when Instrument I left.

Emptiness is to dominate this movement. There shall be no joy expressed by the ‘winning’ performer(s).

- **Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level?**

Each performer gets new specifications in every movement. The score specifies what kind of musical material you have available and the possibilities for using it.

> The piece examines different distributions of resources, and possible consequences of that.
> Actual resources may be:
> pitch
> duration
> number of notes one totally can play in each movement
> dynamics
> breaks
> melody
> "Effects"
> polyphony

From the general instructional text, p.1.

- **Can I relate 100 % to the score?**

The instructions that are given in *U - the play* are extremely detailed and describe multiple aspects that sometimes contradict one another.

> Instrument VI: Available notes: D - Eb - G - A in a maximum of four octaves Maximum simultaneous tones: Total number of tones in this movement: 45
>
> If possible on your instrument, you have the opportunity to within each specified tone to play all tones that lies between one quarter down and one quarter up. You can play the way you want to when it comes to coloring.

From the first movement, *I – Utopia*

As explained with the example of *U - the play* in 'A Basic Recipe', p. XXXX, you need to make several compromises between the score and yourself.

Example: Instrument VI is given an extensive number of pitches to keep track of for both head and hands, while at the same time relating to some pitches played simultaneously, and has to keep track of the number of pitches played at all times. In addition, Instrument I is given the option of microtonal playing. These frames are open, but are at the same time incredibly detailed. If all the instructions are to be carried out, you have to evaluate your need to pre-determine some of the material and to make some kind of notation of it to bring along on stage.

During my ensemble's preparations for this work, together with the composer, the musicians made compromises between themselves and their own voice rather than notating any pre-determined material, despite the possibility of doing so for some of the voices. This way, the performers' attention to the unique interaction in this work is ensured.

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- What possibilities and what limitations does the score give for a realization?
- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises.

The most important advice for this work is to not practice the second movement, *II – Unrest and doom*. This is unconventional practice advice in itself, and contradicts my general attitude to preparations, but the reason I give it is because of the interaction, or competition, between the piano and instrument VI.

In my experience, this movement possesses an unpredictability that lies between these instruments, and which is vital for the work's identity. The piano is constantly trying to steal and develop as much as possible from all instruments, while Instrument VI is trying to prevent this. At the same time they must be inventive and surprise the piano by presenting unstealable material. If you have been practicing this as an ensemble, both parties have revealed their weaknesses and their strengths, and the competition loses some of its edge.

An alternative to not practising this movement at all is to practice a small excerpt from it. You can do this by agreeing to rehearse for a much shorter time on this movement, compared to how long the performance itself will last. This way, you will be able to test the interaction a little bit. This applies particularly to the conclusion of this movement, where some of the performers will leave the stage, depending on who 'wins' the competition.

Exercises for *U - the play.*

Below are three exercise examples, which may help you in the practice of *U - the play*.

A general advice for practice: Create your own exercises for interaction for just two or three instruments in one movement (not *II – Unrest and doom*). Study your own instructions carefully, with special attention on how to relate to the instrument(s) in the exercise.

Exercise 1, for all movements: Can I find five different ways to combine the resources of my instrument?

Exercise 2, for Instrument VI, *II – Unrest and doom.*

Can I find ten different ways to form and develop my resources? The goal is to make it difficult to steal for the piano.

Exercise 3, for *III – Infinite*: Make a list of how many possibilities your ensemble has for this movement. Practice the interaction between the various possible constellations within your ensemble.

- Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?
- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the realization.
- Selection
- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

The interaction in this work is unique and curious, and it represents a contrast to other Open Form works. You have received instructions that guide you to a certain way of interacting, but it is an unusually unpredictable and open way of relating to fellow players. You are to steal from each other and try to put each other out of the

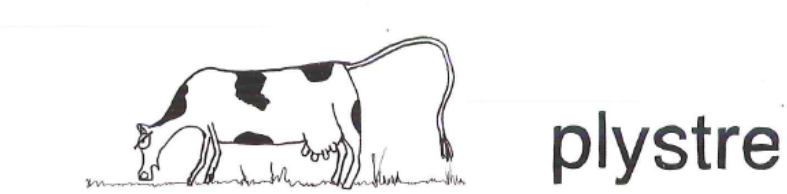
play, so to speak. The dynamics created between you in the interaction affects the work's final form. Especially the end, with its two possible endings, is influenced and settled by your interaction, and your ending from the previous movement.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

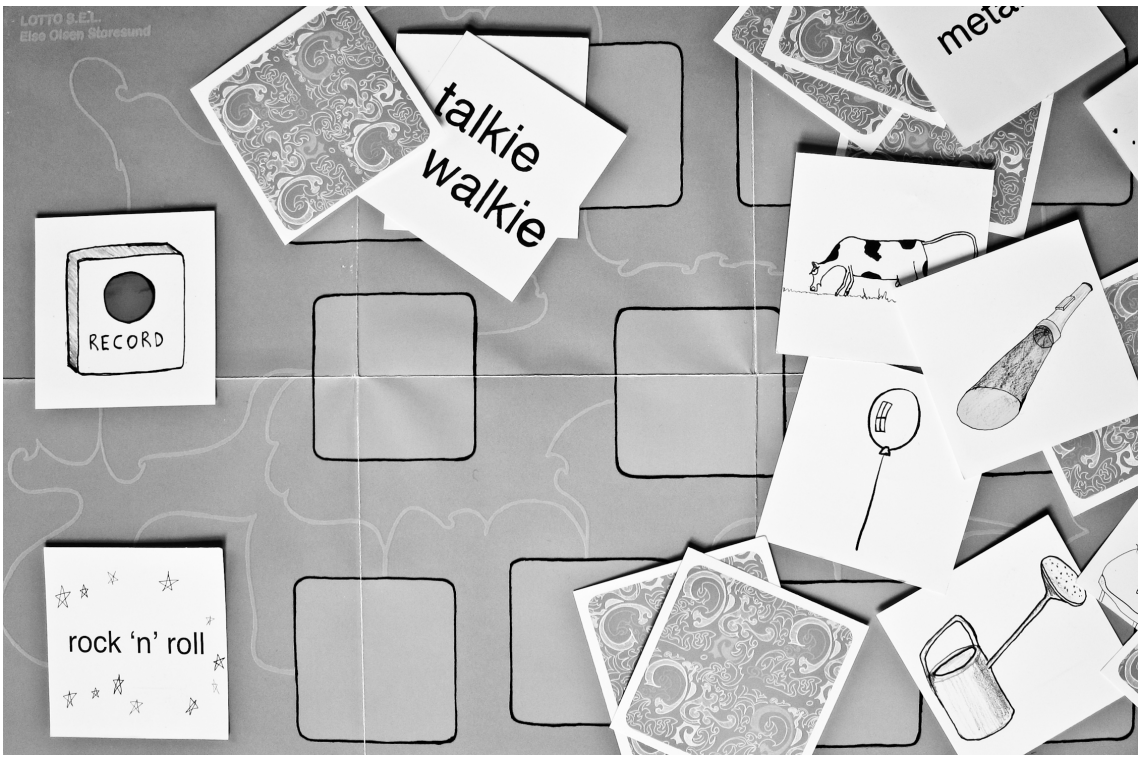
4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

Showcase 8 Else Olsen S., *Lotto* (2010)



Two of the 24 lotto cards from *Lotto.*



Play board and lotto cards from *Lotto*.

This work is a successor to *Lotto Ernst* (2009), which was written for the Norwegian chamber orchestra Ensemble Ernst for a collaboration together with a school class. Like *Lotto Ernst*, this work was written for children as well as for trained performers. It may also be played as a board game, without any performance on stage.

The work was published together with the recording *Lotto S.E.L.,* but the recording does not constitute any kind of blueprint for your performance. It's simply a picture of

one performance. The recording is solely one realization, one perspective from one angle.

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

Lotto is notated with graphics, text, and a few numbers.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

Lotto is a game consisting of 24 playing cards, a play board, and instructions for playing.

  - Does the work have an instructional text? If yes: What does the instruction say?

Lotto contains:

24 lotto cards

1 play board (map)

Instructions for playing

> **Instructions for playing**:
> It is possible to play with only one player if no one else is able to join.
>
> Fold out the play board. Place all the lotto cards with the picture facing down. Pick enough cards to place one card at each station on the play board.
>
> Make yourself a bank of ideas for every card that you have picked. An idea could be either musical, visual or an action. Practice to perform the cards.
>
> Travel in the play board for as long as the players have decided.
>
> The players can travel in the play board through as few or as many stations as they wish, not depending on where the other players go.
>
> Let unexpected things that happen be part of the game.

- Is the instruction clear and logical, or is there any individual need for interpretation of the instructions?

An idea could be either musical, visual or an action. This instructional text is inspired by Cage's *Variations III*, where Cage asks for an *action* instead of asking for a *sound*. The lotto cards are open to be interpreted as sound, image (visual) or with an action (performative).

Sound needs no further explanation.
With *visual*, I mean interpretation, for example, with colours or paint. One lotto card may be the initial point for one or more visual compositions.
With performative, I mean to perform an action. It could be dance, acting, or simply just an action, like drinking coffee.

Example: The lotto card that displays the word *whistle* can be the basis for an action. *Whistle* has seven letters. This could be the starting point for interpretation.

Whistle: The player could whistle:
7: seven different melodies
7: in seven different places
7: to seven different people in the audience
7: for seven seconds

Or it can mean just to whistle, without any further interpretation of the word.

- Is there anything that the instructional text does not deal with?

The score says nothing about the possibility of not using the play board. There is the possibility to use just one lotto card, and there is the possibility not to use the map. When using only one or two lotto cards the play board no longer has any function.

I would like to stretch the limits of this work to include this possibility for the work:

You may play without the play board, regardless of how many lotto cards you may use, or create your own.

- Descriptive analysis of the score.
  - Does the score state anything specific concerning Instrumentation, length, and development: Open

  - Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level?

Everything concerning a micro level is open.

- Can I relate 100 % to the score?

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- What possibilities and what limitations does the score give for a realization?

The lotto cards are the most open aspect of the work. The limitation is mainly in the play board, where the various roads are pre-determined for you. If you use the play board, or map, you cannot choose to skip a card because you want to perform a card further away on the map. This can be frustrating. Although you might feel the urge to 'cheat' and play a card that you fancy somewhere on the map, you have to wait until you get the urge to play the card next on your route. The waiting marks the road between the cards. The silence in your waiting for the right moment is part of the work.

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
  - Making exercises.

As in Wolff's Edges, in Showcase 3, this work many signs or symbols that make quite a wide and stretchy framework for interpretation. Some of the exercises below are the same as in Showcase 3.

Exercises for *Lotto*:

Exercise no. 1: Phonetic interpretation: Can I find ten different ways to realize one card?

Exercise no. 2: Visual interpretation: Can I find ten different ways to realize one card?

Exercise no. 3: Performative interpretation/actions: Can I find ten different ways to realize one card?

Exercise no. 2: Focus on air (breaks) and silence.

Exercise no. 3: Focus on contrasts.

Exercise No. 4: Let the card's cartoon-like appearance be expressed in your interpretation.

Exercise No. 4: Limitation: Only two performers are allowed play simultaneously.

Exercise No. 5: Limitation: Only three performers are allowed play simultaneously.

- Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?
- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

If you choose to do a performative interpretation, you may happen to involve the audience. It is not a requirement of the work, but an aspect you may need to address. Remember the ethics of this: be careful to consider how far you go if you involve the audience. See also under the same section in 'A Basic Recipe', p. XXXX.

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the realization.
- Selection
- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

I tend to favour playing simultaneously rather than playing together. (See *Authentic performance, or not?* p. XXXX) You do not play it 'the wrong way' if you decide to play together but as Wolff says; playing together is something that happens anyway, which is good and necessary. Therefore, I would recommend that your general attitude to interaction is to strive to play simultaneously.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

Showcase 9 Christian Wolff, *Brooklyn* (2015)

B R O O K L Y N (for 6 or more players)

Instrumentation is open.

Where no clefs are written, read in either treble or bass , or any other, and any transposition (Bb, F etc.). Basses and piccolo many read as written (sounding octave down or up) and also, ad lib., play notes at concert pitch (in treble or bass). Players may shift octaves where there are unusual difficulties or lack of range; notes in a phrase may also be omitted. These conditions can apply varyingly, to any note at any time.

𝄽 = a pause of possibly widely varying duration.

For melody instruments not able to play chords, the chords can be played as grace notes to one of the notes of the chord (the direction of the grace note(s), up or down or both, and the choice, among notes of the chord, of decorated note are free).

If there is percussion: can use pitched instruments, but if there is a percussion clef (𝄥), use non-specifically pitched sounds. Generally the notes on the stave at the top (top two lines and spaces) call for metal; the ones at the bottom (bottom two lines, spaces) call for skin; in between use wood and/or material other than metal or skin. The higher a note, the higher the pitch. This notation is flexible, that is, a note on a given line need not always call for the same sound, unless the note is successively repeated. Sharps and flats before notes may be ignored, or used to indicate a (small) modification of the sound.
A prepared piano could also be used for percussion., and non-percussion players may play passages marked with percussion clef, or implying percussion (e.g. there are only white notes, without sharps or flats), either using percussive sounds or reading the notes as pitches, or a combination of both.

Tempi when not specified are free, and those specified are suggestions.

The music consists of material for which a plan of use must be made. Not all the material needs to be used for any given performance.

Pages 1- 6 make up a unit. Each page may be assigned to or chosen by one of six players; then all play within the same approximate overall time frame. If there are more than six players, the additional players each choose a page (whose playing is then freely doubled, that is, the two (or more) playing from that page proceed independently, more or less heterophonically. The material on a page may also be divided between two or more players (e.g. one player plays first four lines, another plays the rest). Some of this material may also be repeated, changing instruments or players; having only a smaller number of the players playing, or a larger, etc.

Page 7: a designated number of players (minimum 2), each independently play the numbered items in any sequence. This can be done several times, changing players and/or how many play.

Page 7, lower part: same instructions as for pages 1-6, except that there are six lines to be used instead of six pages.

Page 8, top four lines, (a), (b) and (c) : determine at least one player for (a), one or more pairs for (b) and at least one for (c). Play (a) by itself; then (b) plus (c), then (a) plus (b).
(b): open notes are of free duration, black notes are variously short. Vertical lines = play simultaneously, start and stop; angled lines = one sound follows directly on the previous one (no pause between), as in hocketing.

Page 8, material lower down on this page: the first two lines are a solo for an instrument reading bass clef. Optional: this material may be doubled quietly by non-specifically pitched percussion.
Next the bracketed pairs of lines, continuing to the top of page 9: the bass line instrument continues and a second instrument (in any clef/transposition) plays freely at the same time, starting more or less together and aiming to end not too far apart in time.

Pages 9 – 10: at least six play, additional players may double on any line. "Tutti" refers to all players, 6 or more.

Pages 11 – 13, except for the middle two lines on page 12 marked "(tutti)", are material for solo players or possibly, some of the time, for several players playing heterophonically. These solos'(or heterophonic playings) may be accompanied or joined by freely improvised material.

Page 14: divide players into three groups: the first plays A in the given sequence, 1) to 8); the second plays A , each player independently playing 1) to 8) in any sequence; the third plays B (this is particularly for percussion if available), each player playing 1) – 5) in any sequence.
Note that a tempo is given (or can be decided on). The pulse of that tempo should be kept by all players throughout, though spaces marked by wedges (⅄) are of free duration (number of beats).

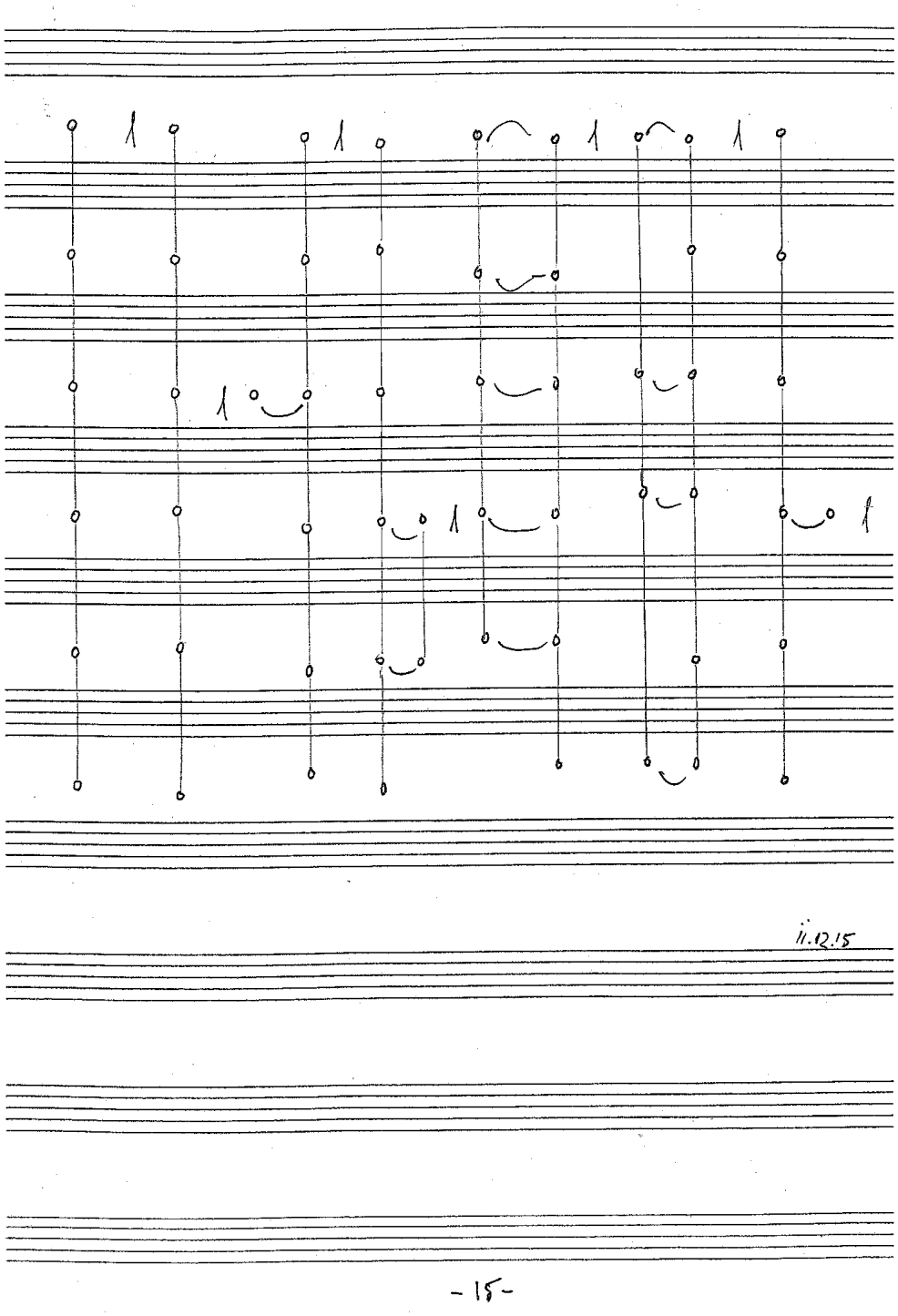
Page 15: coordination, marked by vertical lines, are for starting and stopping together, durations within coordination are free. A tied note continues, that is, holds into the next sound, e.g. the single sound in the 3rd line (after the two opening simultaneous soundings) sustains into the following simultaneous sounding, and in the 4th and 5th lines the sounds sustain beyond the simultaneous sounding.

For Else Olsen Storesund

Christian Wolff

Brooklyn, instructional text.

Print Courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation



Brooklyn, page 15.

Print Courtesy by C. F. Peters Corporation

I commissioned *Brooklyn* from Wolff for his planned visit to Bergen, Norway in 2015, where he performed this work together with an ensemble of nine performers in all. The concert, and the preparations for it, forms the basis for this showcase.

Brooklyn is a work that at first glance may resemble a conventional work with conventional notation. But when you look at it closely, both instructional text and notation open the door to a planet of possibilities. The movements may be played side by side, or on top of each other. Different sections can be linked together, omitted, or altered.

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

The score consists of two main parts:
Part 1. The instructional text. This text is providing a general instructional text concerning the notation and the general structure of the work. The other section consists of detailed instructions which are linked to each individual part of the score.

Part 2. This is the score you bring on stage. Part 2 is notated with extended conventional notation. It consists of nine parts altogether, which are marked with their page numbers in the instructional text, so that they can be identified.

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?
    - Instructional text.
        - Is the instruction clear and logical, or is there any individual need for interpretation of the instructions?
        - Is there anything that the text does not deal with?

The instructional text does not indicate that there should be any in the process of preparing this work, but you should, nevertheless, consider having one. This applies particularly to structuring the so-called *plan of use*, where it is very important to make decisions and to consider opting out some possibilities. I describe the *plan of use* in more detail below.

The instructional text explains how the performers should relate to the various parts, and to their unconventional notation. It also explains how they should relate to one another (see the section below under *Interaction*). Some aspects of the score are not defined in the instructional text. They are supposed to be open, but some of the issues were explained or cleared up by Wolff during the preparations for the performance in Bergen.
In some parts, practical questions arise, while in others there are questions concerning interpretation. I've made a list of practical questions that may benefit from some clarification:

Page 1 – 6 / page 7, lower part.

These two parts are similar in the way they are structured. There are six voices, playing within approximately the same time frame. Both parts are played simultaneously, or as what Wolff calls *heterophonic playings*. I will come back to this term later. If there are several performers, they can freely choose which voice they will double.

Do all six voices have to be played? Or could perhaps only four of them be played?

Does the whole voice have to be played in its full length when first started?
Wolff:

> Not all six parts need to be played, though I'd be curious to hear what that would sound like.
> A whole line should be played, but one part could be played by one player, the rest by another (or the line can be distributed amongst more than two players).[49]

Page 7, upper part.

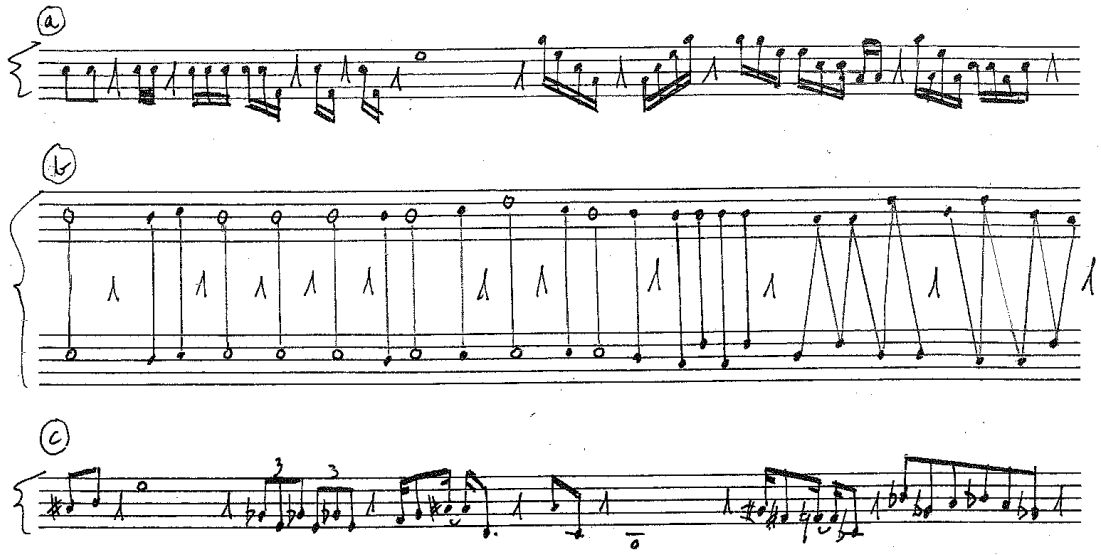
In this heterophonic duo, you have two staves to choose from. You can choose to play either the top or the bottom stave. The numbered *items* can be played in whatever order you choose. The instructional text says nothing about whether you may repeat an item before all the items are repeated all together. According to Wolff, this is not a possibility.
All items should be played once before you consider repeating this voice.

[49] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 21 February 2015.

Tempi:

> Page 7 top, each set of players (system) start and end more or less, not necessarily exactly, together; end is more free, ok if one player is left alone for a while to finish; a musical judgement call.[50]

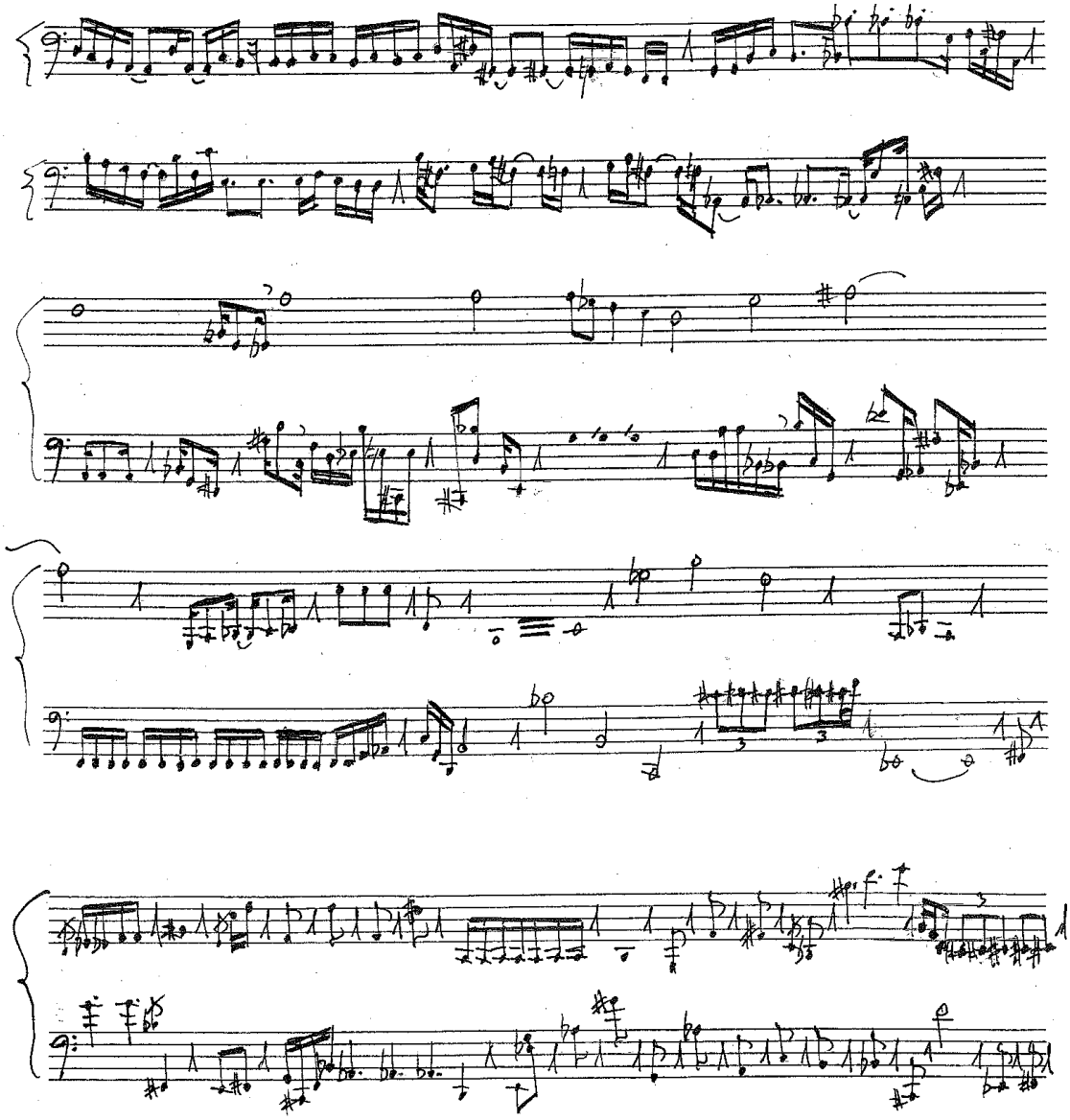
Page 8, upper part.



The instructional text describes how the groups a, b and c should relate to one another. Yet another possibility was added by Wolff during the preparations in Bergen: part b, which is a duo or several duos, can be taken out of this section to be placed freely in the *plan of use*, without involving a and c. He said that b 'could also be performed alone'.[51] If you choose to stretch the possibilities of the work like this, it is important that it's done with care and consideration. If this is done, it should only be done because it is important for the music. To find the utmost potential in the *plan of use*, feel free to experiment with all its possibilities. In the spirit of Wolff, it's ok to stretch the limits of the work a little.

[50] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 17 February, 2015.
[51] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 21 February, 2015.

PAGE 8, LOWER PART (WHICH IS CONTINUED ON PAGE 9).



The picture shows page 8, upper part, plus the continued part on page 9.

This section is divided into two parts:

Part 1. Two lines, notated in bass clef.
Part 2. The bass stave continues, but with an additional stave where the key is free for choice. The bass and clef free staves establish a duo.

In Part 1, the bass stave is notated as a solo, but the instructional text exposes the possibility of doubling the voice with an additional voice, either percussion or prepared piano. When examining the instructional text, the kind of interaction the performers should have in this part is left a open a little. Wolff explained during the preparations in Bergen that the interaction should be heterophonic, as in the duo

below, Part 2.

Page 9 – 10.

This is a constant and rhythmic part and stands in contrast to the other parts of the work. The last eight bars in this part are to be repeated, and all performers should change to a different voice for each repetition. As far it is possible, this should be done accordingly to Wolff's instructions. But Wolff in Bergen also offered the possibility of playing the repeats without changing to a different voice. He also did this in the first performance of the work, in Brooklyn in 2015, just before it was performed in Bergen. The ensemble in Brooklyn did not have enough time to practice the repeats with the change of voice, so they played the repeats but kept their voices consistent for each repeat. If you use this as a solution for your ensemble, make sure it’s because the music benefits from it.

Page 11 – 13.

The improvisation that can accompany the solo(s) in this part is referred to as *freely improvised material* as opposed to *free improvisation*. This says something about the improvised material not relating to one genre more than another, or to free improvisation. The possibilities regarding the improvisatory accompany part, as in all improvisation, are:

1. To improvise something based on, or related to, the notated material from the solo, as an accompaniment.

2. To improvise something that is not based on, or related to, the notated material from the solo, as a contrast to the solo material. It can be adventurous and also louder and overpowering the solo.

3. Silence.

Page 15.

This is a chorale, intended to form the conclusion of the work, although it does not need to be there. It might as well be placed freely in the plan of use, one or several

times. It is also possible to extract fewer than six of the total voices and to play this part as, for example, a duo or a trio. You should, nevertheless, consider using it as a conclusion since the composer intended this.

Are single notes just single notes?

Chord instruments or instruments that can play multiple notes at once, can turn single notes into chords.

> […] single notes can be played as chords (you read both treble and bass clef); if there is more than one note, then you have even more possibilities (4 note chord). You can do this any time.[52]

Prepared Piano.

In addition to the suggested voices for prepared piano, this instrument can also be used for anything notated with a percussion clef.

The piano can be prepared freely. If you play the percussion clef parts where the instructions have specific requirements for the materials, metal, wood and leather, these specifications are optional on prepared piano. This means that you can either prepare the piano according to the material specifications given for percussion, or you can make your own choices of material.

> Your piano preparations can be free, so also for page 14. You might have a range of sounds from quite resonant and very low resonance (say, like a low resonance piece of wood or similar fairly resonant metal, though I know the prepared piano resonance range is fairly narrow). [53]

- Descriptive analysis of the score.
  - Does the score state anything specific concerning
- Instrumentation: For six or more players. Instrumentation beyond this is open.
- Length: Open

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

- Development: Open

The development, despite this description of it being open, is determined by making a *plan of use*, which in turn conditions the structure of the work, because the *plan of use* is a planned structure for the performance. In this plan, the various parts of the work are assembled as desired. Not all parts need to be used, and they can also be repeated. The parts do not have to stand next to each other in the *plan of use*, like the movements of a conventional work. They can be placed covering each other, as separate layers, to be played simultaneously. Within this framework, the *plan of use* is created according to the performers', or possibly a leader's, choosing.

Such a *plan of use* may be totally different between two separate performances, depending on other open parameters of the work. This is typical of Wolff. A similar way of structuring a work may be found in another work by Wolff, *Burdocks*.

- Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level?

- Timbre, texture, duration, and dynamic: Open

Be aware of the openness of the dynamics in this work. Wolff warns against falling into the trap of mezzo forte in this work. This means that you have to consider your dynamics consciously to avoid the work being played consistently within *mf*. .

> Generally also, keep in mind dynamics, which are not given at all. It is important to think about them and not just play without dynamic focus (tendency then for things mostly to come out in some middle mf world).[54]

- Tempo: Partially open.

Some parts have tempo specifications, while other parts do not.

- Time: Partially open.

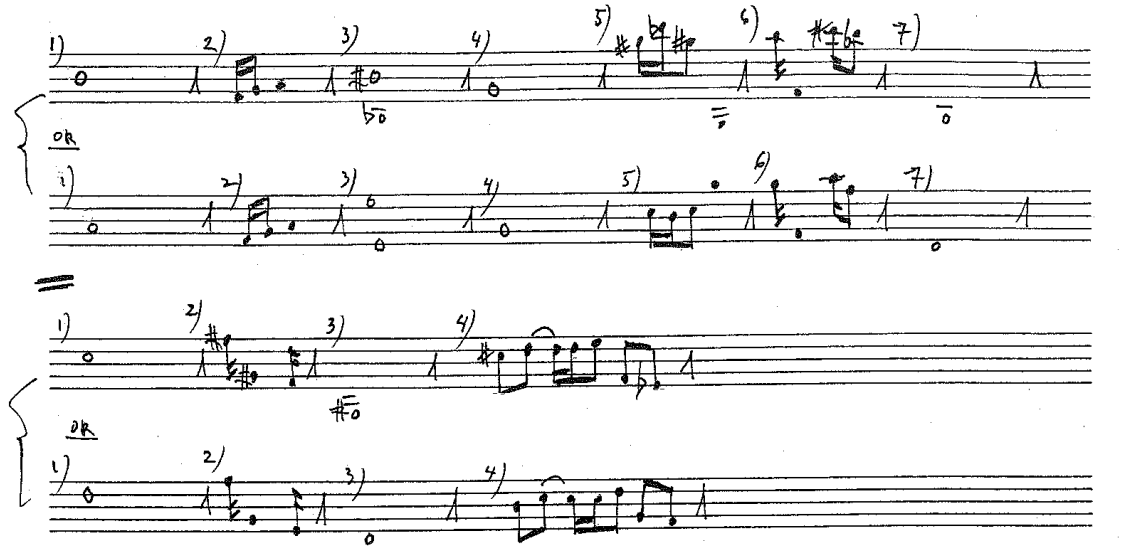
Many of the parts where the performers play at the same time are described as *heterophonic playings* in the instructional text. This means that you are playing simultaneously, but not together (see also *Authentic performance, or not?* p. XXXX). At the same time, you are instructed to start approximately within the same time frame, and stop whenever your voice ends, regardless of when your fellow player ends. This means that if one performer chooses a completely different tempo to their

[54] Ibid.

teammate, the voice of the performer with the slowest tempo will sound for a while after the other voice has ended.

The heterophonic playing makes time open.

Example 1: Page 7, upper part, where one or more duos play their individual voices heterophonically.



Example 2:

> Page 11 – 13, except for the middle two lines on page 12 marked ”(tutti)”, are material for solo players or possibly, some of the time, for several players playing heterophonically. These solos’ (or heterophonic playings) may be accompanied or joined by freely improvised material.[55]

These are the possibilities of the solo, page 11 – 13:

1. One performer may play the whole solo.

2. Several performers may play the solo simultaneously, but not together. (See *Authentic performance, or not?* p. XXXX). The performers will have different tempos, different dynamics, and so on. They will end at different times, depending on the respective tempi that they will choose.

[55] From the instructional text of *Brooklyn.*

3. The solo may be divided between different performers. Overlaps between the various parts of the solo are ok. This means that between two parts of the solo, the soloist who is to continue the solo may enter with his part before the previous soloist has finished hers. The soloists may also overlap some of each other's solo material.

4. The solo is split up between different performers, and also between several groups. This means that each group distributes the solo material between themselves. The various groups then play the solo simultaneously (but not together) until the end.

5. Wolff even stretched the limits to a fifth possibility during our preparations in Bergen: the performer(s) may choose to play excerpts from the solo, which means that you may leave parts of it out too.

- PITCH: Partially open.
Many parts are notated in a typical five-line stave, with relatively conventional notation, but the clef is omitted. The clef is for you to choose, where ever you choose.

Example: The upper part of page 8 (see previous excerpt). The upper staves have no clefs, which leaves the choice of clefs up to you to decide.

- SPACING / COMPLEXITY, RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE: Partially open.
The apparently accurate notation is affected by the choices you make on a micro level, such as clefs, dynamics and tempo. But your choices and decisions also have a great impact on a macro level, so the work's form may be radically different from one performance to another. Your placement of the various parts in the *plan of use* is one element, but how you relate to time as an open parameter also affects the work's form and surface (see the description of *time* above).

The rhythmic structure is notated with the same accuracy as the rest of the work, with the exception of many rests, which are of open duration. You are to relate precisely to the rhythmic structure in the places where it is notated exactly. The work's identity, and that of each part, is however more important than the precision of the notation.

Example: Pages 9 – 10, with accurate notation concerning both notes and rests. The performers are to play together in this part, in contrast to playing simultaneously. This part should be presented as pretty tight and firm, because of the contrast it represents. One thing that stops this part from being straight out conventional is that Wolff stresses the identity of this part rather than the accuracy with which it's notated, by allowing minor deviations from the notation.

During the tutti rehearsal in Bergen, Wolff allowed for a divergence between the notated rhythm and what was actually played. The most important issue was the consistency of this part, and that the performers employed the same pace, the same groove, so to speak. Playing 'wrong notes' was not an important issue. I would like to emphasize that what I'm discussing is minor deviations, not the possibility of recreating the part in any way. You cannot create your own voice or alter the rhythmic structure deliberately. I simply refer to the possibility of small rhythmical wanderings that eventually get back on track. Wolff's comment to this part: *I wouldn't worry about being too correct*. [56] See also the section below 'Can I relate 100 % to the score?' for further discussion of the possible stretching of this part.

- Can I relate 100 % to the score?

In the examination of the instructional text, I have questioned the aspects that I've experienced as unclear. I would like to examine one final aspect concerning relating to the score 100 % in conjunction with adjustments.

Example:

> Pages 9 – 10: At least six play, additional players may double on any line. "Tutti" refers to all players, 6 or more.[57]

♩ = Ca. 80[58]

What is indisputably open in this part is instrumentation and phrasing, including everything that concerns forming a micro level. It is reasonable to rehearse this part, as you would practise a conventionally notated work. It's useful for this part if you

[56] In conversation with Wolff, 15 March, 2015
[57] From the instructional text of *Brooklyn.*
[58] No tempi are indicated in the original score that we received from Wolff in 2015, but were conveyed during our preparations. The specific tempi indications will probably be notated a published version. See Appendix No. 5 for full the complete score of *Brooklyn*.

practise different tempi using a metronome, and experiment with the instrumentation. For instance Wolff suggested that the singers, and also other performers, might use percussion instruments in this part.

You might feel as if you're on shaky ground if choosing to do this, not being a percussionist. To enter the world of percussion with a percussionist's instruments but without trained skills, does something to the overall character of this part.

> I like the idea that both professionals and non-professionals can play the music. Even people that don't even read music.[59]

Here's your opportunity to experiment with yourself as a percussionist, although this is not specified in the score.

Wolff's comment fits very well as a short conclusion to round one in the discussion of *Brooklyn*.

> Generally, a lot of […] decisions are open and may be made on the basis of trying things out; and see what you feel works best.[60]

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- What possibilities and what limitations does the score give for a realization?

If you take the score into account together with the elements explained above in 'What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?' you have a good starting point for preparing a performance of this work.

A conventional practice strategy can be a good choice for this work. By that I mean that there are many similarities between preparing for this and a conventional work. The performers need to know their voices very well and at the same time be able to make experiments with dynamics and stylistic phrasing.

Example: Page 1 – 6. Regardless of which clef you choose, you have to rehearse note-by-note, motive-by-motive.

[59] In conversation with Wolff, 15 March, 2015.
[60] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 12 February, 2015.

But what should you do if you do not read music, or if you are not in a position to rehearse all the musical material? As already said, it is important that each performer knows their voice very well in this work. I'm talking about a conventional, old-fashioned amount of practice. In our preparations in Bergen, we had to solve the problem of reading music for some of the performers.

The orchestra consisted of both classical, rock, and jazz performers. The performers did not have the same qualifications in sight-reading nor the same experience and knowledge in interpreting unconventional notation. The problem for some in reading conventional notation was solved by making an oral transmission. We recorded one performer who could dictate to the others. The dictation together with the recording gave the notation a meaning. This is how we made sure that everyone had what they needed to practice their voices at home.

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises.

Some aspects of *Brooklyn* have to be under reasonable control before you meet the ensemble.

prepare these aspects before meeting the ensemble:

- Your voice.
- *Plan of use*, to the degree that the *plan of use* is ready. The *plan of use* doesn't have to be ready until later.
- The interaction between you and the other performers, which is heterophonic (playing simultaneously) in some places, and homophonic (playing together) in others.
- The interaction between each part, which is often intended to be heterophonic.
- The interaction, hence the possibilities for you, within each part. Keep the instructional text available to maintain an overview of the defined interactions of each part.

Exercises for *Brooklyn*

When everyone rehearses together, various exercises become enjoyable and interesting. Here are some suggestions for exercises that are attainable for all parts, on a micro or a macro level:

Exercise no. 1:
Focus on dynamics. Can you find five different ways of working with dynamics?

Exercise no. 2:
Focus on tempi. Try to listen to the others, but do not follow anyone else's tempo (play tempi heterophonically).

Exercise no. 3:
Focus on breaks. Test out the extremes: how long and how short can you make the breaks?

Exercise No. 4:
Focus on heterophonic playing where this is relevant. You may listen to the others if you like, but avoid playing together (play heterophonically).

Exercise no. 5:
All homophonic parts, for example, pages 9 – 10 and the tutti parts: practise with a metronome, with different tempi.

Below are some exercises custom made for each part of the work:

Page 1 – 6, and page 7, lower part.

Exercise No. 6:
Can we find ten different combinations of the voices available?

Page 7, upper part.
Practice in duos. Use one room for each duo if available. Experiment with and test all voices. Rotate the instrumentation of the duos.

Exercise No. 7, for duos:
Play along with another duo.

What happens if your duo knows which voices the other duo has chosen?
What happens if your duo does not know which voices the other duo has chosen?

Page 9 – 10.

Exercise No. 8: Can I find five different ways to make percussive sounds on my instrument? Experiment with these sounds for this part.

Exercise No. 9: Can I play this part on percussive instrument or objects, instead of, or in combination with my instrument?

Page 14.

Be sure to practice adequately on this part, focusing on interaction (homophonic playing) in this section.

Exercise No. 10: A homophonic exercise, for part A, or B, or A and B together.

A: Play through 1 – 8, letting all the optional breaks be quarters, or some other pre-determined break.

B: If there are two or more percussionists/prepared piano: Play through 1 – 5, letting all the optional breaks be quarters, or some other pre-determined break.

Repeat the exercises, and eventually allow for optional breaks and any sequence of 1 – 5.

A and B can practice together, but they can also practice individually.

Feel free to use a metronome.

Page 15.

This part might need a leader to bring everyone in and out, according to the ensemble's pre-determinations. Nevertheless, having a leader or not having a leader will result in two different expressions.

Exercise No. 11: Focus on being accurate according to the leader's indications.
Exercise No. 12: Play a version where the optional durations are relatively short.
Exercise No. 13: Play a version where the optional durations are relatively long.
Exercise No. 14: Experiment with combining both short and long durations.
Exercise No. 15: Play a version where all the notes have an indefinable pitch (pitch), for example, white noise, scratching, and so on.
Exercise No. 16: Make a version where all the notes have a defined pitch.
Exercise No. 17: Experiment with different instrumentations for the different voices to see what happens with the miniature solos in between.

- Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?

The *plan of use* forms an essential part of the pre-determined frames. It requires a great deal of time to get this plan ready. You have to make several suggestions and test them out together with the ensemble. A helpful tool in this process is making an audio recording of the different versions. When the *plan of use* is set, you cannot deviate from it. The performance is depending on the whole ensemble being synchronized at the agreed places at the agreed time.

- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: to test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the realization.
- Selection.
- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

I have already talked about the interaction between the performers in discussing *Brooklyn*. In some parts, the performers are to play together (tutti). In many other places, however, the interaction is based on heterophonic playings. See also the section above 'Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level?'.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

PART 2

1. Authentic performance, or not?

Playing with historical accuracy is not the same thing as playing which is historically informed. Most performers collect background information concerning what they play and therefore have more or less historical information concerning the music they perform. It is becoming more and more common for performers or conductors to offer a short lecture for the audience before a concert. A pre-concert talk gives the audience the opportunity to gain a deeper perspective of the work, the composer, the music and its performers. A pre-concert talk shows that the performers feel a responsibility for the work and its intentions, and that they have prepared the work in a thoughtful and sincere manner.

Wolff says, in his article 'Immobility in Motion. New and electronic music', of 1957, published in *New Directions* in 1958:

> While intention or conception may generate sounds, they neither measure nor are measured by them necessarily. The sounds while they last are final and there is no separating from them a score for purposes of comparison. If the score indicates the note A to be played and the performer, for no reason or another, hit B instead, the existence at the moment of the pitch B gives no measure of the score nor is measured by it (though the B might not have occurred had there been no score). But the existence of the B is, in this view, compellingly real. To call it a "mistake" is beside the point (is meeting someone by chance, is a meteor a mistake?). Nor does this suggest simply a letting-go – that the performer play any pitch he pleases when he is asked to play a: a measure of good will is assumed.[61]

This quotation says something about the meaning that is created out of unintentional sounds or happenings. It also says something about the Wolff's listening approach, as he describes his fellow composers' listening approach. At the same time, Wolff emphasizes the performer's responsibility and 'good will' in relation to the work's intention and identity.

How are we, the performers, to relate to authentic instruments? The available instruments of this time, including objects trouvés, were different from the ones we have today. A radio from the '50s was easy to get one's hands on in the '50s. Today a radio like this is an authentic instrument, and a radio from Apple Store is not. The same applies for preparations for a piano. A screw from the 40s has a high degree of density and is much heavier than a modern, lightweight screw from The Home Depot, manufactured from a modern alloy. The two different screws give very different timbres. Instrumental choices, for example in the preparation of a piano, are up to

[61] Wolff, 1998, p. 26

you to make, based on availability and your own experiments with them. I have done performances with both authentic and contemporary instruments. For example, when I prepare the piano to play Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946 – 48), I prefer authentic preparations. But a contemporary radio has played its role just fine in other works.

What if someone performs an Open Form work with a 'sound' or identity that is not consistent with the sound of the composer or the genre? What if a performer gives a performance of *Edges* by Wolff with a John Adams-ish sound, which is quite far from the sound associated with Wolff? Wolff says:

> W: Now I do sometimes use material from other composers (though it wouldn't occur to me use Adams; I have used, for example, folk songs, Bach, and Haydn, (music I like and respect) in my compositions. I could imagine, in that spirit, material from other music being used in Edges. Though, insofar as Edges so clearly involves improvisation, to include other material, unless from memory, would be difficult - you'd have to write something out, which of course I don't say you can't do, but seems against the spirit of the piece.[62]
>
> […] An important issue, of course, that you mention is how to explain to performers what is a good performance of an Open form piece. And that this is a question not so different from what makes a good performance of Bach (some 300 plus years later) and what makes a not so good performance. And I have no answer! I think we have to rely on musical experience (something that is acquired and learned) and also on whatever musicality we have in us (which is more or less given).[63]

With these words, *against the spirit of the piece*, Wolff illustrates something very significant in the performance of any work. The performer is responsible for the work and the work's intention. You have to have a minimum of contextual understanding in order to manage this responsibility. In addition to whatever instrumental technical skills you might have, you need insight to the composer's work and a good method of acquiring it is to get started with the interpretation. A graphic notation does not mean that anything is permitted. It's an instruction given by the composer to you as a performer, where you can, with respect and humility, explore the possibilities of the instruction through experiments, just as you would do with a conventional work. This may seem like a strict limitation at first. A work is, in fact, a (strict) instruction providing possibilities within a certain framework. It is important to remember that if you want to find as many solutions as possible within an instruction, exploring its uttermost edges is a necessity. This means allowing all ideas, both good and bad. Test and try, explore and practice, choose and eliminate. It is through careful

[62] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 28 November 2014.
[63] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 1 December 2014.

selection and, finally, in the performance of the piece that you eventually give one (or more) interpretation(s) of the work. Artists will recognize a creative process like this in both music and the visual arts, as well as working with Open Form.

Oliveros represents primarily herself when she answers questions concerning contemporary interpretation, but her answers are still of relevance to other composers' works, and of interest here. She says that it is useful for performers to be familiar with Deep Listening practice to perform her works, but they should not strive to attain a certain Oliveros-sound or a historically correct sound.

> E: Should a performer strive to have a certain Oliveros-sound to it? Or a sound that would match the time it was written in?
> O: No.[64]

Nevertheless, being familiar with Deep Listening practice does require a certain way of approaching the work through a defined way of listening. If you choose not to experiment with this, you run a risk of harming the work and your performance.

Her approach to interpretation is not so much based on a historical context, but information and perspectives concerning the work itself.

> E: […] would it be ok to play a work without doing any kind of research?
> O: Study the score.[65]

This way of relating to a context for interpretation might as well a possibility for other Open Form works, as well as for an Oliveros work. This is a kind of freedom that reflects the core of Open Form, providing the chance of letting the work be part of the present, contemporary time as well as the time it was written.

Could it be helpful to use recordings as a contextual reference? In historical recordings, one can find useful information about sound, instrumentation, interaction between the performers and so on. It is still, in my opinion, important to be aware of potential traps related to this. It is easy to believe, consciously or unconsciously, that what you hear constitutes some kind of blueprint for the performance of a particular work or that what you hear is representative for a whole genre. As in other music, there are recordings which can be directly misleading or pointless within the frames of your research. In Open Form, it is important to preserve what makes the genre most vivid of all: genuine flexibility and the fact that the genre lives in the context it's

[64] Mail correspondence with Oliveros, 24 March 2015.
[65] Ibid.

being performed in. It does not mean that recordings cannot provide valuable information, on the contrary. But you must be aware of the possibility of being affected too much by doing this.

During a period when I listened a lot to other performer's recordings of Open Form works, I spoke to Wolff about this:

> E: How should I use the recordings available? I like the Sonic Youth one.
> W: I do like the Sonic Youth too. But it doesn't matter. I wouldn't worry about them, just do what you and your group think is good.[66]

This conversation illuminates an aspect of Wolff's interest what is important in interpretation and performance. He has distinct ideas about what he likes and dislikes but advocates an attitude to any performer's interpretation and performance as being independent, liberated from other performer's interpretations.

Oliveros underlines this when she says that listening to other people's recordings might be misleading as well as helpful. She recommends working together in a group and exchanging experiences with each other directly instead.

> It is better to work together in a group and to compare experiences.[67]

I n addition to that, if you can I urge you to study with an expert who has knowledge and experience in working with Open Form, whether as performers or composers. It is unfortunately still too difficult to find such expertise in the institutions, and therefore it is necessary to seek a milieu outside the institutions to attain first-hand information.

In her dissertation *The Polyphonic Performer*, Tanja Orning (cellist and artistic researcher at The Norwegian Academy of Music) discusses three different elements that can help the performer to organize their interpretation. [68]

Orning studies performance practice in works by Morton Feldman, Helmut Lachenmann, Klaus K. Hübler and Simon Steen-Andersen in her research. She explores the musician's role through the works of these composers and discusses how the musician needs new skills to rehearse and interpret them. Orning's research relates to the cello repertoire, but extends far beyond it. You do not need to be a cellist to benefit from her research.

[66] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 3 February 2005.
[67] Mail correspondence with Oliveros, 24 February 2015.
[68] Orning 2014, p.66f

Orning describes three elements concerning interpretation related to:

1. The musician’s physical and performative interpretation. Experiments with the work through the instrument, and by seeking experiences from other performers with relevant expertise.

2. A critical evaluation of history and context. What kinds of literature, interviews, audio recordings and so on are available?

3. The composer's intention. How important is composer's intention?

Organizing the process of interpretation as Orning has suggested might help you in your own quest as a performer into the world of a new work.

Interaction: how to relate to your fellow players

One of the points discussed in the section, ‘A Basic Recipe’, deals with the interaction between the performers, how you should relate to your fellow players. Cage had a distinct philosophy on this point. He urged performers to play simultaneously, but not together. It is important to be aware of these two different modes of interaction, not only in relation to Cage but also in the works of other Open Form composers. It is important to be conscious of the interaction you find as most appropriate for each work, whether at one extreme or the other, or moving somewhere between them.

Playing together and playing simultaneously are two different modes of interaction.

Playing together: the performers listen to each other and adjust their playing to the other musicians as to pitch, tempo, dynamics and overall timbre, and make musical choices based on what's happening musically in the ensemble.

Playing simultaneously: the performers do not play together but simultaneously, within the same time frame. The performers listen to each other but continue their own playing of what is either determined intuitively, or pre-determined material. They do this without permitting any conventional considerations whatsoever of their musical interactions.

- Example of playing together:
In Earle Brown's *December 1952* there is a wide range of possibilities for interpretation of the 'floating planks'. One performer may play a big, noisy sound while another performer plays a small, transparent sound simultaneously. If the performers play together, a possibility in *December 1952*, they have many possibilities for responding and adapting to each other. Maybe the loud, noisy sound makes some modifications in its intensity or its timing to let the small, transparent sound come forward. The performer who plays the small sound could also choose to make a crescendo to match the volume of the big sound. Or the small sound could be replaced with a completely different sound that is more audible and compatible with the big, noisy sound. Or it could just remain as small and transparent, submissive to the big sound.

Bottom line: Playing together means that the performers may adjust their musical actions to each other as desired. One could say that it's related to Mickey Mouse-ing.[69]

- Example of playing simultaneously:
When performers play simultaneously they continue to play what is decided at that moment intuitively (as in improvisation), or what has been pre-determined, without any regard to what the fellow players play. This applies to all parameters: pitch, duration, dynamics, timbre, rhythmic structure, and so on. In John Cage's *Four*[6] the performers choose their fixed sounds, with all its respective parameters, unaffected by the other performers. For example, if one of the four players plays a loud and noisy sound while another player plays a small, transparent sound, they are not to adjust their sounds to each other. The sounds stay fixed. The loud, noisy sound sings out with all its force while the small, transparent sound remains small and transparent, regardless of the fact that it's being drowned by the loud noise. None of the performers are making any adjustments to each other and the result is that the small sound may not even be audible to the audience. This does not mean that the small sound does not exist, on the contrary. The audience could perhaps see the performer play and listen for the sound that they see is being played, but cannot hear

[69] Mickey Mouse-ing refers to how the music and catroon follow each other. If Mikcey Mouse falls down the stairs, the music appears as falling down to match the cartoon.

it. Perhaps it will also be audible in a tiny moment as the big sound dissolves – who knows? The magic lies in not knowing and not adjusting yourself to your fellow players or your own taste.

Bottom line: playing simultaneously means that the performers may not adjust their musical actions to each other as desired, but keep an anarchistic attitude to all musical actions. One could say that it's the opposite of Mickey Mouse-ing.

The challenge of playing simultaneously, not together, is usually greater in a large ensemble than in a smaller one. This goes for both improvising simultaneously and playing composed or pre-determined material simultaneously. Do not be intimidated by the amount of practice needed for this kind of non-intentional interaction. Even in a duo, this has to be rehearsed. Remember that playing simultaneously goes against all the principles a musician is trained to follow in their conventional education, where playing together dominates their training. Your mind as a performer may be programmed from all your previous musical training and experience to adjust all your musical actions to others going on at the same time.

Is it really possible not to make any adjustments to the music that surrounds you, to the other performers standing in the same room on the same stage? I think it is very difficult to play simultaneously, keeping all parameters fixed and not adjusting anything to what else is happening, although I have no definite answer to this question. Different instruments may also have different kinds of problems related to playing simultaneously. For example, a singer might have difficulty in keeping a pitch stable if it's interrupted by another pitch performed within a microtonal distance, while a pianist will of course have no problems with keeping the pitch stable.

I'd like to illustrate the phenomenon of playing simultaneously with a story from one of Cage's studio recordings. Cage wanted to make a recording of his work *Etudes Boreales* (1978) in its duo version for piano and cello, and had two performers in mind for this mission. Several obstacles delayed the recording, which turned out to serve the work very well.

> Now we met our first obstacle: when would John Cage, Frances-Marie Uitti (who lives in Holland) and Michael Pugliese be available for this recording? The solution: Frances and Michael were scheduled to perform the world premiere of the Duo version of the *Etudes* at the New Music America Festival

> (held in Hartford, Connecticut in the summer of 1984). Everyone agreed to go into the studio in the days following the festival and record all three *Etudes*. At long last, it seemed we would be recording the *Exercises.*
>
> But things were not what they seemed – shortly before the Hartford dates Michael became seriously ill, requiring extended bed rest. Because of this, Frances played the Cello Solo at New Music America […]. Frances' schedule would not allow her to return to New York when Michael could play again, and it seemed the project would be delayed once more. This obstacle was solved by Cage. The Duo is intended to be played with *no interaction* between the two musicians. The performers must play the piece by adhering to strict timings (click-tracks were created to be played through headphones as an aid to keeping time). Cage suggested that the Solos be recorded separately, and the Duo be created in the studio utilizing the two Solo performances. Thus resulted the Duo recorded here.[70]

Perhaps is this the only way of making sure that the interaction between the performers is kept as simultaneous playing. I believe that it's logical to think that when we play with other performers in the same room or on the same stage, we do make adjustments to some degree, either consciously or unconsciously. This is, in addition to being a consequence of conventional musical training, is also the result of our inherent musicality. But when you are aware, as a performer, of the differences between these two sets of interaction and bring this into your interpretation, it is most likely that the work and your performance will benefit from it.

Cage is the composer who has the clearest stated philosophy regarding interaction between performers. He advocated the anarchistic idea of the performers playing simultaneously rather than together. This is closely related to his Zen Buddhistic mind-set. Yet it is important to consider each individual work and what it requires. This also goes for the other composers represented in this handbook. Although there are a multitude of examples showing that Cage was a musical performer, he followed his own rules as far as it was possible. Wolff portrays Cage's punctuality (all punctuation is by Wolff): [71]

> Cage as performer I believe almost always followed his own rules. "Taste" or personal preference applied only to choosing materials for a composition, for example, in the earlier work, the preparations, or later choosing the material (number and kinds of instruments, kinds of sound - simple/complex, approximate spacing - dense to very sparse [more usual]) to which the chance operations were applied.
>
> The only possible situation where performer choice might enter in was in pieces like "Branches" […], where Cage actually uses the word "improvisation" to describe how to play. But even then there are major restrictions, for instance, use for sound only vegetable (plant) material, and also fixed time frames.

[70] Mode Records, 1985.
[71] Mail correspondence with Wolff, 25 May 2015.

> And (as you known from "Four6") the performer can choose where to play in a flexible time frame.
>
> In short, when performing, Cage observed the requirement of the score as carefully as he could.
>
> I did experience one unusual exception: we - John, David Tudor and I - because of a travel delay, had only a few hours before a concert to prepare/rehearse a program. One of the pieces was "Cartridge Music", which requires rather complicated preparation from the score. There was no way we could find the time to do that, so John said: we all know how this piece can sound, so we'll just play it that way (i.e. improvise it according to our memories of the piece), which is what we did.
>
> With this piece, "likes" would also play a part when you chose the material to insert into the cartridges for amplification - that was open; Tudor discovered the use of the "slinky", Cage, I think, liked the sound of a feather being stroked, etc. These kinds of sounds were chosen by "taste" or preference. But of course they were then subject to various chance operations, timing, combination with other sounds, etc., including the possibility that they sometimes couldn't be heard at all (because someone else's part required the volume affecting your cartridge to be turned down to zero).

According to this, Cage did make adjustments when it was necessary, both musical adjustments and in his answers in interviews. In one of his interviews he retracts his own earlier answer: *That's not very good, let's do it again*.[72] See also Magne Hegdal's portrayal of working with Cage during his stay in Norway in 1983, p. XXXX.

Wolff says this about playing together and simultaneously:

> In [the] "together" situation I've sometimes found that there is a risk that individual players get carried away by what they are doing, that in fact, because the "together" allows unusual freedoms, they don't really play "together" but get involved with asserting themselves.
> I myself don't really have a philosophy, something abstract and prescriptive. I do think that giving players freedom (in the "together" situation) involves a risk, and that it calls for one's trusting the performers to function "musically" and intelligently (Cage liked that notion, "intelligence", or you could say "thoughtfulness"). To so function involves both being oneself and being "with others", no trying to "express oneself"; but at the same time, one does express oneself (it's impossible not to). Because self-expression is going to happen in any case, one shouldn't actually try to do it - and in that sense one also functions "simultaneously".[73]

In Wolff's compositions, he explicitly applies the two different ways of interacting as a deliberate compositional element. He leaves the starting and ending times and tempi to be free for the performers to choose, allowing the performers to adhere to their own pre-determinations (or spontaneous provisions) in their interaction, unaffected by other performers' musical actions. See also Part 1, Chapter 2, 'Showcase 9 Christian Wolff, Brooklyn (2015)' p. XXXX.

[72] Scheffer, 2004. (Video)
[73] Mail correspondence with Wolff 7 May 2015.

2. Is there a need for a methodical approach to Open Form?

Working with Open Form is time-consuming because of all the processes the performer must carry out before the actual music making can begin. For this reason, it is useful to have some tools in the first meeting with the piece. I myself went on many detours as I approached each, for me, new work. I would like to show some paths that may lead you more directly to your destination. These paths do not mean that you'll get a blueprint presentation of the work. They mark out methods that enable you to interview the work. Experiments through the works' instructions should always be at the centre of your attention, no matter how you want to enter the work.

In Open Form works, a different approach and knowledge is required compared to interpreting a conventionally notated work. In addition to conventional instrumental skills, you might need extended techniques and an interest in exploring other aspects of the instrument's timbral potential.

It is debatable whether it is necessary to have high technical skills on a conventional instrument to perform some of these works. I have a conventional classical education, but Cage, Wolff, and Oliveros among others, have made it clear in many of their works that the virtuoso is not necessarily appropriate for these works, on the contrary.

Cage could happily, musically, tie one finger to one piano key, preventing the pianist from being a 'show off' virtuoso. Oliveros has repeatedly advocated her view on unschooled musicians as professionals. She has described some of her best musical experiences as having been from children and illiterate performers. [74]

Working with Open Form, the performer approaches a new role: an expanded performer role.

So what is an expanded performer's role?

Based on the instructions in each score, you have to pre-determine and develop your own voice. Sometimes in detail, other times to a degree that affects the structure of the work as a whole. Perhaps the work will tell you how to play something, but not what to play. Within more or less strict limits the performers often has to use

[74] Conversation with Oliveros during Open Form Festival, 2009, Oslo.

improvisation and composition to solve the various tasks given by the composer. This requires insight and understanding for the relationship between the details and the work as a whole. You have to make sure that you preserve the identity of the work at all times as the centre of your interpretation, and not get lost in imaginative instrumental techniques or methods.

It is important to remember that a method that works for one piece, or for one performer, does not necessarily work for another piece. Each requires its own method, and each performer needs custom experiments. Through their experience of different works and methods, the performer will develop a richer context, and will eventually be able to develop personal methods for interpreting an Open Form work.

3. What is *Open Form*?

Understanding the concept of work and genre

Open Form is a designation for a type of composition that is to some degree open. It is also a term which helps us to understand a genre. So for example, I do not include for example Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge* (c. 1740) in the term, but Stockhausen's *Aus den Sieben Tagen* (1968) is included. In other words, works from several genres may hold elements that can be interpreted as open to a certain degree, but not all of these works are Open Form works.

An Open Form composition is graphic, text- or number-based, or has extended conventional notation. The work may also be a combination of these categories in combination with conventional notation.

Roles approaching each other

In an Open Form work, the roles of the composer and the performer are approaching each other. Many of the choices that have traditionally belonged to the composer are left to you, the performer, to deal with in an Open Form work. In some of the works, the notation is open to such a degree that two different performances might sound like two different works to the audience. This shows how important your role as a performer is, as manifest in your interpretation and performance. You are moving into what has traditionally been the composer's territory, and therefore have a different, expanded role than permitted in a conventionally notated work.

In the quotation below, Cardew says something about the freedom of the performer. He acknowledges the performer's role as much as that of the composer or of the work itself.[75] Cardew wanted no competition between the different parts involved:[76]

> One point is, that every sign should be active (compare the barlines in Feldman and Boulez). Here are openings for indeterminacy, or freedom for the player: he must decide which signs he will give activity to, or allow to act.
> The composer can bring this about in a variety of ways: by overloading the player with so many rules that they begin to contradict each other; or by using the same sign in a variety of context where it cannot mean the same (paradoxical notation); or by giving no rules whatever and obliging the player to seek out such rules as he needs or as will make sense of the notation. (This last is very important, and often seems the case with Feldman.) All these are psychological obscurities directed at the player in the hope of waking him up.

[75] Cardew 1961, p.23
[76] Ibid.

Metaphorically, in a conventional work you get the assignment of bringing a rose into being, as though you have had it from the composer. In an Open Form work, you get only a seed from the composer, and do not know what kind of flower will grow from it.

How open is *Open*?

The degree to which an Open Form composition feels open can vary. The work may contain rules that are strict in such a way that both form and content may be experienced as quite bound, for either the performer or the listener. But these boundaries are what actually defines the core of the composition and what distinguishes it from improvisation. Improvisation alone is not Open Form.

The relationship between form and content is an element that may affect the openness of the work. Cage's *time brackets* give a strict structure to *Four*[6], which makes it possible to argue that the form is not open at all. In spite of the strict structure, the openness is most present in the *time brackets*. The choices you make concerning the qualities, placements and durations of the sounds may vary but still be 100% within the frames for the work. Together, the four players reveal the openness in the work.

The rigid structure of *Four*[6] also limits the total length of the piece to 30 minutes. The performers may repeat the work, with many of the parameters already chosen, with certain accuracy. In Brown's *December 1952* the openness and the strictness is defined in another way. The piece cannot be repeated like *Four*[6] unless it's notated in a somewhat exact manner, something that the instructions for the piece clearly rule out. The total length of December 1952 may also vary, from a few seconds to several hours long. In *Four*[6] the structure in the form is partly closed, but the content is open. In *December 1952* both form and content are open. They are both Open Form works.

Wolff discusses the term and the phenomenon of Open Form in his article *Open to Whom and to What. On the theory of open form in new music*.[77]

> What exactly constitutes openness in Open form is not easy to say. The notion, or word "open" is highly, and variably, associative. "Open ears, open minds" (John Cage, circa 1967). Open can suggest possibilities, multiplicity, heterogeneity, change. It can simply open to participation […][78]

In the same article he also discusses the audible openness. He uses Beethoven as

[77] The article was originally a lecture from 1986.
[78] Wolff 1998, p. 178.

an example, despite the fact that he considers Beethoven's music as 'closed,' and not Open Form.

> At any rate, open comes down to how it sounds. A Beethoven score, I take it, is "closed", but I can imagine it, in some degree, played in an open way, or at least I have found myself sometimes hearing moments of such a score, especially slower ones, fermatas, and especially sustained final chords, as open, wishing there were a piece made up entirely of such moments.[79]

The audible openness could be claimed to be part of a work's identity, something that is discussed below in 'Recognizable?' and elsewhere in this handbook.

Recognizable?

Asking if an Open Form work must have an element of recognition represented in the sounding result, my answer is 'no'. The notation in these works is open to so many different and diverse interpretations that to suggest the opposite would be to exclude most works from Open Form as a genre.

Earle Brown expressed a slightly different attitude. He suggested that an Open Form work should represent something that makes it recognizable from one to another performance.

> I wanted (and still want) very much for the work to have a "reality" of its own in addition to the specific controls imposed by myself and by the performer. Ambiguity in the service of expanding the conceptual and real potential of the work must not lead to the loss of the work as a recognizable, and to a certain extent, "objective" entity. The "object" must reappear transformed by the process imposed upon it as a "subject. [80]

Brown did not have any definition for the unrecognizable works, though it would have been interesting if he had had one. It's interesting that Brown talks about what is recognizable in a work, because this is a matter concerning an important aspect of all Open Form works: the identity of the work. In my opinion, the identity of the work can be well preserved even if several interpretations are different and unique, without any recognizable material. For this reason, the term *Open Form* should include both works with and without any recognizable material. Amongst performers and composers, this is also a common way to use the term.

My personal experience is that these works, in spite of the absence of recognizable material, often still have a sounding identity, their own sound, so to speak. There is something recognizable in the core of the work that will be expressed in the

[79] Ibid.
[80] Brown 1986, p. 193.

performance if the work is well taken care of through the whole process of interpretation and performing. Wolff's *Edges* (1967) could be recognized by how the performers mould their sounds or actions between two edges, while at the same time the material could be non-recognizable from one interpretation to another.

Having a sounding identity does not represent all Open Form works and may even change from different performances of the same work.

Chance, or something like that.

In an Open Form work, indeterminacy is part of the process of making a completed work. Indeterminacy in music can occur in at least two ways, between the composer and the work, and between the work and the performer.

Indeterminacy also occurs between the work, the performance and the audience, as the work forms, or is interpreted, by the listener. The experiences that each and every one of the audience bring with them are subjective, which also makes each and one's experience of the performance unique. This indeterminacy takes place in every listening situation and is not peculiar to works with Open Form, hence the lack of attention in this context.

In the first form of indeterminacy, the composer uses chance operations to compose the work. The result may be a composition notated with conventional notational techniques, with no more openness than any other conventionally notated work.

In the second situation, when indeterminacy occurs between the work and the performer, form invokes a different content from what is usually associated with the term. In this type of work, the composer has given a framework for you to relate to, but leaves crucial choices, for example of instrumentation and sound material, as variables which are open to you to experiment with. This is Open Form.

Cardew has described indeterminacy in a musical composition. This quotation highlights the work as a Supreme framework, given to the performer as any conventionally notated work. He insists that indeterminacy does not occur in the notation itself, but merely between the work and the performer.

> There can be no indeterminacy in the notation itself – that would mean a sort of blurred sign (as in Busotti)-but only in the rules for its interpretation (as in Cage's

> piano concerto: · means soft or short).[81]

Composer and writer Reginald Smith Brindle describes the typical European serialistic composer in the 50s as one who strives to define all musical parameters in as much detail and as accurately as possible. He says that it was expected that the performer would provide a reproduction of these instructions, also as exactly and accurately as possible.[82] For the serialistic composer, the concept of indeterminacy didn't have any value. The strict standards of serialism were thrown overboard in Europe, little by little. It is both asserted and denied that this had something to do with the many visits of American composers to Europe. It is interesting that the European composers, to varying degrees, incorporated aspects of indeterminacy more and more from the 50s. Admitting it or not, they did, of course, experience the works, performances and lectures by American composers in Darmstadt, and were influenced by them. This goes both ways, though, as the American composers were also influenced and inspired by what was going on at Darmstadt.

Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke XI* (1956) has often been described as the first aleatoric work. Stockhausen himself seemed to believe that he had presented a new way of perceiving form with this work, despite the fact that Feldman's *Intermission No. 6* (1953) had been written three years earlier. I have discussed this in my thesis of 2004, *Det preparerte piano - innøving og interpretation av verk for preparert piano* (The Prepared Piano - Preparing and Performing Works for Prepared Piano).[83]

> *Klavierstücke VI* has for a long time been considered the first work composed with an open form.[84] With this work, Stockhausen affirmed that he had presented a new form. Well-known literature also describes this work as representative of this new form, for example in Wörner's *Stockhausen – Life and Work* (1973). He erroneously says that *in 1957* [the year of performance] this 'openness' in a work's form led the first to the possibility of interchanging sections, in Klavierstücke XI. *With this Stockhausen first brought into play the concept of chance, of the aleatory, of a polyvalent technique of composition for large forms*.[85] He [Wörner] is also misleading regarding indeterminacy and aleatory, which among many others are techniques used by for example the Dadaists. In fact, the tour goes all the way back to Frescobaldi to find the [...] use of indeterminacy. In his toccatas of 1637, he allows for the performer to choose excerpts, leaving out the rest. Frescobaldi explains to

[81] Cardew 1961, p. 23
[82] Brindle 1975, p.61
[83] Storesund 2004, p.28f
[84] Stockhausen1964, p.69f
[85] Wörner 1973, p.220

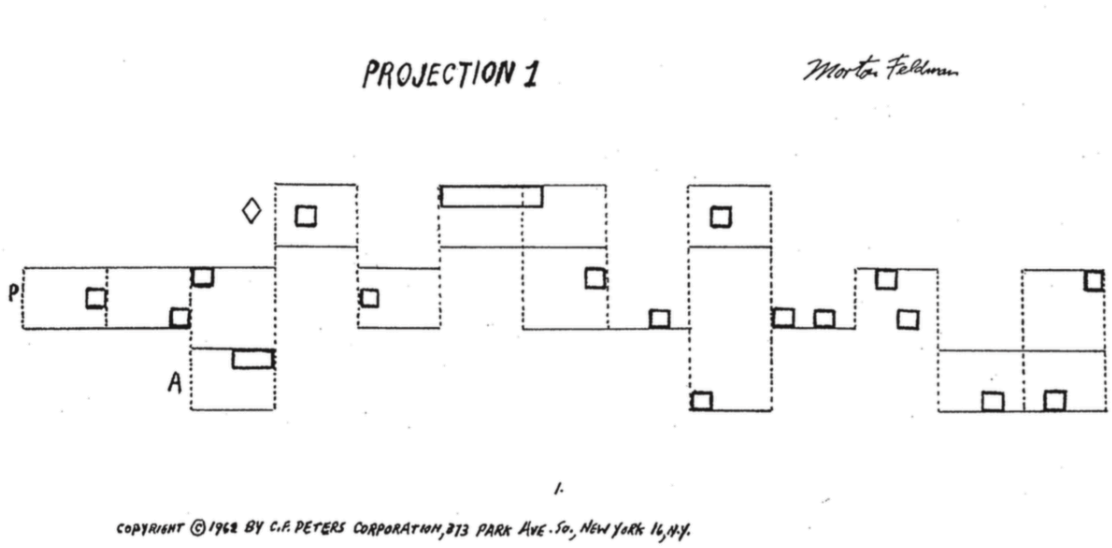
the performer in this way: [86]

> In the Toccatas I have only paid regard to the fact that they are rich in varied passages and ornaments, but also that the individual section may be played separately from one another, in order to enable the player to make a conclusion at will, without having to end the Toccata.

> Mozart wrote so-called 'dice compositions,' which means that the performer puts together the various measures given, using dices and table of number. The 'dice compositions' give innumerable possibilities for different walzes.[87]

A work does not need to be consistently Open Form. Many works are only partially Open Form, while other works are completely Open Form. Just to be clear, what I'm discussing is the relationship between the work and the performer, not the relationship between the composer and the work.

An example of a partially Open Form work: Feldman, *Projection I* (1950) for solo cello. [88]



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Closed aspects in *Projection 1*:

1. Instrumentation
2. Time
3. Form. The structure is pre-determined, although the form can be

[86] The quote is from the preface in the score *Orgel- und Klavierwerke*, band III, published at Bärenreiter.
[87] Schwanauer 1993, p.533ff
[88] See also Orning 2014, *The Polyphonic Performer.* for further aspects concerning interpretation of *Projection I.*

perceived as very different between two performances due to its open aspects.

4. Tempo: 72 or thereabouts

Open aspects in *Projection 1*:

1. Tone material is partially open. Tone material is decided according to Feldman's instructions for either high, middle or low.
2. Dynamics.

An example of a completely Open Form work: Howard Skempton, *For Strings* (1969).

waves

shingles

seagulls

The score consists of those three words only. It has neither instructional text nor any guidelines for instrumentation or musical material. Form, timbre, tone material, dynamics and so on are open. Nevertheless, the framework is clearly presented and the performer(s) has received complete instructions from the composer.

In the English/American terminology, there are different terms that are used to address inconsistency in music:

1. Chance
2. Indeterminacy
3. Aleatory[89]

These terms have been, and still are, used with a somewhat undefined content. Cage normally used *indeterminacy* and *chance*. Brown used *aleatory*, but also *indeterminacy* and *chance*.

[89] The word *aleatory* derives from the Latin word *alea*, meaning *dice*, which reflects the words *indeterminacy* and *chance*.

These terms are often used to explain one another. *Aleatoric music* is explained by *indeterminacy*, *indeterminacy* is explained by *chance* and chance is explained by *aleatory* and the use of dice.

The term *Open Form* and its use in the milieu

Even though the term *Open Form* is used more and more frequently by both performers and composers, it is not a well-established term. The reason for this might be that Open Form works are not performed very often, hence the lack of a distinct definition of the term. There are various reactions to the use of this term, which is understandable. When a term without a precise definition, like *Open Form*, is used it can both provoke and inspire. The lack of a precise definition of the term allows for diverse interpretations to flourish.

There is also an abundance of other terms indicating some kind of openness, used or invented with the purpose of addressing these works. One of these terms is score art, a term formed by composer William (Bill) Hellerman (US) (f.1939), who is also said to be the first to have used the term sound art. In a letter to his colleague Philip Corner he writes:

> […] i've come up with the term "score art" it seemed necessary to use the word "art" so as to imply an openness to the "reading" of the score – the image could lead to other images to dance to words to theatre as well as to sound "artyness" being out of the question since a score to be a score isn't a pretty picture to the extent that layout factors come into play (elements of design) they are in the service of some other idea than just themselves [90]

In my experience, *score art* is a term that is not very much used, either by musicians or academicians. It is a term that might as well address a conventionally notated work, depending on what is considered as 'art', which may explain its lack of use. There is, nevertheless, something intersubjective about the term 'score art,' that probably will make many artists understand it, given some supplementary explanation.

Michael Kurtz describes Stockhausen's work *Plus Minus* (1963) with the term *polyvalent process composition*. [91] *Polyvalent* is a relevant and credible term, having a logical association with the nature of the work. It speaks of the work's many perspectives, and can be interpreted in many ways. The second part of the term, *process composition*, could be a useful and good term to some works, for example

[90] Sauer 2009, p. 97
[91] Kurtz 1992, p. 133

text scores, but is somewhat more problematic to use in describing Open Form works in general. *Process composition* appears as a less useful term than *polyvalent*. The term *process* is connected to the term *composition*, and carries a meaning related only to the method of the process of composing. It says nothing about the relationship between the work and the performer. Even if the term could be used to describe Open Form works to some degree, this is a term that is even less used amongst performers and composers than score art, without saying anything about it being an appropriate term for describing *Plus Minus*.

It is reasonable to think that Earle Brown was the first to use the term *Open Form.*

> Calder was the first influence, I think, and then Pollock, because Pollock in effect performed his paintings. He was like a conductor, and the paint went where he said, in a way, and because with a musical mobile you can't expect the wind and the breezes to make the variations, it has to be activated, and out of Pollock it came to me to realize that a conductor could be the activator of this musical mobile.
>
> And so I have always said, and it's very true, that those two things, Calder's concept of a variable work of art from moment to moment in real time and Pollock's way of spontaneously dealing with his materials and coming up with very vibrant and urgent direct contact became called action painting. Some people have referred to the way that I came up with these conducting techniques--is like action music in a way, and so a lot of people say that I get into trouble by saying this, but I have to say it because that's where these original influences came from to make a music, a piece of music which--I first called them mobiles, musical mobiles, sound mobiles or whatever, and then, when they got to Europe, the Europeans called it Open form, which is a better phrase. But the first ones that I did before anyone else ever did anything like that, I called them mobile scores, and then in France forme ouverte and in Germany offen[e] form. They are the ones that put that title on them. [92]

Brown also used other terms to describe these works, including *mobiles*, with a reference to Alexander Calder. He also twisted the term Open Form and described conventional works as *closed form.*[93]

Brown expressed himself somewhat modestly concerning the origin of the term, as if it was a term that had arisen amongst fellow composers and performers. He believed, however, that his work *Folio* should be considered the first Open Form work:

> After *Perspectives*, I began to work on the *Folio* pieces, which are single-page pieces in different notational systems and which request varying degrees of performer involvement in their final form and, in two cases (*November 1952* and *December 1952*), the sound content. *Folio* led to a notation which I still use in pieces such as *Music for Cello and Piano* and the *Available Forms* work, which I called “time notation” and aspects of what has come to be called “Open form”, as in the *Available* works, but now modified specific in content. *Folio* was between October, 1952 and June, 1953 (the titles of the pieces are the dates of composing) and, as far as I know, they are the

[92] Brown 1987, p.19
[93] Ibid. p. 41

> first examples of “mobile” or “open-form” works.[94]

Since Brown considers *Folio* (1954) (which *December 1952* is part of) as the first Open Form work, it seems logical that he had a particular criterion, which an Open Form work should fulfil in order to be categorized as Open Form. He knew Feldman’s graph compositions very well, such as *Projection 1* (1950) (see description and illustration of the work on p. XXXX), but he does not include this as an Open Form work. Cage highlights this precise work by Feldman, in ‘Indeterminacy’ in *Silence*, as an example illustrating the openness between the work and the performance (the performer). Despite the fact that the performer controls the dynamics and phrasing in the work, and to a certain degree pitch, the rest of the work is accurately and precisely notated. The exact notation is far from conventional, yet precise.

Brown insists that Feldman's graph compositions are carefully structured and, are therefore not Open Form works.[95] That does not mean they are not open to some extent, but for Brown, these works are more akin to ‘closed’ form rather than Open Form. Without any specific desire to refute Brown’s perception of Feldman’s graph compositions being closed form, it is still possible to argue the opposite. From Feldman’s graph compositions, the performer is given the freedom to choose pitches and dynamics. Although there will be a recognizable aspect concerning the structure and form of the work, the choices made by the performer affect the form of the work, significantly different from one performer to another. In Feldman's *Intermission 6* (1953), also one of the showcases in this handbook, the structure is apparently open, so it is without doubt an Open Form work.

In the term *Open Form*, the word *open* mirrors the word *form*. It gives the impression that the form is opened. Very often, we think about form in music as a boundary in time. From A to B. And somehow music will always exist in time. The term *Open Form* gives the impression that something is opened up. Is the work no longer bound in time? Can form just as well be a spiral or a helix, rather than a straight line? The form in an Open Form work may be experienced like this, which is partly why *Open Form* is a suitable term for these works.

If the term *Open Form* is turned around, the word *form* mirrors the word *open*: *Form Open*. This mirror creates associations to active participation; to form, to open. *Form*

[94] Sauer 2009, p.193
[95] Brown, 1970. (Sound recording)

Open includes the performer as a significant contributor and illustrates how the roles of the performer and the composer are approaching each other. This in itself is a valid reason to let the meaning that has prospered from it, continue.

On the basis of these arguments, I believe that the term *Open Form* represents these works in a full-fledged manner. *Open Form* is also the term that performers and composers use more frequently than other terms to address this type of work, which is a reason in itself why this term should be allowed to continue to mature in the role it already is playing.

Form and *Open Form*

It is reasonable to define the difference between *form* and Open Form. There's a myriad of definitions of *form*, documented in many formats for discussion by the academics of the future. For me as a performer, the definition is less complicated: *Form* is everything. Form is the process from the composition and the score, through the interpretation and its sounding realization. You could of course delimit the content of the term, depending on the context it is being used in, but the definition of *form* (everything) is still a certain content within a certain framework.

Christian Wolff described the term *form* in his article in *Die Reihe 7*, in 1965. [96] [97]

> Form in music could be taken as a length of program time. […] A piece as it starts and stops is indicated by the actions of its performers (even when no sounds are scored at all). Form is a theatrical event of a certain length, and the length itself may be unpredictable.[98]

Short historical background

The concept of Open Form works was developed in the period after World War 2, when composers were particularly concerned with developing new forms of musical expression. *Freedom* was a fundamental concept in both visual arts and music. Improvisation and an alternative perception of form were essential elements in these works.

In New York, a group consisting of various artists emerged: composers, musicians, visual artists, choreographers and dancers. This group was eventually, and still is,

[96] The text was first published in the German publication of *Die Reihe 7*, published in1960. The English publication was published in1965.
[97] This article is also printed in 1968 in *Cues* by Christian Wolff with the title 'Precise actions under Variously Indeterminate Conditions. On Form'.
[98] Wolff, 1998, p. 38

referred to as The New York School.

Wolff talks about how the four composers came to be a group:

> The original grouping was Cage and Feldman (January 1950) and I came along about two months later, probably March 1950. Earle didn't come to New York and join us until two years later, in 1952.[99]

The term *The New York School* was first used by the artist Robert Motherwell (1915 – 1991) in 1950. He was looking for a term, an 'umbrella phrase', which could encompass the individuality of each of his artist colleagues, and he believed that the name of a place was suitable.

Motherwell says:

> I had to invent it [the term] ... for a very well-known art dealer in California, Frank Perls. He became interested in what I and my friends were doing and decided to put on a show of it in his gallery in Beverly Hills, and asked me ... to write a preface for the show he had chosen. I called the essay, 'The School of New York'. It was 1950, I think. He had chosen some artists who were not strictly Abstract Expressionists, so I had to find an umbrella phrase. New York served.[100]

Christian Wolff, John Cage, Earle Brown, and Morton Feldman, are the four composers who are traditionally considered to belong to this group. It is also natural to include the performers, and later composers, David Tudor (1926 – 1996), Cornelius Cardew and Pauline Oliveros in this group. Tudor had an especially important role as a performer and interpreter. Because of the new, expanded role of the performer, I find Tudor's work particularly interesting. Many Open Form works by the mentioned composers are dedicated to Tudor, and according to Wolff, Tudor were the inspiration behind many of the works[101]:

> I think we all felt that about David - - that we were boring him. "What can we do next that he can't do?" I think we all felt he had a low threshold of boredom; he just breezed through these pieces, then seemed to ask, "what's next? Give me something really to do."[102]

Pauline Oliveros can be linked directly to The New York school as both performer and composer, and also has works dedicated to her, amongst them *Four*[6] by John Cage.

The term *The New York School* is in our time well established in the artistic and academic milieu, but is still somewhat controversial in musicology. The term should be used very thoughtfully and with caution. The term in musicology stands clearly in

[99] Mail correspondence with Wolff 10 May 2015
[100] Diamonstein 1983, p. 228
[101] Storesund 2004, p.25
[102] Holzaepfel 1994, p. 45

the context of the radical upheaval that occurred in the art of painting through the New York School painters. Cage and Feldman had a notably close relationship with the art of painting. Feldman often refers to painting and painters in essays, interviews, and lectures:

> The new painting made me desirous of a sound world more direct, more immediate, more physical than anything that had existed heretofore. Varèse had elements of this. But he was too 'Varèse'. Webern had glimpses of it, but his work was too involved with the disciplines of the twelve-tone system.[103]

The explosion of the arts continued to expand. Individuality and to cherish the unique and distinctive was essential for both painters and composers. Wolff describes this in the following way:

> […] no walls, no formulated ideologies, no single-minded goals, not even a common language within their work.[104]

According to Wolff Cage did not serve as a leader of the group, but he had some kind of 'manager's role.'[105]

He was older than the others and had contacts that enabled the music they wrote to actually get performed. Cage's connections to visual artists were also of a significant character so far as the financial part of many of their performances were concerned. The visual artists could more easily earn money from their art for the simple reason that a painting was far easier to sell than a score. In 1958 Robert Rauschenberg (1925 – 2008), Jasper Johns (1930) and Emile de Antonio (1919 – 1989) arranged *John Cage Retrospective Concert* in New York Town Hall where *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* received its world premiere.

The engaging support given to music by the painters was of great importance to the composers. They often felt like outcasts, standing on the sidelines of what was going on in the established music scene. The gap between them and composers like Milton Babbit (1916 – 2011) and Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990), just got bigger and bigger.

> We were totally unacceptable to people like Milton Babbit, Aaron Copland – that kind of American composer – because we were influenced by other than musical events and ideas.[106]

The Open Form composers were on a course moving away from the traditional elements of tonality, motivic and thematic development. They left *form* as it had

[103] Feldman 1985, p.38
[104] Josek 1998, p.19
[105] Conversation with Wolff in his home in Hanover, USA, September 2003.
[106] Brown quoted by Quist. [Quist 1984, p.18]

functioned in conventional music and changed their roles as composer. Through non-controlling procedures, they developed ways to structure a composition with the purpose of creating music necessarily without straps to their personal taste and therefore also without personal limitations. As composers, they focused on the process of composition, and not on the result of the performance itself.

Brown talks about Open Form in a lecture given at the summer course in Darmstadt in 1965. He explains how he finds *form*, in the traditional sense, as very limiting in composing because of all the criteria that must be followed. One of these criteria is that a conventional work contains the ideas of only one person, despite the fact that there can be several other people involved in the process of performing it. Brown thought of these as unfortunate and unnecessary constraints.[107] He described what he considered two ways of approaching form: Through a *method* and *non-method*. He used the methods separately, but they were often combined in one single work.

- Method: The generating of a rational distribution of units, aggregates, densities, and qualities of sound elements; the numerical manipulation of micro-elements or structures of musical materials to obtain a rational evolution and generation of a macro-Form as a quasi-organic ”growth” process. [108]
- Non-method: The second approach is to *Form* as a function of a complex process of not totally rational developments within a chain of cause and effect extending from the original conception of the work, through the graphic presentation as ”score”, to performance realization as actual sound. It is difficult to describe this process because at every point it is more or less a combination of rational and irrational signs and actions. Not irrational in the ”mindless” sense but in the sense that the immense number of major and minor decisions which are made at all stages of the process, by all of the minds involved, create a labyrinth of cause and effect which is too complex to systemize before the event or to trace and rationally account for after the event. […] More briefly, this is the possibility of form as function of people acting directly in response to a described environment of potential…accepting the obvious fact that there is no such thing as a formless thing or event and wishing for the co-existence of rationality and irrationality in the ”unfolding” of *Form* as a dynamic process.[109]

While the *method* seems to be related to serialistic methods, the *non-method* depends on the performer(s) to a much greater extent. This provides, as Brown explains, a result that would not have been possible to systematize in advance and which would also be difficult to systematize after a performance. In this way the constraint problem, as explained above, is avoided, and for each performance a new and unpredictable version of the composition may arise. Interpretation no longer stands in the shadow of the work, but as an equal party.

[107] Brown 1966, p. 61
[108] Ibid., p.57
[109] Ibid., p. 57

Other terminology

- Intuitive

The Oxford Dictionary gives this definition of *intuitive*:

Using or based on what one feels to be true even without conscious reasoning; instinctive […][110]

Cognitive is used in many contexts to express the opposite of intuitive. *Cognitive* addresses aspects of reason, perception, thinking and consciousness.

In musical terms, this means the exact moment you're in, and all of what this moment may conduct. It may be a sound, unexpected or expected from a fellow player or the sound of an ambulance passing the venue. The performer reacts intuitively to whatever is served by the moment, with an action. An action may be a phonetic or a non-phonetic/performative action.

- Spontaneous

The Oxford Dictionary gives this definition of *spontaneous*:

Performed or occurring as a result of a sudden impulse or inclination and without premeditation or external stimulus:
the audience broke into spontaneous applause[111]

The difference between the terms *intuitive* and *spontaneous* is hard to distinguish since they are partially overlapping. The terms are often used next to each other to describe roughly the same issues, but there still is a difference in the nuances between the two terms.

In a musical context, *spontaneous* can be separated from *intuitive*. Being spontaneous means that the performer adapts to unexpected events that are not planned while being intuitive applies to all musical and non-musical moments, also

[110] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/intuitive, Retrieved 8 January 2016, 14.22

[111] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/spontaneous, Retrieved 8 January 2016, 14.30

those which are not planned. If a performance goes as planned, the performer can be intuitive in the performance by being observant and ready to act in the moment. If something unplanned happens, for example if an unintentional sound occurs, the performer may be spontaneous and react to the unintentional sound by creating yet another unintentional sound. In this way, the unintentional sound is placed in a context where it is perceived as intentional. The performer has been acting spontaneously.

- Improvisation

Improvisation is a term that needs further discussion. Michael Duch, Norwegian bass player and improviser, describes how he perceives so-called *free improvisation* as both a method and a genre.

> […] Free Improvisation is to be seen as both a method of music making and a genre of its own.[112]

Duch also discusses what it means to say that an improvisation is free, and argues that a considerable amount of practice and preparation is needed to perform this freedom.[113] I can relate to that conclusion in relation to improvisation, but this also applies to work with Open Form.

Free improvisation is an established term amongst performers and composers, but it has an indistinct delineation. This is partly why I personally don't I use this term very much, but instead I use *improvisation*. For performers and composers both terms will make sense, but in this handbook, the term *improvisation* is used, rather than *free improvisation*, despite the fact that the kind improvisation I'm referring to in this handbook in most cases is freely improvised.

The terms *free improvisation* and *freely improvised* are two terms bears individual frames. If *free improvisation* is related to a genre, which Duch argues, *freely improvised* is more akin to *improvisation*. The frames are wider in *freely improvised*, and allow the performer to define the term, custom to each situation. In my opinion, this does not contradict *free improvisation* as a relevant term for a genre or a method.

[112] Duch, 2010, p. 13
[113] Ibid. p. 26

Frederic Rzewski, German pianist, improviser and composer, uses both terms, which reflects how performers and composers use these terms. He argues, however, that there is always a framework as a base for any improvisation. This underpins Duch's statement that *free improvisation* is a genre where the genre in itself compounds the framework. Rzewski:

> Improvisation is a controlled experiment with a limited number of unknown possibilities. It always has rules and a framework. There is no such thing as “free” improvisation.[114]

Cage didn’t use the term improvisation very much. One of few examples is in *Branches* (1976). The score consists of an instructional text where the performer is asked to choose plant instruments with the help of chance operations. He also asks the performers to improvise.

Branches was performed in Norway during Cage's visit in 1983. In the booklet of the recording *John Cage in Norway*[115], a conversation between Kjell Samkopf (Norwegian percussionist), Rob Waring (Norwegian percussionist), Christian Eggen (Norwegian conductor) and Magne Hegdal (Norwegian composer) gives us an impression of Cage’s understanding of the term of improvisation. The Norwegian ensemble had a conventional understanding of the term and approached the work as conventional improvisers, playing together as well-trained musicians do.

> Rob: […] After the first run-through he just sat there. Silent. And we thought: *What’s he thinking?* We sensed that something was wrong, but he didn’t say anything.
> […]
> Christian: […] Cage acted like a true Zen-master; he was very reserved, he challenged us with his silence and let us figure out on out own. […]
> Kjell: We [the performers] agreed that the core of the problem was the term ”improvisation”.
> Rob: We had a jazz musician’s understanding of the term.
> Kjell: But it wasn’t meant that way.
> Rob: Little by little it dawned to us that perhaps it wasn’t *we* that should be at the center of attention, but the sounds. Our task was to make sure that the leaves and the twigs and the tree trunk and everything could express *their* sounds.
> […]
> Rob: And we were to go separately, without any sort of collaboration or planned progression.
> Kjell: And completely without any willed intention.
> […]
> Rob: But doesn’t the word ”improvisation” point mainly towards the performer?
> Kjell: Cage agreed that the term was up for discussion.

My conclusion is that *improvisation* is a term that has to be defined according to the

[114] Rzewski 2007, p. 104
[115] Published in 2010, Prisma Records, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo.

situation or the composition it is related to.

- Decipher

The Oxford Dictionary gives this definition of *decipher*:

> Succeed in understanding, interpreting, or identifying (something):
> [...] *visual signals help us decipher what is being communicated*[116]

I find *decipher* as a relevant and describing term to use related to the interpretation of Open Form works.

An Open Form work is in this context the coding while the performer is the one who unlocks and therefore deciphers, with a key or a method. The scripture, meaning the score, may be perceived as cryptic to the performer and to decipher it, the performer has to be authorized, that is, possess a key.

- Heterophonic

Heterophonic describes a specific interaction between two musical events. In conventional interaction, homophonic interaction, two musical voices will be played together. Homophonic interaction is the opposite of heterophonic interaction. Performers tend to have a unified understanding of where to start and stop, and relate to this in their playings together. In heterophonic interaction, the two musical events may be played at the same time, but they are not played together. The performers play as independent and unaffected from each other as possible, related to all musical actions such as tempi, dynamics, and phrasing. They relate only to their own understanding of where to start and stop their musical events. Wolff usually refers to this as *heterophonic playings*.

- Sound

Sound is a term that carries various meanings. In this context, it refers to the term musicians often use to describe an identity of something musical. It may be the identity of a work, an instrument, a composer, or a performer.

[116] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/decipher, Retrieved 13 January 2016, 10.18

Example: The sound of a composer may make it possible to recognize the composer's music, even if you have not heard the work before.

4. Where does the road go from here?

A contemporary composer will not compose a work in complete baroque style without having a particular reason. It is a genre that belongs to another era. If Open Form is a genre, will the era end for this genre as well? Wolff answers this question*: I have no answer!* [117]

But this topic evokes a stream of thoughts, which in turn leads to new questions, crucial for the future of Open Form.

What role will institutions play concerning Open Form?
What roles do performers who work with Open Form play?
What role do contemporary composers play concerning Open Form?

From being on the very edge of the established art scene, Open Form is today more established. Open Form may indeed still be perceived as far out for both for musicians and students. The far out perspective is a perception that applies to parts of the musical institutional environment. Luckily, the limits that frame the established art keeps expanding even if it's happening in a slower tempo today compared to the 50s. My experience is that this genre also expands towards an increased significance in music institutions.

Music institutions have a big potential and also carry a responsibility for Open Form. Open Form is part of the musical tradition on a par with baroque music, folk music or any other genre. So it must be ensured that the level of knowledge and experience within the institutional walls are at a high level and broad enough to reach the students within the system. Open Form and other music related to this genre are on their way into the educational systems, but there still is a great need to facilitate for this to settle as a vigorous tradition.

Why is it so important to reach the students with Open Form? Besides the obvious answer to take responsibility for this genre like other genres, Open Form is a link from a historical time, through our time, and towards our students' future. We are still in the era of Open Form and now is the time to take care of the essential sources we

[117] Conversation with Wolff, 15 March 2015

still have in for example Christian Wolff and Pauline Oliveros. First-hand information is an essential source for future performance practice.

Working with Open Form as a student, the meaning of the term *interpretation* acquired a much deeper and richer perspective. The leeway a student gets in working with Open Form affects both the perception and understanding of *interpretation*, but it also affects the relationship between the performer and their instrument. I will discuss this further below. These two side-effects of working with Open Form may have a great impact on a student no matter what genre she or he will emphasize for their future performances. In this way, interpreting and performing Open Form also serve as an important educational aspect that goes far beyond the limits of Open Form.

Loving my instrument

By teaching students in Open Form and by encouraging them to do experiments with their instruments and fellow students, I find that the students often return to an important aspect of making music. They get a more passionate involvement to their instrument and a glow and eagerness to solve the puzzle of an Open Form work without acting like the master's marionette. I dare to use the word passion because it reflects the effect working with Open Form has on many students, including myself. Improvising, experimenting, and interpreting as a creative and reflecting musician brings the student closer to their instrument and to music making.

Trusting the performer as a creative artist

This section is an ever so tiny criticism of the institutional phenomenon (which I support and am a part of): as explained above, then master-apprentice tradition is a significant and active part of how we teach and learn music and art. The master is indispensable. But this tradition also involves a risk to the student (from you are a small child and piano pupil), relying too much on the master and too little on herself. The musician should not and cannot be a marionette in the work with Open Form. The problematic aspects of the master-apprentice relationship are already broadly discussed. I simply refer to the issue from my point of view, related to Open Form.

The marionette problem can also be part of the reason why many performers and students are reluctant to embark an Open Form work (as well as the problem that very few students are presented to Open Form at all). In an Open Form work, the

student is not necessarily supported by the methods learned from the master, used in conventionally notated works. The student has to put away her own conventions, and the conventions of the educational system, working and thinking as a creative artist.

I've worked with improvisers, composers, jazz, noise, and classical performers. The ensembles have been mixed groups with intricate symbioses. Nevertheless, with a particular interest, I observe students as a group of performers in their meeting with Open Form. Through Open Form, the concept of interpretation evolves in a flourishing manner for them, in a way that differs from working with, for example, an Edvard Grieg work (a composer who by the way awakened Cage's first musical passion).

Experiencing a young student's (and one's own) joy, discovering herself as a creative artist is indescribably beautiful.

Composition

The notational techniques developed by composers like Oliveros, Wolff, and Cage have developed should be a natural part of a composer student's notational techniques, and not be looked at as just an eclectic and idiosyncratic phenomenon. Most composers today are familiar with certain alternative notational techniques, but the danger of reinventing the wheel over again is great, as it often is when one does not know history well enough.

Working with composition and notation without knowledge about Open Form is, in my opinion, an uneconomical way to work, not only for the composer but also for the performers who in the end are to perform the work. The institutions carry an essential responsibility in facilitating for systematic training and practical use of Open Form techniques for their composer and performing students.

If these notational techniques are surveyed systematically, they could be a much bigger resource for a composer's toolbox than they are today. Wolff claims any new techniques that are developed, including his own notational techniques, should pass on to the future as part of the educational system, and not remain as a patented technique.[118]

[118] Conversation with Wolff, 16 March, 2015

I've discussed higher education regarding Open Form, but I would also like to make a comment regarding the lower level, down to primary school. Many countries offer some kind of musical training programme for children, and many of them also offer training programmes in dance, drama, and arts & crafts. One important subject is missing: composition.

All children compose. In everyday life, in their play. Example: the 2-year-old poet inventing a new story about Spiderman, as he flies through the air to save a Lego man in distress; Spiderm-a-a-a-an - coming so-o-o-o-on! Or the 5-year-old who crawls onto the piano chair and with 1st and 2nd finger, climbs up and down the white and black keys. Chromatic passages become a spider working full time (and a lovely exercise for their hand position).

Just as the educational system at a higher level, the educational system for smaller children needs more knowledge and experience in Open Form and the methods and techniques it represents. Concerning experimental music in general, some exquisite performance books for children exist, for example, *Tiger Tango* by Mats Persson (S) and *Åpent hav*, by several Scandinavian composers (both are piano performance books). Some Open Form notational techniques are represented in these books.

There is no doubt that children compose in their everyday life. We, the teachers, need experience and a proper and decent methodology for composing and improvising with children. Open Form is a brilliant starting point for composing and improvising with children.

The audience experiencing Open Form

You, as a performer, not only capture the attention of the audience but also require their attention. This does not mean that the more effects and untraditional choices you give, the more attention you will get from the public. Perhaps strict and spartan choices are precisely what make the audience give the proper attention to a specific performance. In an entirely dark room with pillows instead of chairs, the audience gets the opportunity to give the music its full attention (if they don’t fall asleep!).

The audience’s other senses are also played on in this example. The isolation of some senses may enhance other senses, which may seem stronger. This is the opposite of a multimedia situation, where many senses are stimulated simultaneously. While a multi-media experience captures the audience's attention

immediately, isolating some senses may lead the audience to sharpen their senses to give the focus and awareness that the performance requires. In the entire black room example, the listening is in focus, while the other senses are somewhat isolated.

The New York School composers represented in this handbook are reaping recognition and attention from performers, composers and the audience today. Their works represent a precious treasure that we performers, composers, and teachers are obliged to care for, both regarding performance practice and the notational techniques that they have developed. Still, there is some way to go before Open Form gets its rightful place in the educational systems. The job that you as a performer do when you perform these works is therefore highly important in order to keep the tradition vibrantly alive and to keep moving one step further into the future.

Appendix 1 Worksheet: A Basic Recipe.

1. Analysing the score

- How can the score be categorized?

- What does the score tell the performer about what tasks to perform and what responsibility to take?

    - Does the work have an instructional text? If yes: What does the instruction say?
        - Is the instruction clear and logical, or is there any individual need for interpretation of the instructions?
        - Is there anything that the instructional text does not deal with?

    - Descriptive analysis of the score.
        - Does the score state anything specific concerning
            - Instrumentation
            - Length
            - Development

        - Does the score state anything about the material on a micro level? A micro level concerns the sound's
            - Timbre
            - Texture
            - Duration
            - Dynamic
            - Pitch
            - Spacing/complexity
            - Rhythmic structure
            - Development/structure

- Can I relate 100 % to the score?

2. Making a Bank of Ideas

- What possibilities and what limitations does the score give for a realization?

- Do I need to define any specific rules for possibilities or constraints for this specific realization?
    - Making exercises.

- Can I relate 100 % to my pre-determinations?

- Does the work require attention from the audience in an unusual way?

3. Test ideas and rehearse for the performance

- Practice: test which ideas from The Bank of Ideas work in the realization.

- Selection.

- Interaction: how to relate to fellow players.

- Consider, and possibly test, different venues.

4. Performance

- Is there anything in particular besides the prepared elements that should concern the performers?

Appendix 2 'Player One' from *Four*[6], (1992)

Choose twelve different sounds with fixed characteristics (amplitude, overtone structure, etc.). Play within the flexible time brackets given. When the time brackets are connected by a diagonal line they are relatively close together. When performed as a solo, the first player's part is used and the piece is called *ONE*[7].

FOUR[6]

PLAYER 1

JOHN CAGE

0′00″ ↔ 1′15″ 0′55″ ↔ 2′05″

2

0′00″ ↔ 1′30″ 1′00″ ↔ 2′30″

4

1′50″ ↔ 2′35″ 2′20″ ↔ 3′05″

9

2′50″ ↔ 3′35″ 3′20″ ↔ 4′05″

11

3′00″ ↔ 4′00″ 3′40″ ↔ 4′40″

5

3′40″ ↔ 4′55″ 4′35″ ↔ 5′45″

8

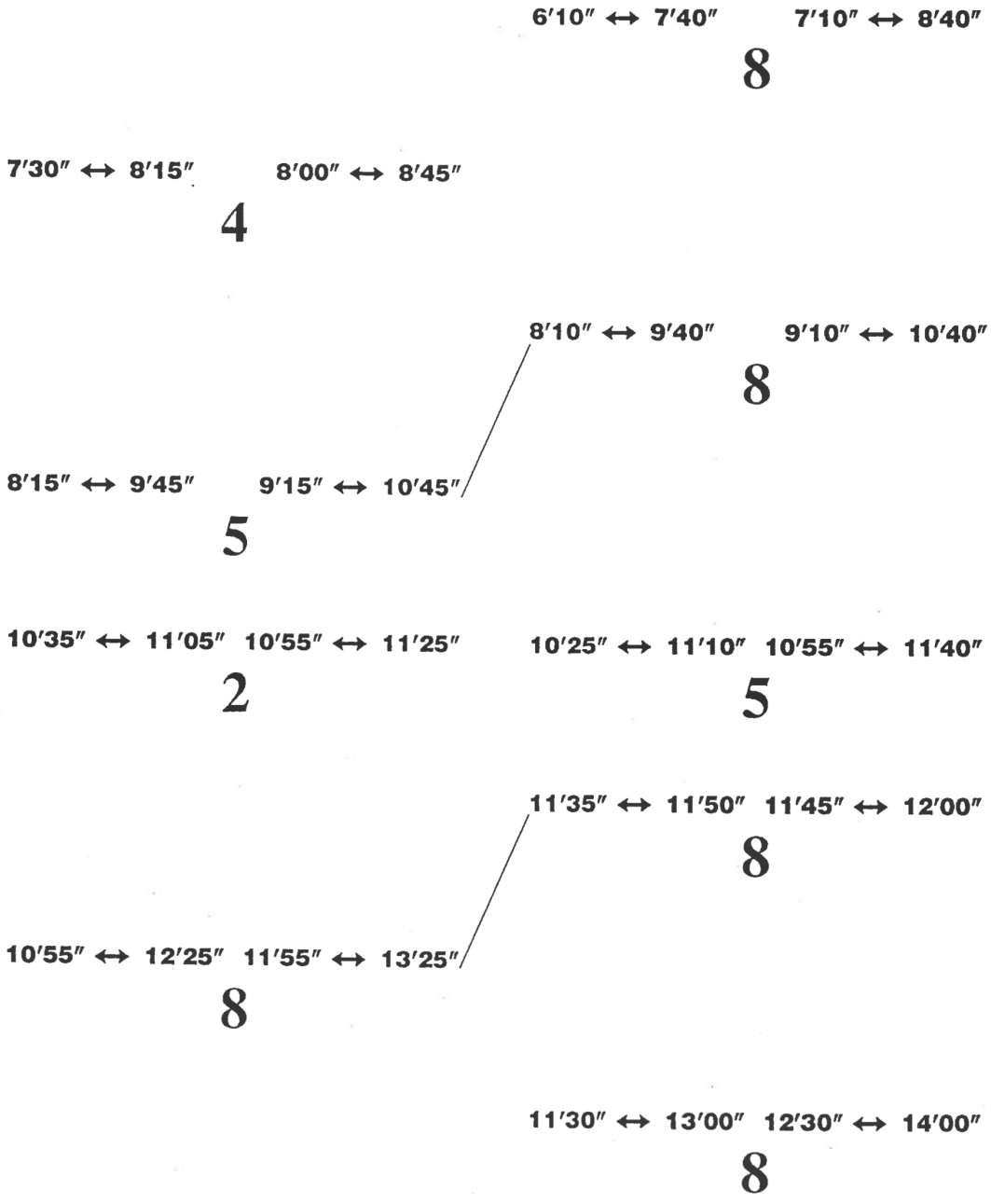
4′10″ ↔ 5′40″ 5′10″ ↔ 6′40″

2

5′15″ ↔ 6′45″ 6′15″ ↔ 7′45″

8

2 PLAYER 1


6′10″ ↔ 7′40″
7′10″ ↔ 8′40″
8
7′30″ ↔ 8′15″
8′00″ ↔ 8′45″
4
8′10″ ↔ 9′40″
9′10″ ↔ 10′40″
8
8′15″ ↔ 9′45″
9′15″ ↔ 10′45″
5
10′35″ ↔ 11′05″
10′55″ ↔ 11′25″
2
10′25″ ↔ 11′10″
10′55″ ↔ 11′40″
5
11′35″ ↔ 11′50″
11′45″ ↔ 12′00″
8
10′55″ ↔ 12′25″
11′55″ ↔ 13′25″
8
11′30″ ↔ 13′00″
12′30″ ↔ 14′00″
8

PLAYER 1 3

13′20″ ↔ 13′35″ 13′30″ ↔ 13′45″

7

13′20″ ↔ 14′35″ 14′15″ ↔ 15′25″

6

13′35″ ↔ 14′50″ 14′30″ ↔ 15′40″

7

15′20″ ↔ 15′35″ 15′30″ ↔ 15′45″

2

15′35″ ↔ 16′05″ 15′55″ ↔ 16′25″

7

15′20″ ↔ 16′20″ 16′00″ ↔ 17′00″

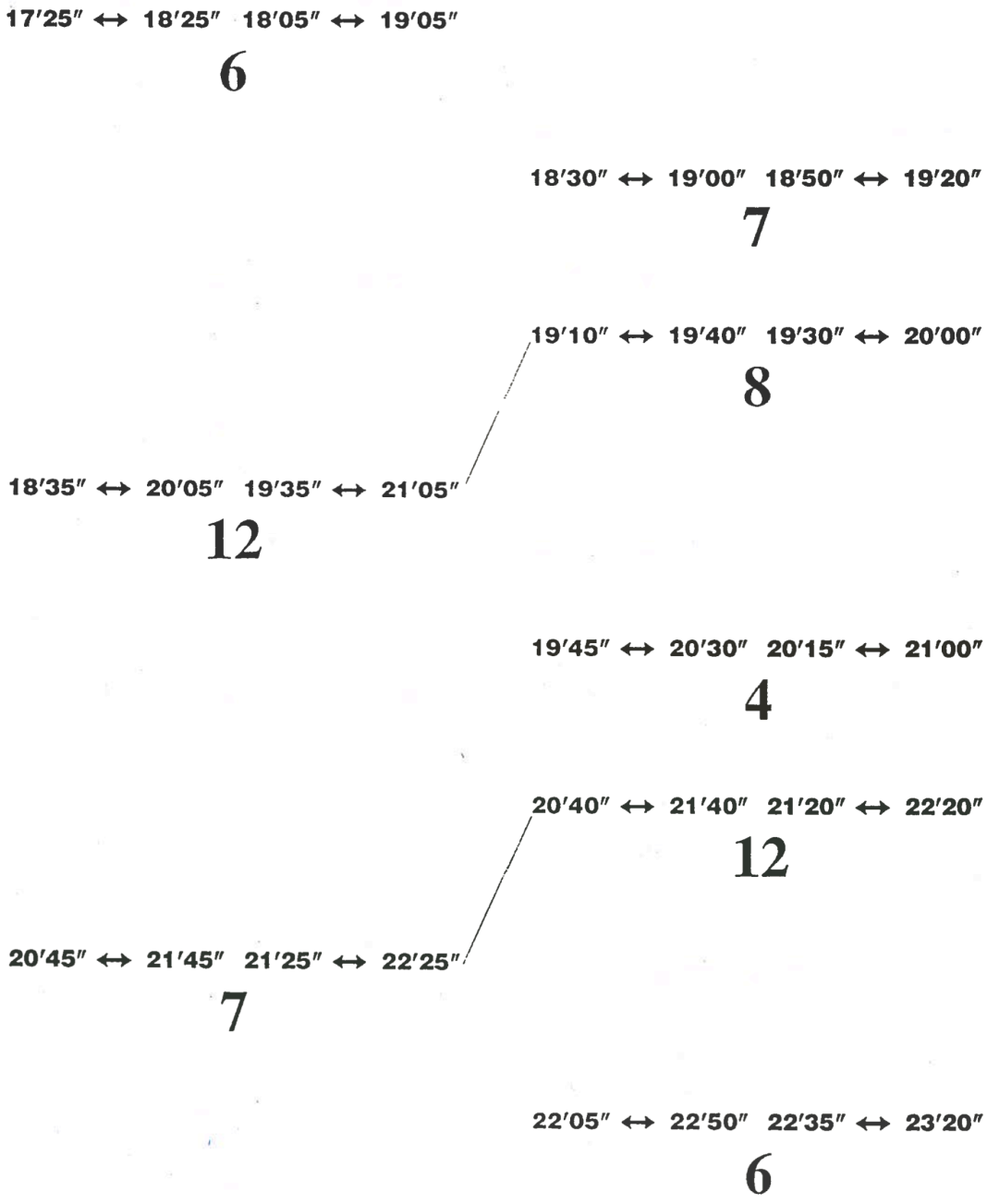
8

16′05″ ↔ 17′05″ 16′45″ ↔ 17′45″

3

16′35″ ↔ 17′50″ 17′30″ ↔ 18′40″

8


17′25″ ↔ 18′25″ 18′05″ ↔ 19′05″
6
18′30″ ↔ 19′00″ 18′50″ ↔ 19′20″
7
19′10″ ↔ 19′40″ 19′30″ ↔ 20′00″
8
18′35″ ↔ 20′05″ 19′35″ ↔ 21′05″
12
19′45″ ↔ 20′30″ 20′15″ ↔ 21′00″
4
20′40″ ↔ 21′40″ 21′20″ ↔ 22′20″
12
20′45″ ↔ 21′45″ 21′25″ ↔ 22′25″
7
22′05″ ↔ 22′50″ 22′35″ ↔ 23′20″
6

PLAYER 1 5

22′10″ ↔ 23′40″ 23′10″ ↔ 24′40″

12

23′00″ ↔ 24′00″ 23′40″ ↔ 24′40″

7

24′15″ ↔ 25′30″ 25′10″ ↔ 26′20″

5

24′10″ ↔ 25′40″ 25′10″ ↔ 26′40″

3

25′55″ ↔ 27′10″ 26′50″ ↔ 28′00″

9

26′15″ ↔ 27′30″ 27′10″ ↔ 28′20″

7

27′35″ ↔ 28′50″ 28′30″ ↔ 29′40″

5

28′05″ ↔ 28′50″ 28′35″ ↔ 29′20″

5

29′10″ ↔ 29′40″ 29′30″ ↔ 30′00″

8

29′35″ ↔ 29′50″ 29′45″ ↔ 30′00″

11

Appendix 3 Bjørn Thomas Melhus, *U – The Play: a story of three movements.* (2007)

U - the play: a story of three movements

A piece for 6 musicians/instruments, Instrument I must be piano, Instrument V must be a wind Instrument. It is an advantage if some of the other Instruments are polyphonic. The piano may well be prepared, but must have some strings that are not affected by the preparation.

The piece may be performed by 4 or 5 musicians. If it is performed by four musicians, the Instrument II and V or Instrument III and IV can be omitted. If the work is performed by five musicians, Instrument IV is omitted.

The piece examines different distributions of resources, and possible consequences of that.
Actual resources may be:
pitch
duration
number of notes one totaly can play in each movement
dynamics
breaks
melody
"Effects"
polyphony

I - Utopia:

All musicians have almost the same amount of material to play and interaction/cooperation/harmony prevails. It must be beautiful and fragile, all musicians should think about giving each other space. It should nevertheless be a growing tension in the air ...
The movement is finished when all have played all number of notes available. All musicians try to stop at the same time. This is though not the main focus, just a part of the interaction. How many times within the framework of the total number of notes you play each note, is optional.

In addition to the notes listed below every musician once during this movement have access to the notes E - F # - G - H (each note only once, a total of four). These are in addition to the given total tones. Each musician chooses when to play them, but coherence and harmony are important in this movement.

Instrument I (piano):
Available notes: D - E - F - A - H in all octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 10
Total number of tones in this movement: 50

20 of tones can be strummed with your fingers directly on the strings, 5 of these should be mainly percussive. The remaining notes are to be played on the keyboard.

Instrument II:
Available notes: Eb - G - Ab - C in all octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 1
Total number of tones in this movement: 35

If possible on your instrument, you have the opportunity to within each specified tone to play all tones that lies between one quarter down and one quarter up. You can play the way you want to when it comes to coloring.

Instrument III:
Available notes: C # - E - Gb - Ab - Bb - H in a maximum of three octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 1
Total number of tones in this movement: 30

If possible on your instrument, you have the opportunity to within each specified tone to play all tones that lies between one quarter down and one quarter up. You can play the way you want to when it

Instrument IV:
Available notes: F - F # - Bb - H in all octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 2
Total number of tones in this movement: 40

If possible on your instrument, you have the opportunity to within each specified tone to play all tones that lies between one quarter down and one quarter up. You can play the way you want to when it comes to coloring.

Instrument V (wind instrument)
Available notes: C - C # - E - G - Ab in all octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 1
Total number of tones in this movement: 25

If possible on your instrument, you have the opportunity to within each specified tone to play all tones that lies between one quarter down and one quarter up. You can play the way you want to when it comes to coloring.

Instrument VI:
Available notes: D - Eb - G - A in a maximum of four octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 3
Total number of tones in this movement: 45

If possible on your instrument, you have the opportunity to within each specified tone to play all tones that lies between one quarter down and one quarter up. You can play the way you want to when it comes to coloring.

II - Unrest and doom:

Unequal distribution of tone material, those with much tend to "over run" those with less / little.

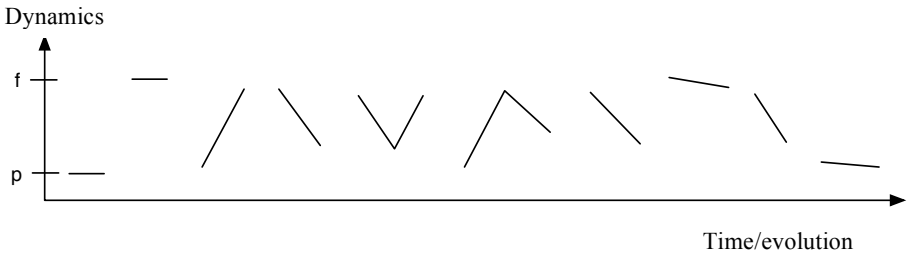
Instrument I: Basically no pre-determined material, but very clever to snap up, take over and develop motifs/themes from other musicians
Instrument II - V: Restricted materials, few opportunities, little freedom.
Instrument VI: Much raw material, but does not get utilized it fully because Instrument I will take over development.

Instrument I (piano):
Available notes: tones you snap up from other Instruments' themes
Maximum simultaneous tones: unlimited
Total number of tones in this movement: Infinite

You should pick up motifs/themes from what the other musicians play, and develop these further. Especially Instrument VI will begin motifs that you will develop, but you are not allowed to listen only to Instrument VI. You want to snap up as many motifs as possible, preferably at the same time, to get the greatest possible self-development. Once you have taken hold of a motif/theme from one of the others, it is you who should develop it further. You are constantly on the alert for new motifs/themes from the others that you can develop further, but you should not stop and wait/hesitate. You are allowed to take breaks, but these must gradually be fewer and shorter. There are two events that mean you must stop playing: 1) when Instrument VI does not come with any new motifs/themes, you should play 10 tones (two or three simultaneous notes in each cord) before you stop playing, or 2) if three of the other instruments stop playing (but Instrument VI still carries on), you play a chord with 7 different tones 3 times as hard as you can before you stop playing. The last notes should be played with the sustain pedal down, to ring as long as possible.
If any of the other musicians are still playing when the sound from your piano stops, you walk off stage - if not, you remain seated.

Instrument II:
Available notes: 2 - C and F (within the same octave)
Maximum simultaneous tones: one
Total number of tones in this movement: 10

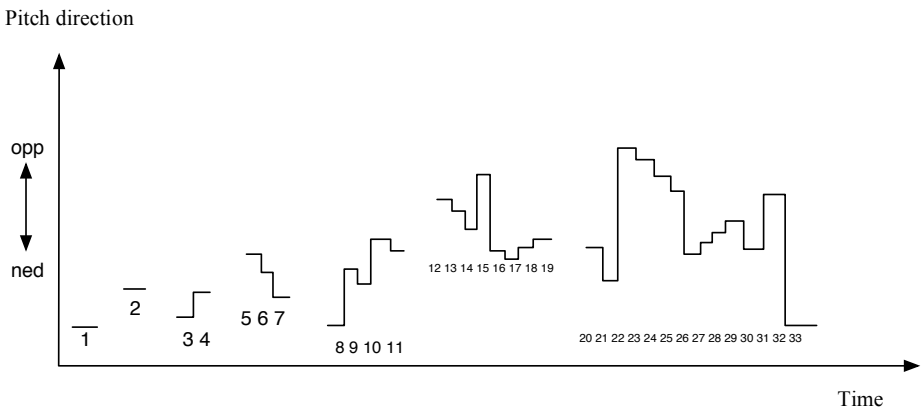
Try to adjust your play to Instrument I. Each tone played must last at least 10 seconds, but max 30 seconds. You are allowed to take breaks as long as you want between each tone, but the playing of Instrument I shall somehow affect you. Each tone has to be played with different "effect" as vibrato, flutter, pizzicato etc. A trill between the two tones is considered one tone. It may be a dynamic development in each tone, and also between the different tones, but the dynamics must always lie within the range p - f. The dynamic process is indicated in the graph below. Note that this does not indicate length of either tones or pauses, only dynamics.
After playing 10 tones, stop playing. If Instrument I is still playing, you walk off stage – if not you remain seated.



Instrument III:
Available notes: 3 optional in each octave within the instrument registry
Maximum simultaneous tones: one
Total number of tones in this movement: 33

Try to adjust your playing to the other instruments, except Instrument I. Half of the notes you play will be short, strong and aggressive, the rest should be long, soft, yearning and reflective. You choose the order of short and long tones yourself. The distribution between playing and breaks are provided by the Fibbonacci-series: 1-1-2-3-5-8-13. I.e. you play a tone, pause, tone, pause, two tones, pause, three tones, pause, five tones, pause, eight tones, pause, thirteen tones. You will then have played a total of 33 tones, and stop playing. If Instrument I is still playing, you walk off stage - if not you remain seated. When you pause, it should last until 5 seconds after Instrument II has begun playing again.

The graph below indicates if the next note is up or down relative to the previous one. It specifies no specific leap, but there will be an indication of whether you have a large or small leap. The graph indicates neither length of notes nor breaks, but shows how many tones to be played continuously until you pause (also given by the Fibonacci sequence above). You select the dynamic yourself.



Instrument IV:
Available notes: 7 different (optional which ones) spread over three octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: two
Total number of tones in this movement: 21

Each tone can be played only three times during the movement. Concentrate on finding an inner peace and let this shine through the way you play - meditative and inquiring.
After playing 21 tones, stop playing. If Instrument I is still playing, you walk off stage – if not you remain seated.

Instrument V (wind instrument)
Available notes: 2 - C # and E (in different octaves)
Maximum simultaneous tones: one
Total number of tones in this movement: 25

Concentrate on adapting your play to Instrument II. Switch between playing along with Instrument II and trying to surpass/drown it. Each tone shall have duration between 5 to 15 seconds. You will mostly have pauses between each tone, but once during the movement you shall play five notes in a row without a break. You decide when. You also decide the duration of each break, but no break can last longer than a tone or a break in Instrument II.
After playing 25 tones, stop playing. If Instrument I is still playing, you walk off stage – if not you remain seated.

Instrument VI:
Available notes: D - D # - F # - G - Bb - H (optional distributed on two octaves)
Maximum simultaneous tones: 3
Total number of tones in this movement: 50

You should focus on playing/developing interesting motifs/themes. Instrument I will constantly trying to "steal" your material. You should try to prevent this by taking surprising twists so that Instrument I cannot so easily understand the development, but each motif/theme can not be more than 20 tones (but it could contain as few notes as you want, this means of course that it becomes easier for Instrument I to"steal" the motif. You decide the length of each tone, and possibly pauses between, yourself. Because of your limited resources, Instrument I is eventually able to understand and take over the development of the motif/theme. When that happens, you should stop playing, take a10-20 seconds break, and then start a new motif/theme. Your playing should however also try to adapt to Instrument III and IV.
After playing 50 notes, stop playing. If Instrument I is still playing, you walk off stage – if not you remain seated.

III - Infinite:

Those left on stage after movement II, play based on the following criteria (there are specified criteria for all, since it is not predetermined who is left):

Instrument I (piano):
Available notes: C # - D - E - F - Bb A- in all octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 7
Total number of tones in this movement: 21

If you are still on stage, you are the only one. An emptiness will characterize your play. You must play at least a complex chord that uses up 7 of your available tones. Furthermore, the last note you play must be a lower pitch than the first one. Dynamicly your range is pp - mf. The end should be softer than the start, but the dynamics will vary along the way, and it should not only be gradually softer.

Instrument II:
Available notes: An arbitrary tone within the instrument range
Maximum simultaneous tones: 1
Total number of tones in this movement: 7

You will play the same tone 7 times, but only once it shall be perfected. The other notes you play will

be unsuccessful attempt to play this tone. The perfect tone can not be the first or last tone, but apart from that you can choose when it comes. The length of each tone, and the length of the break between each attempt, you choose yourself. The movement should as much as possible adapt to the others who are left.

Instrument III:
Available notes: Only sounds without pitch, percussive sounds
Maximum simultaneous tones: 1
Total number of tones in this movement: 9

You can either play long noisy sounds, or short percussive stuff. What is important is that there is no clear pitch. The movement should be adapted to the others who are left.

Instrument IV:
Available notes: 5 different arbitrary notes spread over two octaves
Maximum simultaneous tones: 2
Total number of tones in this movement: 13

In this movement, hands should switch places, i.e. right hand will do what the left one normally do when you play, and vice versa. Otherwise you may do as you wish, but the movement should be adapted to the others who are left. You must also constantly keep in mind that you have few tones, and need to get the best out of it.

Instrument V (wind instrument)
Available notes: All tones that lies between the two selected in Part II
Maximum simultaneous tones: 1
Total number of tones in this movement: 6

The first tone you play, you should hold as long as you can, until you have no more breath left, and then a little longer, untill the tone spasmodic dies out. The next five notes you play will be played after you have breathed out, and really want to breathe again. It will give a dying and spasmodic feeling to the movement. All the last five notes you play will be lower in pitch than the first one, and a tone should always be lower than the preceding one. The movement shall otherwise be adapted to the playing of the others instruments left.

Instrument VI:
Available notes: The same notes as in movement II (D - D # - F # - G - Bb - H (arbitrarily distributed over two octaves)), but you change octave for all tones (ie tones you played in an octave in movement II, will be played in the second octave you had chosen, and likewise the notes you had chosen in the second octave, played in the first)
Maximum simultaneous tones: 3
Total number of tones in this movement: 15

In this movement you should begin on a motif/theme/development, but not finish it. The movement should be incomplete. This is among other things due to that you have a very limited number of tones, and it is important not to use them too fast. The movement should be adapted to the other instruments left.

Appendix 4 Else Olsen S., *Lotto* (2010)

Lotto was published together with the cd-recording *Lotto S.E.L.* in 2010, recorded together with Sigyn Fossnes, violin (N). The recording also includes works by Cornelius Cardew, Pauline Oliveros, and Christian Wolff.

The publication is in Norwegian. Below is an English version of the information and instructions given in the cd booklet. The text on the lotto cards is not translated, however.

Lotto.

A game for two or more players

Containing:
24 lotto cards
1 play board (map)

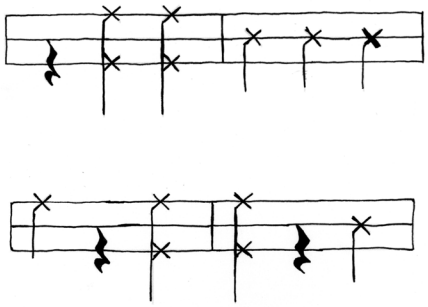
Instructions for playing:
It's is possible to play with only one player if no one else is able to join.
Fold out the play board. Place all the lotto cards with the picture facing down. Pick enough cards to place one on each station on the play board.
Make yourself a bank of ideas for every card that you have picked. And idea could be musical, visual or an action. Practice to perform the cards.

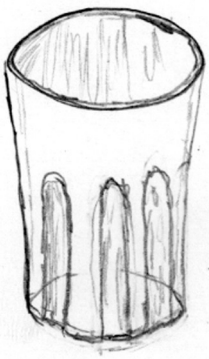
Travel in the play board for as long as the players have decided.

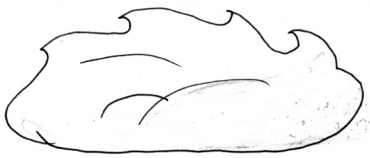
The players can travel in the play board through as few or as many stations as they wish, not depending on where the other players go.

Let unexpected things that happen be part of the game.

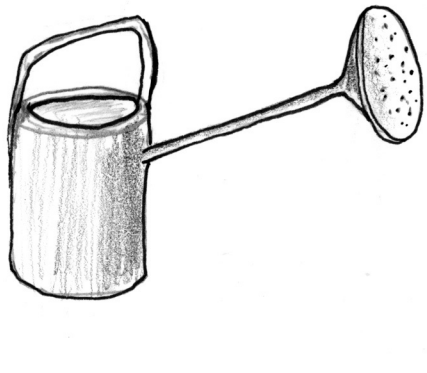
Lotto Cards

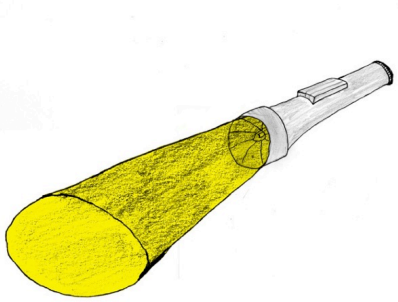






sky





rock ‘n’ roll

pakke inn,
pakke ut

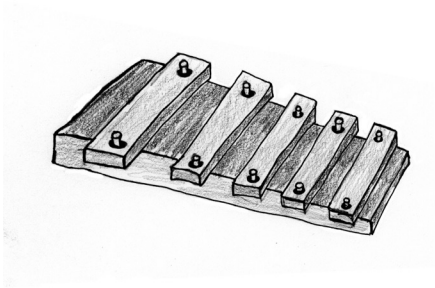
tre

staccato

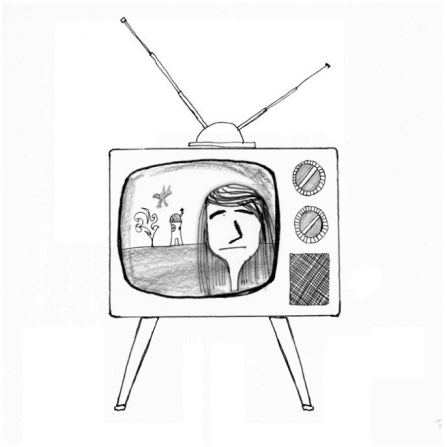
elektrisitet

d-moll
fin sang

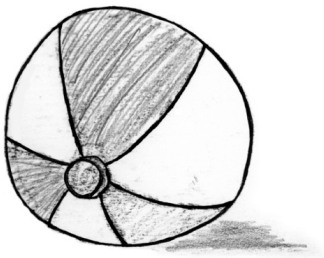
plystre



metall



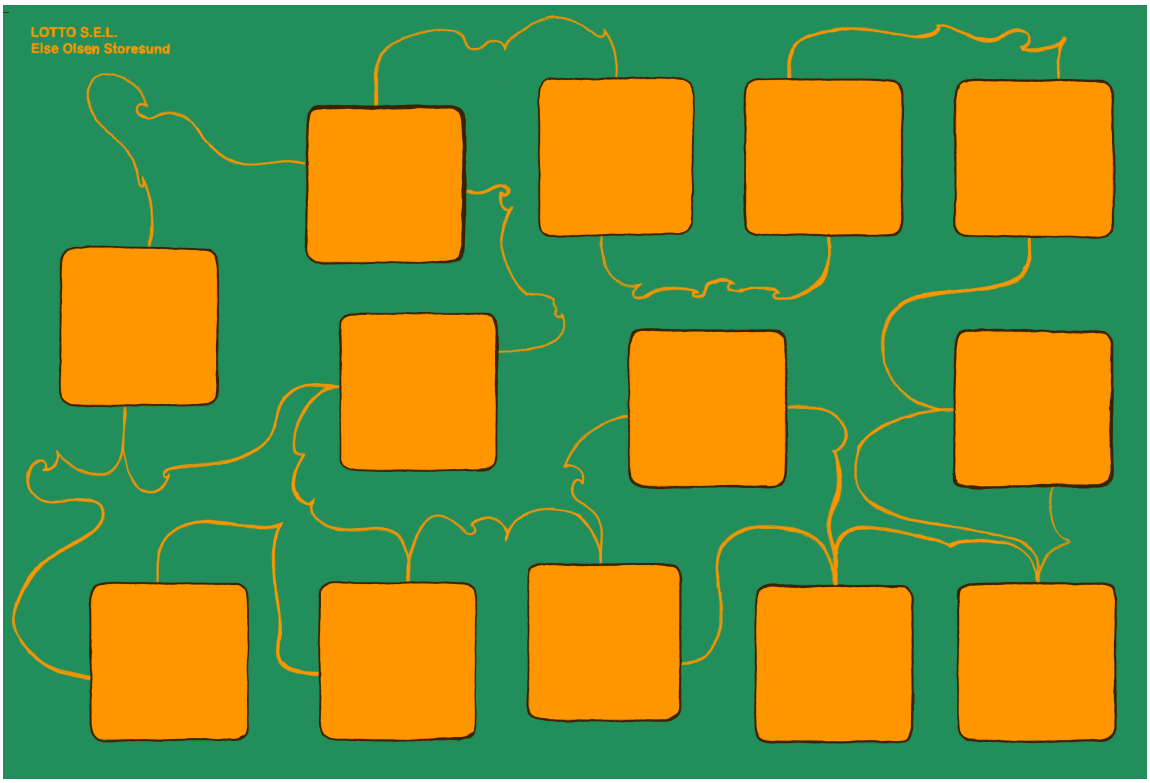
talkie walkie



hviske

danse

Play Board (map)



Appendix 5 Christian Wolff, *Brooklyn*, (2015).

Some remarks: Tempo indications occur some places in the work, but are not marked on the score. These places are:

Pages 9 – 10: ♩ = ca. 80

Pages 11 – 13, 'tutti': ♩ = ca. 84

Pages 14: ♩ = 80-90. Everyone will have the same tempo and play homophonically.

B R O O K L Y N (for 6 or more players)

Instrumentation is open.

Where no clefs are written, read in either treble or bass , or any other, and any transposition (Bb, F etc.). Basses and piccolo many read as written (sounding octave down or up) and also, ad lib., play notes at concert pitch (in treble or bass). Players may shift octaves where there are unusual difficulties or lack of range; notes in a phrase may also be omitted. These conditions can apply varyingly, to any note at any time.

𝄽 = a pause of possibly widely varying duration.

For melody instruments not able to play chords, the chords can be played as grace notes to one of the notes of the chord (the direction of the grace note(s), up or down or both, and the choice, among notes of the chord, of decorated note are free).

If there is percussion: can use pitched instruments, but if there is a percussion clef (𝄥), use non-specifically pitched sounds. Generally the notes on the stave at the top (top two lines and spaces) call for metal; the ones at the bottom (bottom two lines, spaces) call for skin; in between use wood and/or material other than metal or skin. The higher a note, the higher the pitch. This notation is flexible, that is, a note on a given line need not always call for the same sound, unless the note is successively repeated. Sharps and flats before notes may be ignored, or used to indicate a (small) modification of the sound.
A prepared piano could also be used for percussion., and non-percussion players may play passages marked with percussion clef, or implying percussion (e.g. there are only white notes, without sharps or flats), either using percussive sounds or reading the notes as pitches, or a combination of both.

Tempi when not specified are free, and those specified are suggestions.

The music consists of material for which a plan of use must be made. Not all the material needs to be used for any given performance.

Pages 1- 6 make up a unit. Each page may be assigned to or chosen by one of six players; then all play within the same approximate overall time frame. If there are more than six players, the additional players each choose a page (whose playing is then freely doubled, that is, the two (or more) playing from that page proceed independently, more or less heterophonically. The material on a page may also be divided between two or more players (e.g. one player plays first four lines, another plays the rest). Some of this material may also be repeated, changing instruments or players; having only a smaller number of the players playing, or a larger, etc.

Page 7: a designated number of players (minimum 2), each independently play the numbered items in any sequence. This can be done several times, changing players and/or how many play.

Page 7, lower part: same instructions as for pages 1-6, except that there are six lines to be used instead of six pages.

Page 8, top four lines, (a), (b) and (c) : determine at least one player for (a), one or more pairs for (b) and at least one for (c). Play (a) by itself; then (b) plus (c), then (a) plus (b).
(b): open notes are of free duration, black notes are variously short. Vertical lines = play simultaneously, start and stop; angled lines = one sound follows directly on the previous one (no pause between), as in hocketing.

Page 8, material lower down on this page: the first two lines are a solo for an instrument reading bass clef. Optional: this material may be doubled quietly by non-specifically pitched percussion.
Next the bracketed pairs of lines, continuing to the top of page 9: the bass line instrument continues and a second instrument (in any clef/transposition) plays freely at the same time, starting more or less together and aiming to end not too far apart in time.

Pages 9 – 10: at least six play, additional players may double on any line. "Tutti" refers to all players, 6 or more.

Pages 11 – 13, except for the middle two lines on page 12 marked "(tutti)", are material for solo players or possibly, some of the time, for several players playing heterophonically. These solos'(or heterophonic playings) may be accompanied or joined by freely improvised material.

Page 14: divide players into three groups: the first plays A in the given sequence, 1) to 8); the second plays A , each player independently playing 1) to 8) in any sequence; the third plays B (this is particularly for percussion if available), each player playing 1) – 5) in any sequence.
Note that a tempo is given (or can be decided on). The pulse of that tempo should be kept by all players throughout, though spaces marked by wedges (⅄) are of free duration (number of beats).

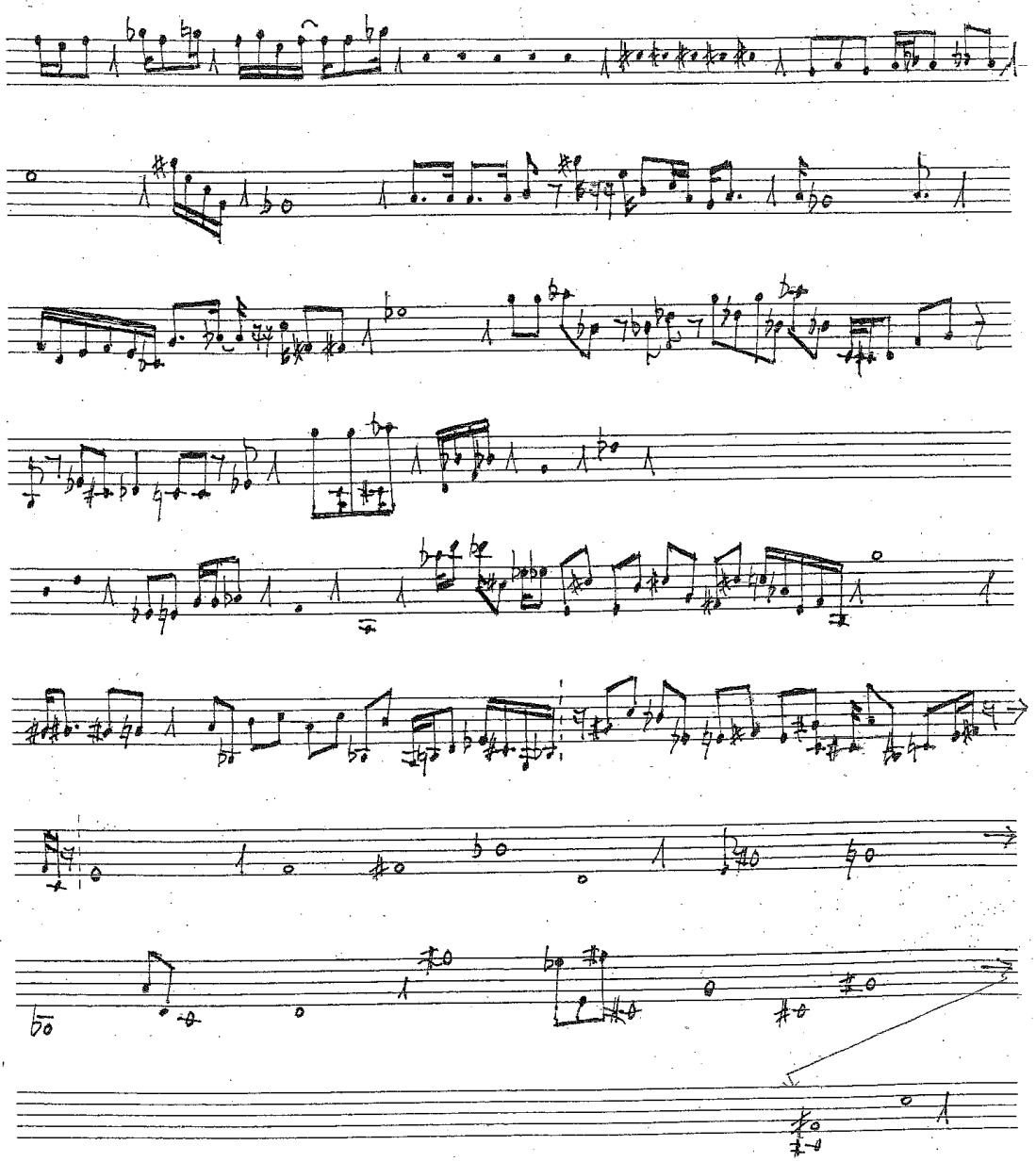
Page 15: coordination, marked by vertical lines, are for starting and stopping together, durations within coordination are free. A tied note continues, that is, holds into the next sound, e.g. the single sound in the 3rd line (after the two opening simultaneous soundings) sustains into the following simultaneous sounding, and in the 4th and 5th lines the sounds sustain beyond the simultaneous sounding.

For Else Olsen Storesund

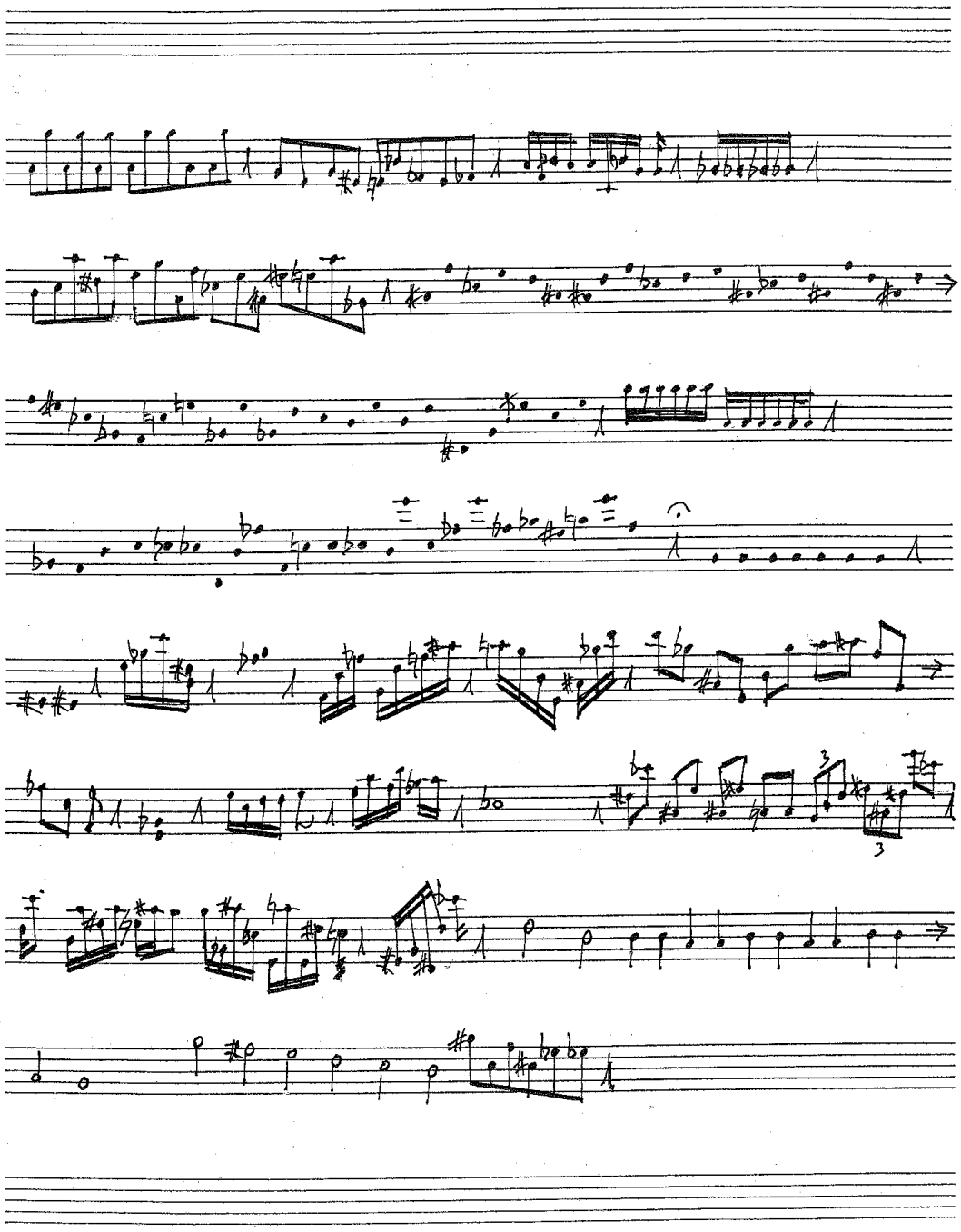
Christian Wolff

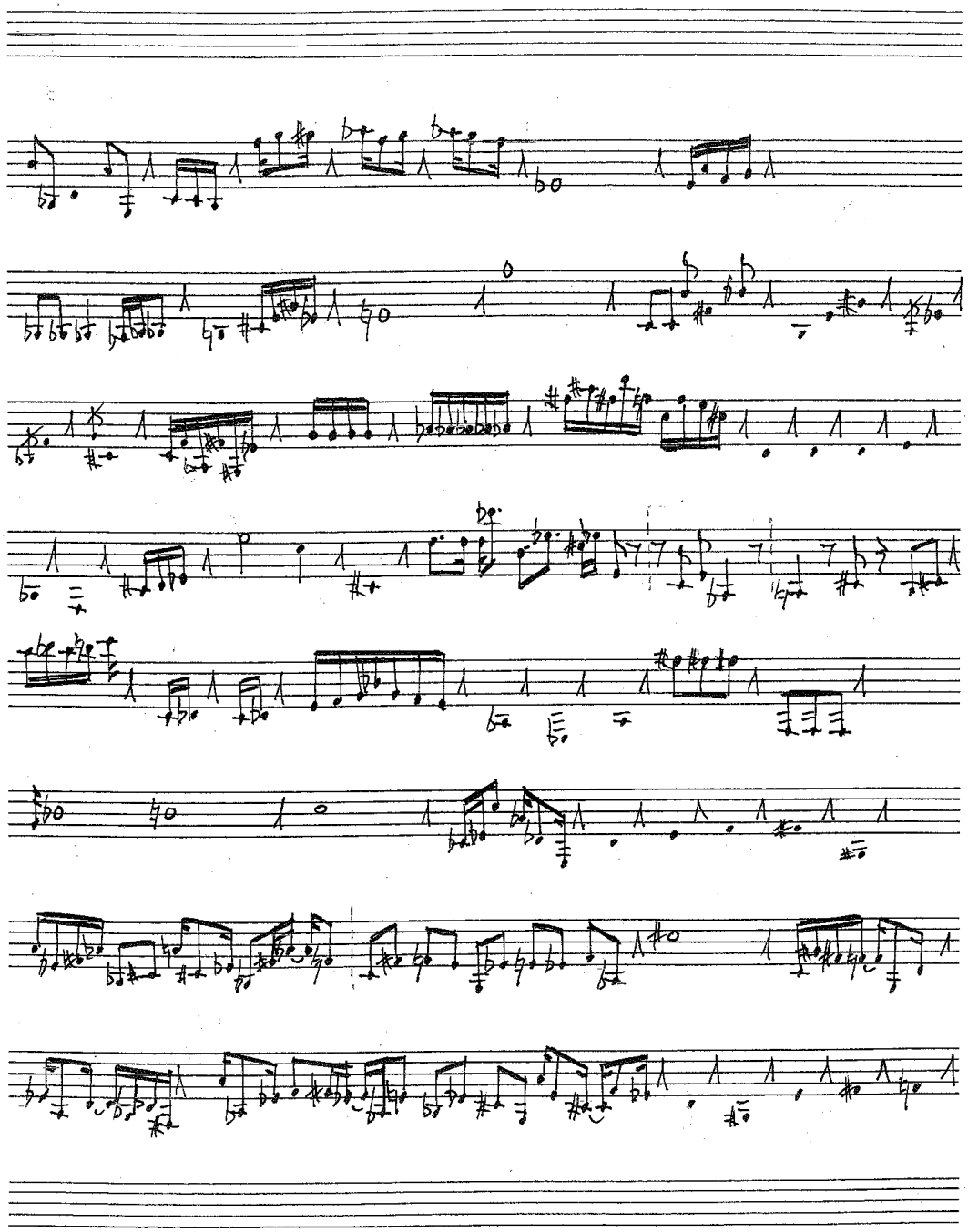
BROOKLYN (FOR 6 OR MORE PLAYERS)

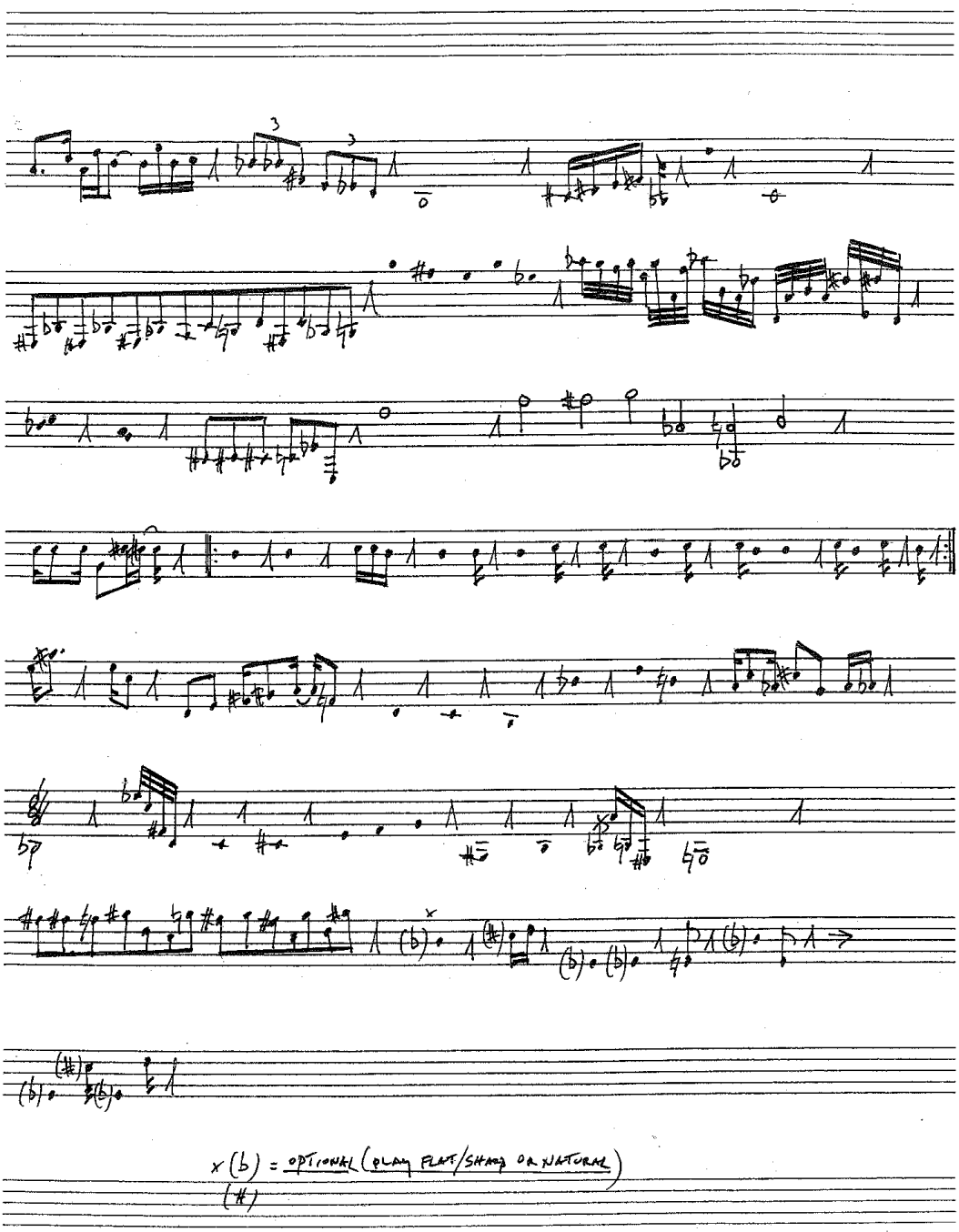
CHRISTIAN WOLFF

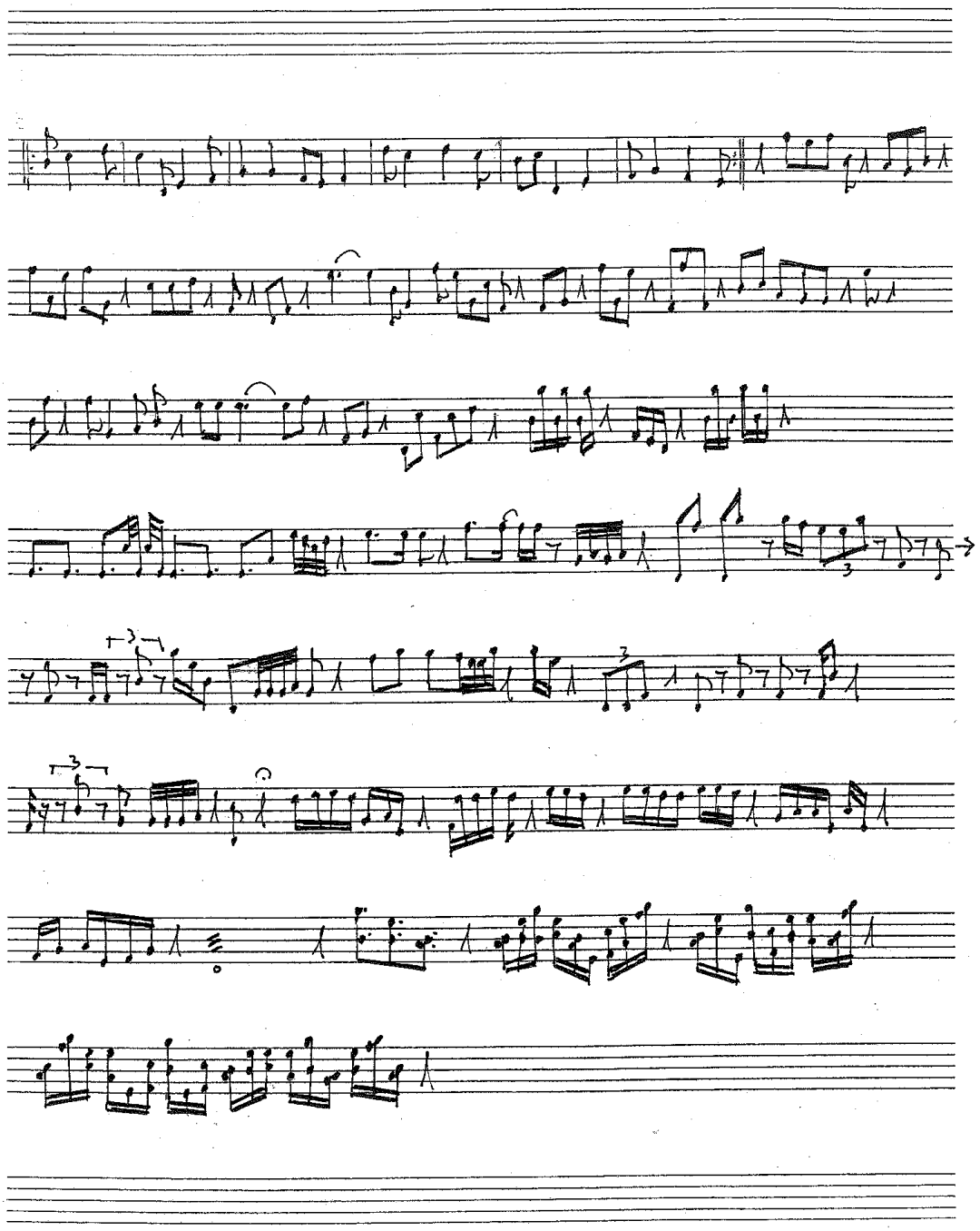


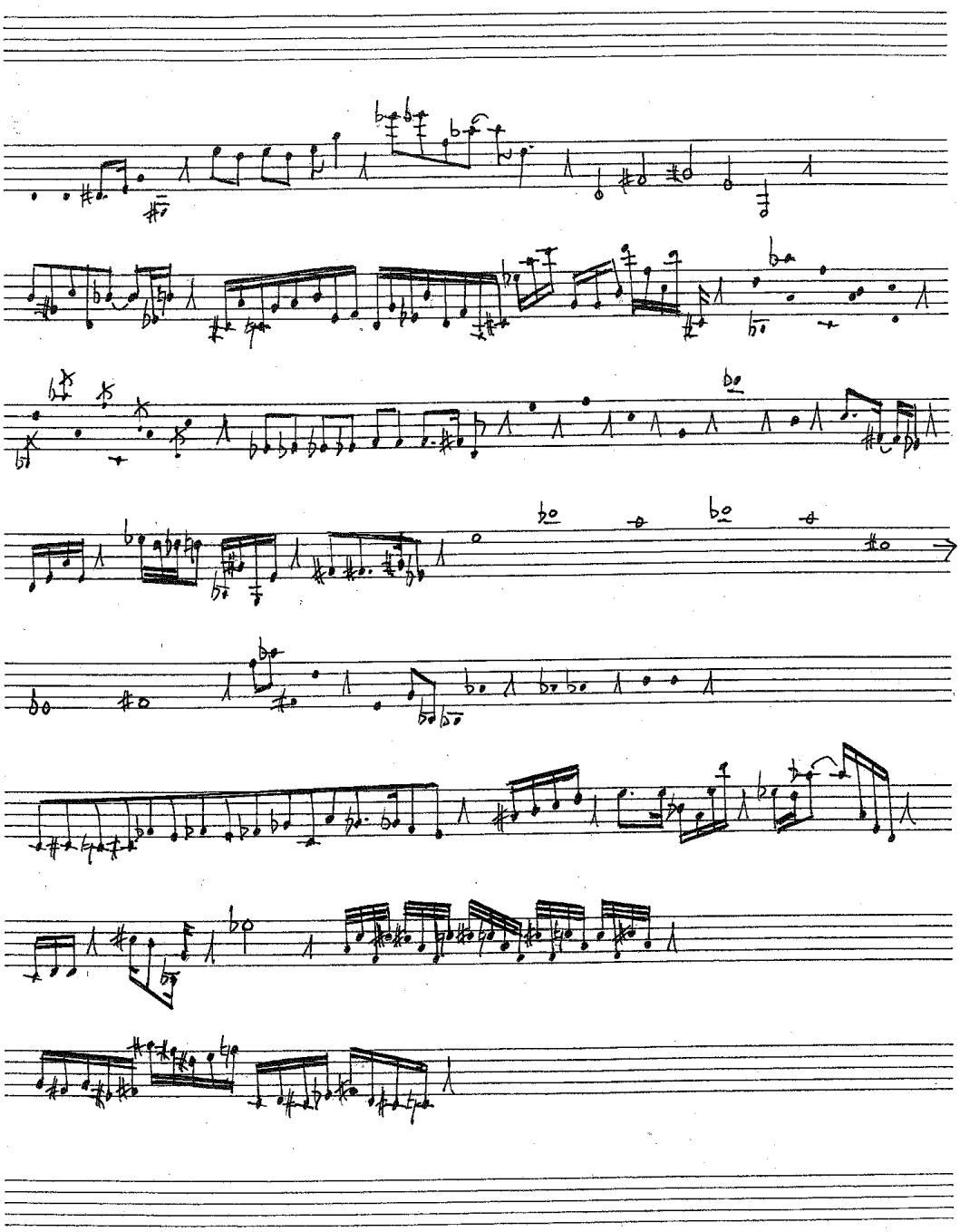
- 1 -

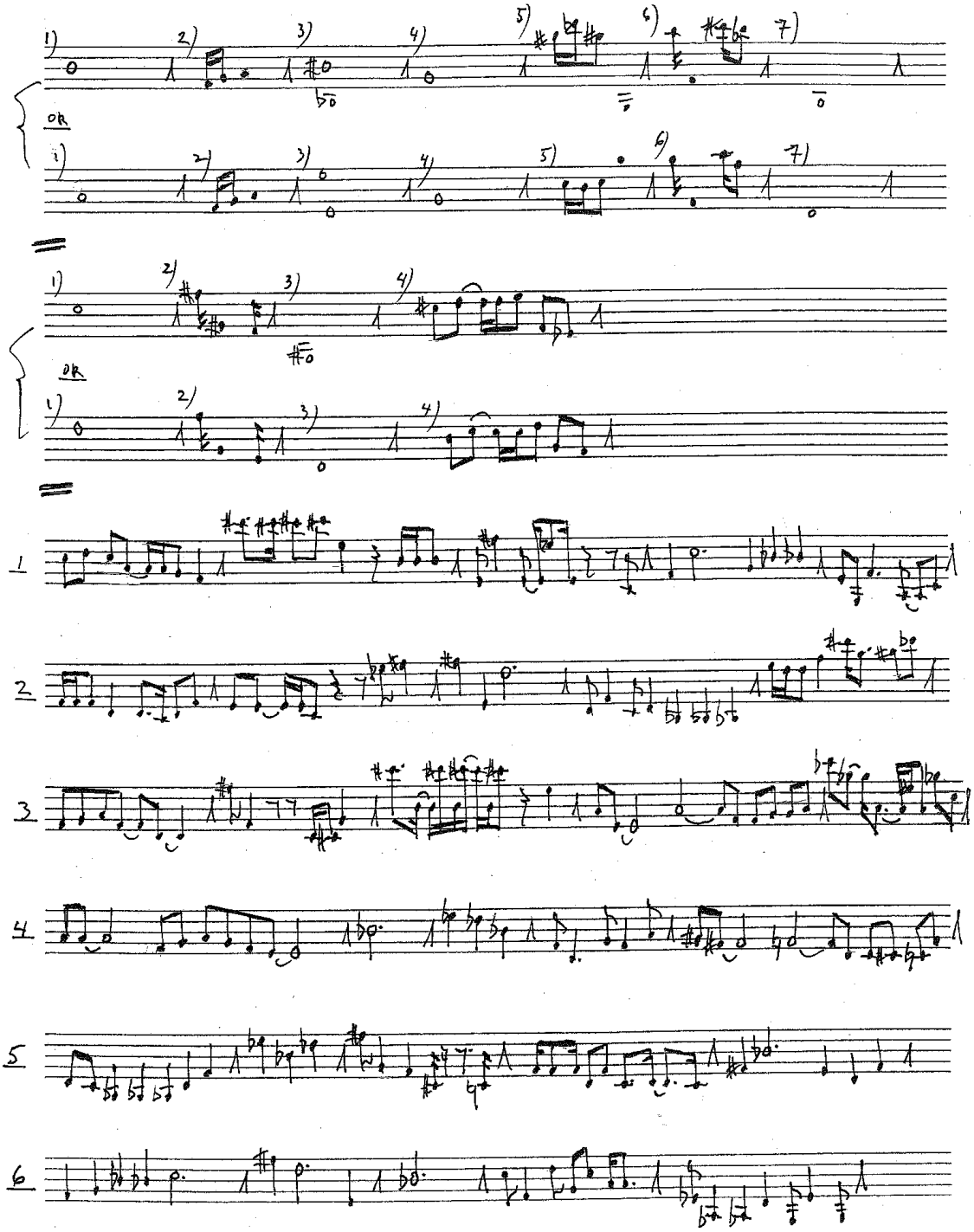


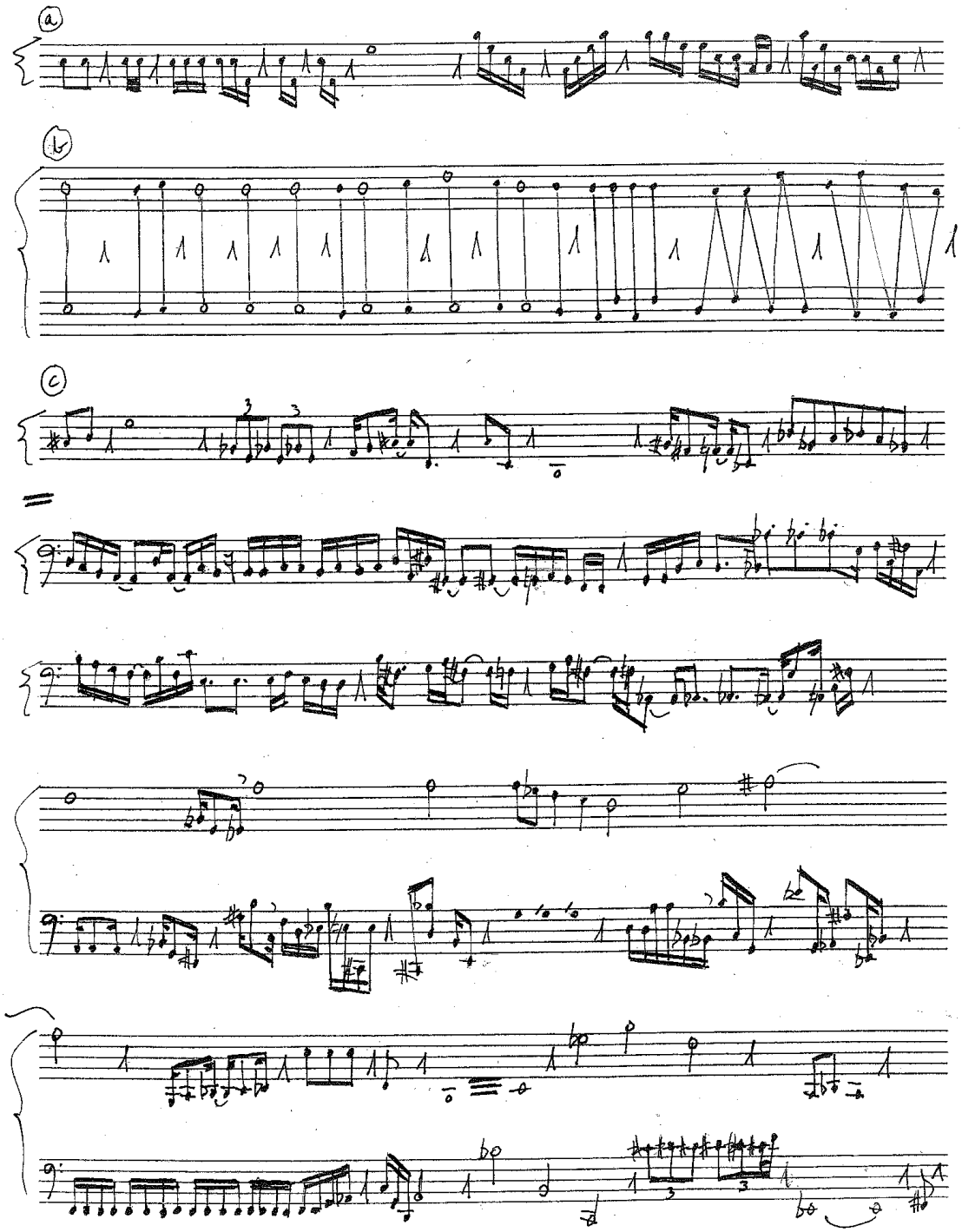


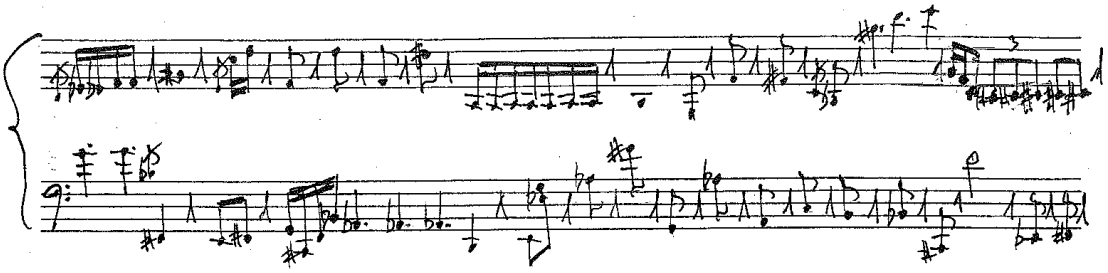

x (b) = OPTIONAL (PLAY FLAT/SHARP OR NATURAL)
(#)

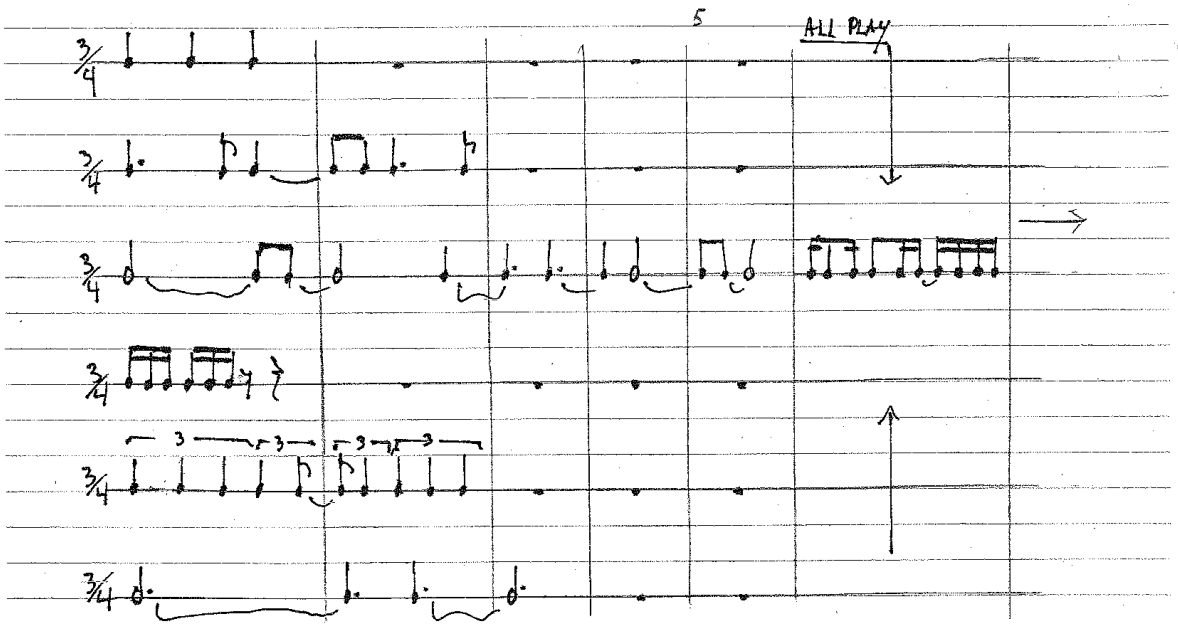


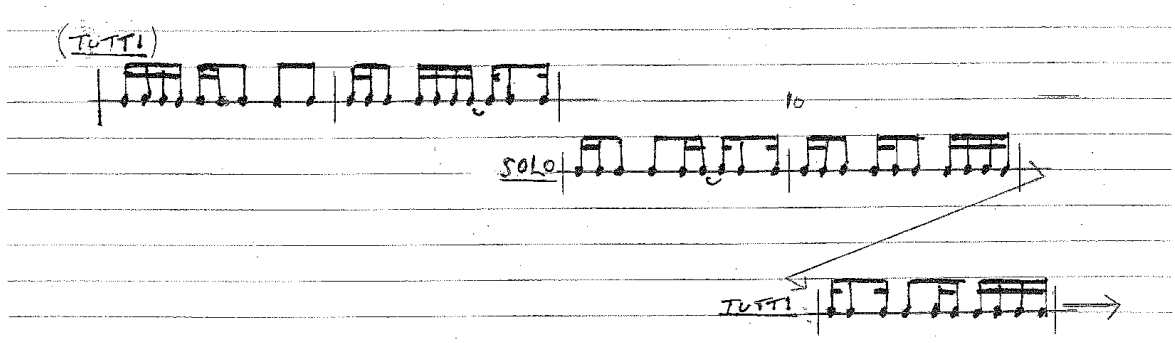


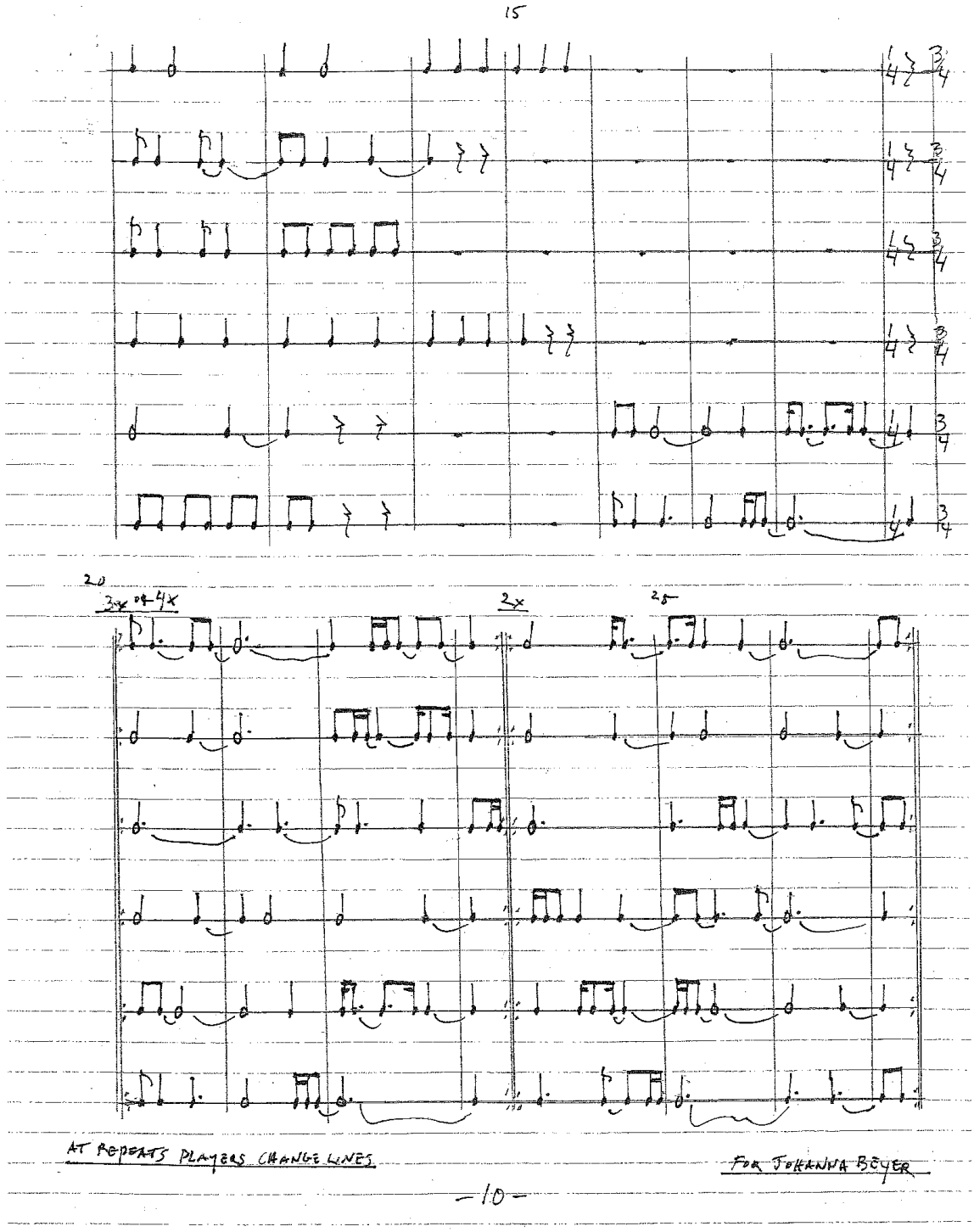

OK
OK
1
2
3
4
5
6

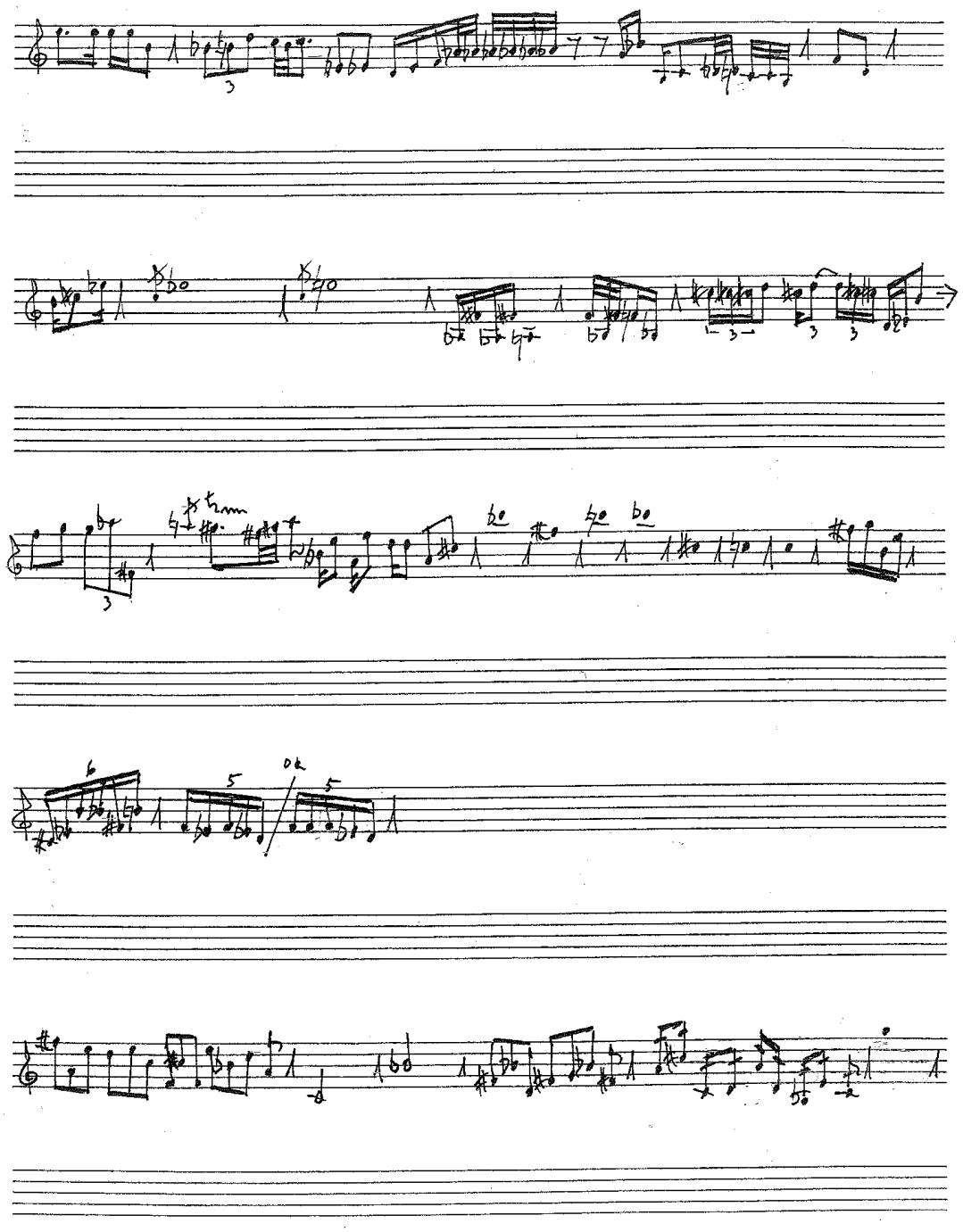


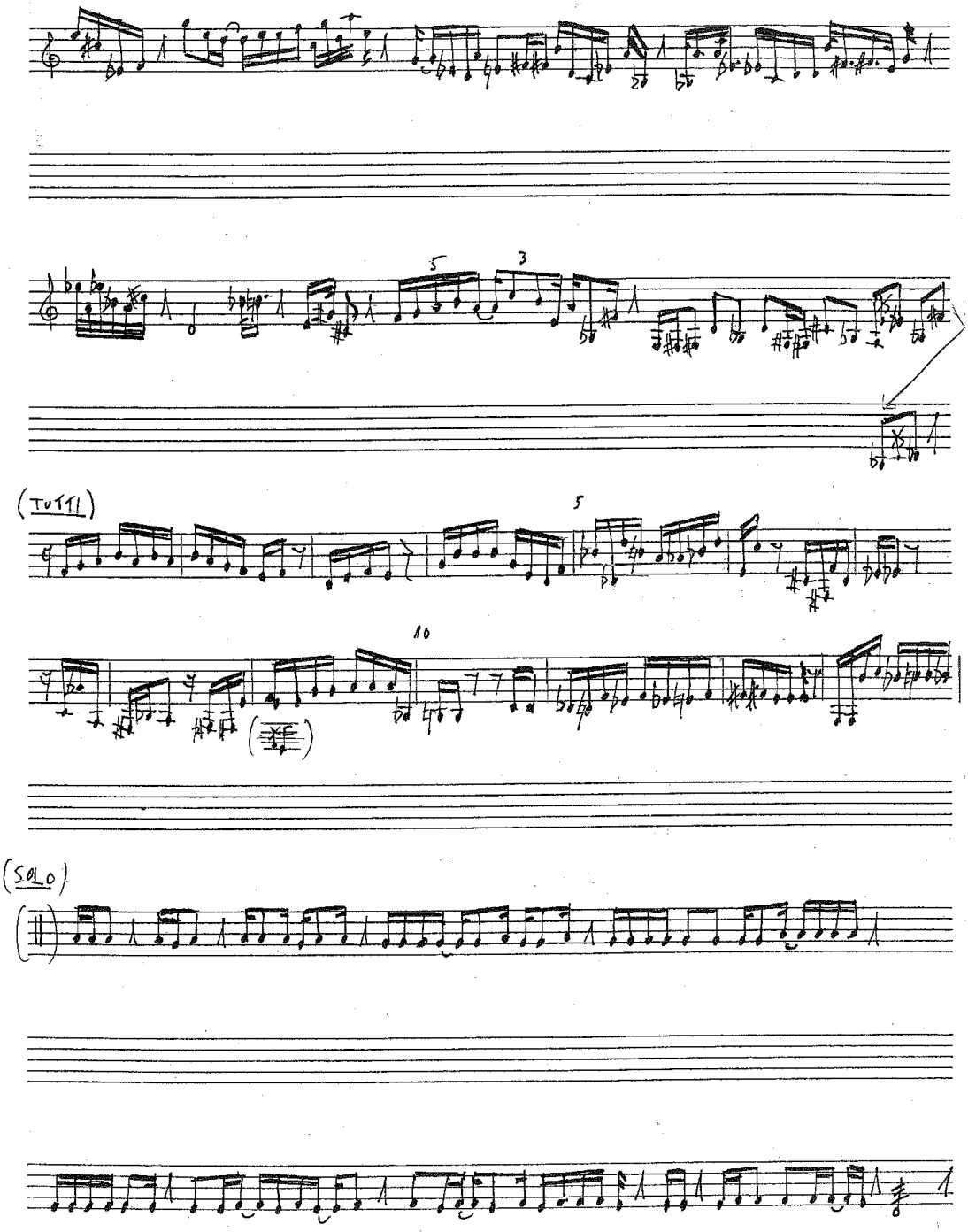


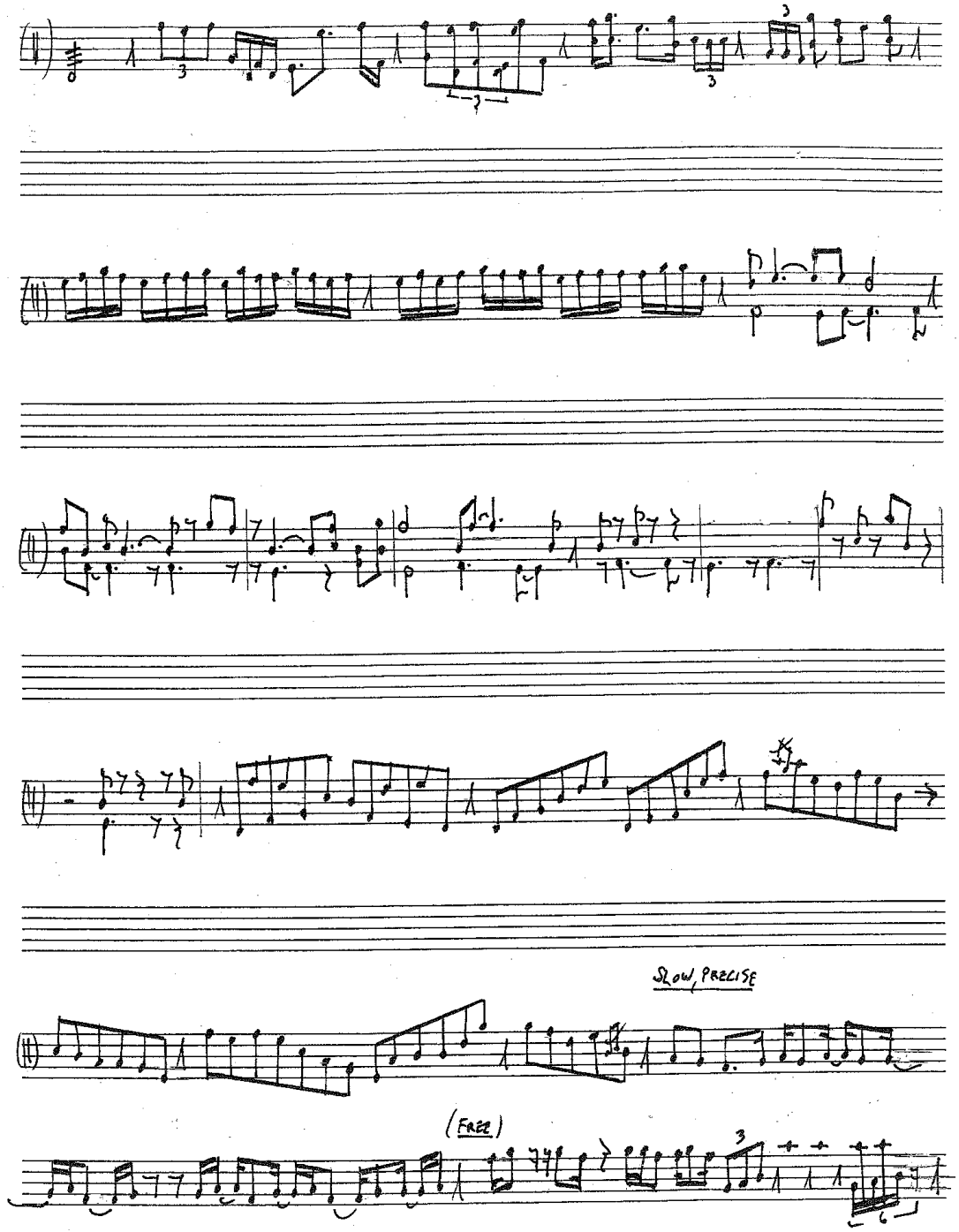

5
ALL PLAY


(TUTTI)
10
SOLO
TUTTI

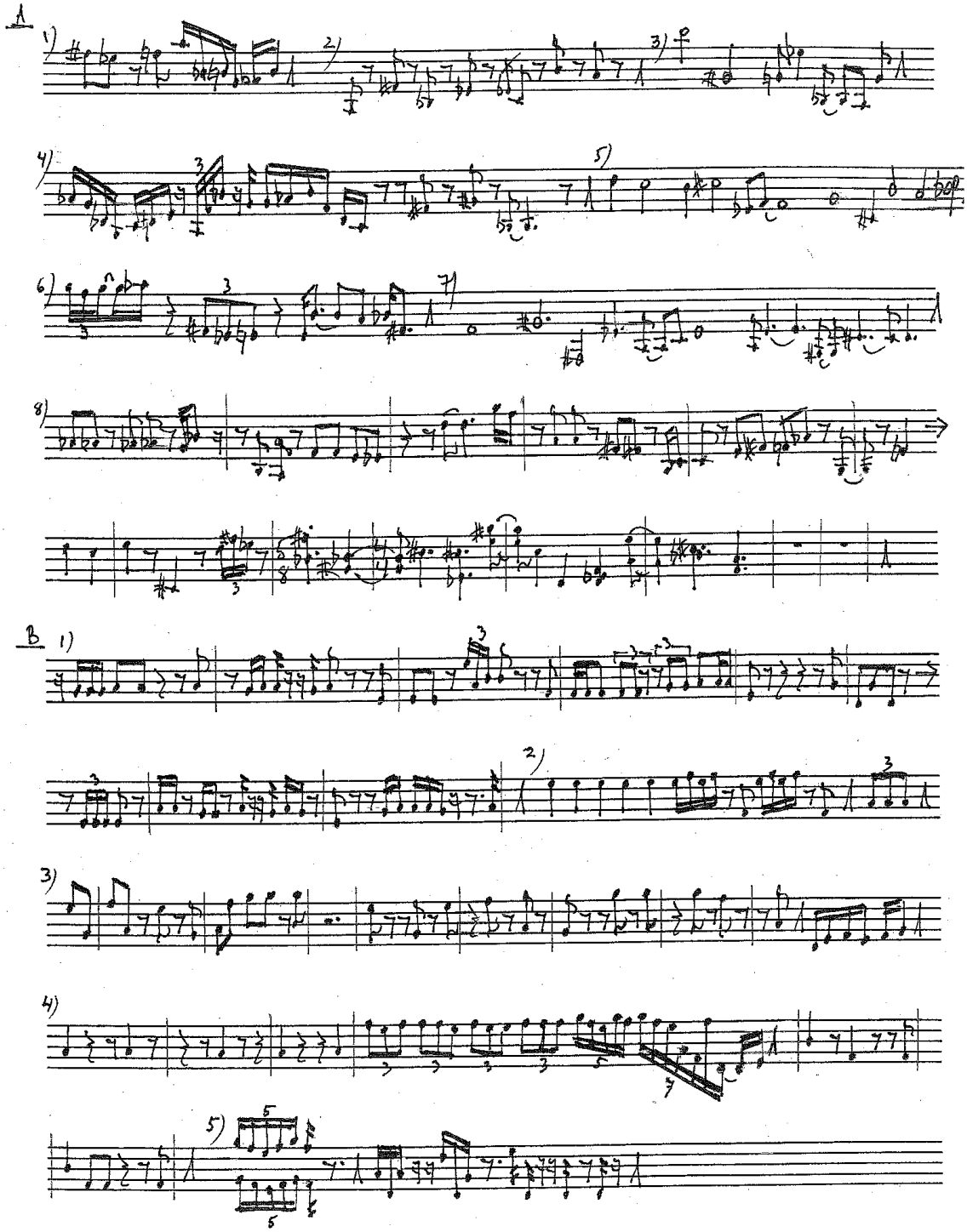

15
20
3x or 4x
2x
25
AT REPEATS PLAYERS CHANGE LINES
FOR JOHANNA BEYER
-10-

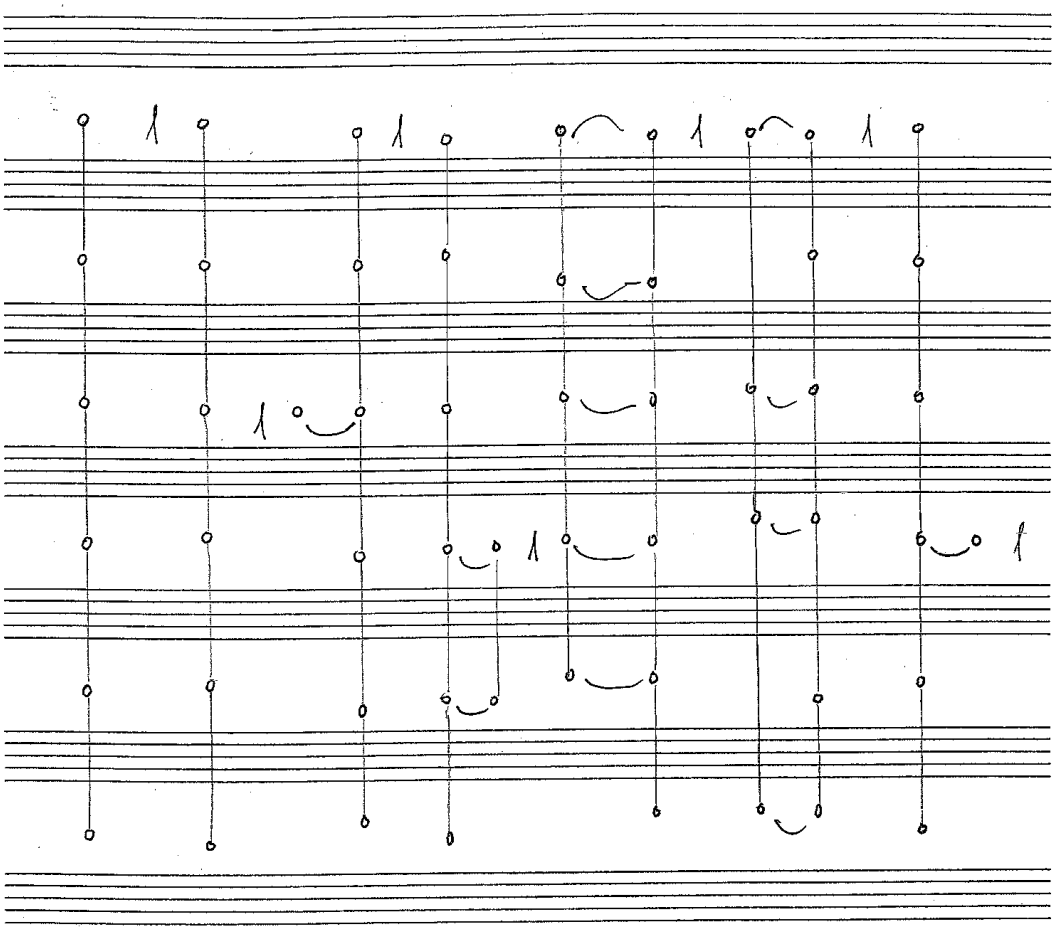



5
3
(TUTTI)
5
10
(SOLO)



- 13 -


A
1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)
8)
B
1)
2)
3)
4)
5)



ii.12.15

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