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Symphonie pour une Femme Seule

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SYMPHONIE POUR UNE FEMME SEULE

Score?

SYMPHONIE POUR UNE FEMME SEULE

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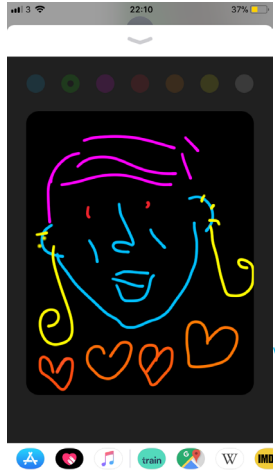
9 audio files for the Improvisors: *soissurA1.mp3* to *soissurC3.mp3*

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(None of the things written in blue need to be read in order to perform the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*.)



Gaia, phone-painted by the author (2017).

Composed for and premièred by Simon Desbruslais (soloist), Ensemble Fractus and a number of outstanding performers I will list later on.

SYMPHONIE POUR UNE FEMME SEULE

Brice Catherin with Mélissa Garcia Carro,
Irene Gil Lopez, Emilia Giudicelli & Manon Parent

For one trumpet player, improvisors, and free ensemble
with an art installation, performance art & videos

Duration: unknown

To Gaia. Thanks for (almost) everything.



Athena, photographed and phone-painted by the author (2018).

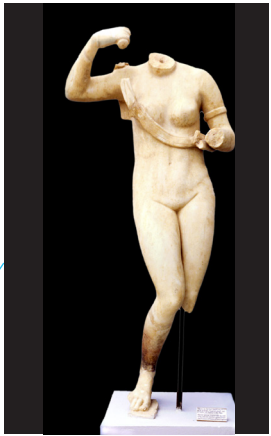
I usually choose titles for very precise, conscious reasons. Not this time.

I wanted to continue the series of portraits/tributes I started with *Галина Ивановна Устольская* (*Galina Ivanovna Ustvol'skaya*) and write a piece called *Pierre Georges Henry*. From any angle you listen to it, Henry's music just screams "freedom" at you: the form, the material, the themes... It escapes analysis, categories and preconceptions of what music should be like. The only problem was that Henry also composed some really bad pieces. Therefore, I could not embrace the entirety of his work the way I can with Ustvol'skaya. Then I thought of the piece of his that started it all: the *Symphonie pour un Homme Seul*, which you may translate as *Symphony for One Single Man* as well as *Symphony for a Lonely Man*. What a marvellously melancholic title, but also an ironic one: there are two men behind this piece, Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer. Melancholy and irony? I liked that, and I stole the title. (Besides the fact that their *Symphonie* is an actual masterpiece.)

I then changed its gender rather intuitively. (I consider intuition to be the artist's best friend — together with dark chocolate, preferably from Sebastien Brocard, 9bis, rue de Lyon, in Saint-Germs Pouilly, France.) Two months later, though, it's pretty clear that this has happened as the logical, unconscious continuation of the series of projects I have been working on for the past year and a half around the mythical figure and de facto patron saint of feminism, the Parthenos (ἡ Παρθένος).

In his book *Woman and Myth*, the ethnopsychiatrist Georges Devereux demonstrates that the word *παρθένος* (*parthenos*), usually translated as "virgin", was actually referring during the proto-Hellenist period to any woman who was not submitted to a masculine authority, any woman living her sexuality and her life freely. Later, upset by this archetype contradicting their radically patriarchal social structure, the Greeks reversed its meaning into a myth of virginity, probably inventing, together with democracy, institutionalised occidental phallogracy. This figure of mythical independent women can be found all throughout mythology and history. Athena, Aphrodite Nikephoros, Judith, Nzinga of Ndongo, Galina Ustvol'skaya and Jessica Jones are just a few of its memorable incarnations.

But women as well as men pay a high price for their independence. Aesop's Wolf knows its loneliness is the other side of the coin of freedom, but it also knows that the only other alternative is to be a Dog, chained to society by the neck, and that this chain will always feel too short and too irritating, whatever the amount of food available in its dish will be. (Even though I consider myself a subsidised wolf! The limit is often blurry.)



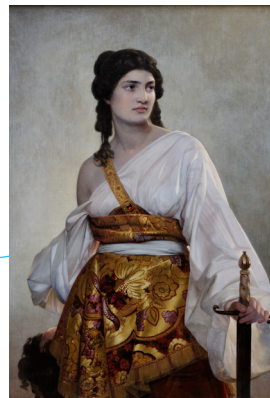
Venus Victrix, found in Paphos, Cyprus. ©Department of Antiquities, Cyprus.



Nzinga of Ndongo. ©Achille Devéria (1830).



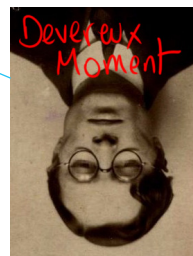
Ustvolskaya. ©Leendert Jansen (2005).



Judith. ©August Riedel (1840).



Jessica Jones. ©Marvel/Netflix (2016).



Description and Duration

The *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule* is a work with music, text, visual art, performance art and video. Its duration is unknown for two reasons: all the musical parts can last for as long as you, the performers, wish them to last. The videos and the art installation can happen simultaneously with the music or not. I would say that the minimum duration of this piece is around one hour, but it can and should be more, and possibly a lot more.

Performers and Tasks

You, the **trumpet player**, referred to as “the Soloist”, will:

- play at least two different kinds of trumpets of any kind, including cousin instruments (cornet, any kind of baroque horn, flugelhorn...), prepared trumpet, and trumpet with live electronic processing (see *Movement IV*);
- play the grand piano — a really easy part which does not require any particular technical ability (see *Four Piano Strings*);
- read a text (see *II*).

You, **the improvisors**, referred to as “the Improvisors”, are a group of minimum four performers. You should all be familiar with free improvisation. You can play pretty much any kind of instrument, including laptop and voice (see *Movement IV*). Even though your parts are improvised, you will need to rehearse, since you will have to follow rather precise guidelines.

You, **the musicians of the free ensemble**, referred to as “the Ensemble”, form a group of minimum seven performers. You are also going to improvise at times. Yet the nature of your improvisation is much more guided than the Improvisors’ (see *Movement IV*), meaning you do not necessarily have to be as familiar with free improvisation as the latter. You can play pretty much any kind of instrument, including laptop and voice. You will also all sing and play percussions with sticks on the walls, floors and pieces of furniture of the venue. (See *Seven (or more) Hammer Ladies*.) You do not need to be trained singers nor trained percussionists, though.

Other tasks: one of you needs to set the art installation following the instructions and trigger it at the appropriate moment. (See *Bubble Seats*.) Another one of you also needs to start the videos at the appropriate moment. (See *Videos*.) The performance art moment is performed by all of you, the musicians. (See *le Baiser par Contagion*.)

Positions in the Venue

The Soloist and the Improvisors must be sitting on stage.

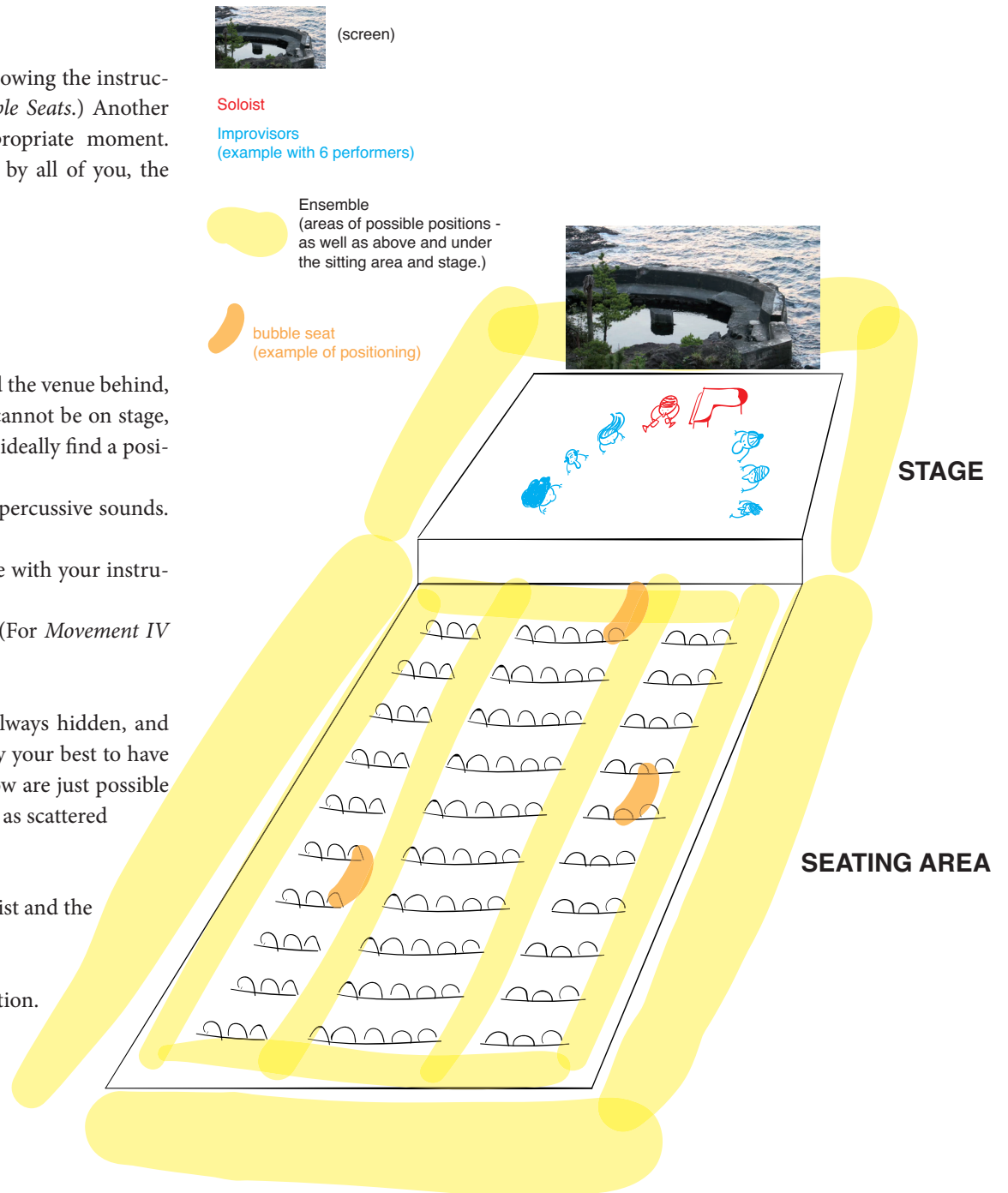
You, the musicians of the Ensemble, are scattered all around the venue behind, in front of, under, on top of, between the spectators. You cannot be on stage, but might be under, over, outside of or behind it. You must ideally find a position where:

- You can be hidden in a spot that offers two different percussive sounds. (See *Seven (or more) Hammer Ladies*)
- You can just move a couple of steps aside to be visible with your instrument. (For *Movement IV*)
- You can easily walk towards your nearest colleague. (For *Movement IV* and *le Baiser par Contagion*)

Again, this is the *ideal* position. Some of you might be always hidden, and some others might be always visible. This is alright. Just try your best to have the two options available. The positions in the picture below are just possible examples. Adapt freely to the venue where you will play. Be as scattered as possible, in all three dimensions.

The screen should be on stage, behind and/or over the Soloist and the Improvisors.

Three seats in the audience area are used for the art installation. No one should sit on these three seats.



Pieces and Organisation

There are 6 sonic pieces which consist of:

- 5 musical pieces:
 - *Seven (or more) Hammer Ladies*, performed by the Ensemble.
 - *Four Piano Strings, part 1: on the Keyboard*, performed by the Soloist.
 - *Four Piano Strings, part 2: on the Strings*, performed by the Soloist.
 - *Movement IV, part 1: Verklärter Tag*, performed by the Soloist, the Improvisors and the Ensemble.
 - *Movement IV, part 2: Unknown Combination*, performed by the Soloist, the Improvisors and the Ensemble.
- 1 spoken text piece: *II*, performed by the Soloist.

These 6 sonic pieces should be played one after the other in any order, except that:

- *II* cannot be first.
- A *part 1* must always be played earlier than its corresponding *part 2*, with or without other pieces in between them.

There is 1 installation consisting of three inflatable seats by Irene Gil Lopez. Instructions on how to install them and trigger the art installation moment are given in *Bubble Seats*.

There is 1 moment of performance art written by Manon Parent. At some point during *Movement IV, part 2: Unknown Combination*, all of you, the musicians, will kiss lengthily someone or something. You will find details about this in *le Baiser par Contagion*.

There is 1 video by Mélissa Garcia Carro, *No Title*, and 1 series of short clips by Emilia Giudicelli, *The Hypertrophied Heart*. They must be shown on the biggest possible screen, in the best-quality possible format, behind and/or on top of the stage. (See *Videos*.)

The videos and the art installation moment can happen during the pieces (taking into consideration the practical parameters that are detailed later) or

between the pieces. My personal preference is to play the videos during the pieces, and to make the art installation moment happen between pieces.

(Global Plan on next page)

Just before starting the concert, and possibly just before printing/sharing the program notes, you, the performers, will decide together the order and possible superpositions of the sonic pieces, the installation and the videos. This choice will depend on your taste, your sensitivity and your intuition. I therefore do not need to say more on this topic. (Plus, do not worry, you still have about 23'000 words left to read before you are done with me.)

The few pages you may actually want to keep on your music stand during the performance have this same yellow background.



©Olivier Texier (2014)

Global Plan

Four Piano Strings, part 1: on the Keyboard

Soloist playing the piano.
Duration: minimum 7 minutes.
Position: Any position earlier than *on the Strings*.

Four Piano Strings, part 2: on the Strings

Soloist playing the piano.
Duration: minimum 4 minutes.
Position: Any position later than *on the Keyboard*.

Seven (or more) Hammer Ladies

Ensemble (voice and percussion).
Duration: minimum 6 minutes.
Position: Any position.

Π - Soloist speaking.
Duration: about 7mn.
Position: Any position
except first.

Bubble Seats

Art installation.
Duration: depends on the air pumps.
Position: During any piece, if the pumps are
quiet enough, or between any two pieces.

Movement IV, part 1: Verklärter Tag

Soloist (all instruments),
Improvisors, Ensemble.
Duration: unknown.
Position: Any position earlier than
Unknown Combination.

Movement IV, part 2: Unknown Combination

Soloist (all instruments),
Improvisors, Ensemble.
Duration: unknown.
Position: Any position later than *Verklärter Tag*.

No Title

Screening.
Duration: 3 minutes and 30 seconds.
Position: During and/or overlapping
any pieces or between any two pieces.

Optional *Unknown Pieces* to be
performed during *Movement IV*:

- Unknown Sound
- Unknown Chord
- Unknown Noise
- Unknown Motive
- Unknown Pair
- Unknown Squad
- Unknown Instrument

Le Baiser par Contagion

Performance art for all the musicians.
Duration: unknown.
Position: any time during *Unknown Combination*.

The Hypertrophied Heart

Screening.
Duration: 22sec/clip; Total duration is free.
Position: During and/or overlapping any
pieces or between any two pieces.

Where are the Roussels?

I frankly believe it is impossible to know, out of all the artists of our time, whose fame will last. (I am not saying which artists of our time are the greatest, because they are not necessarily the same ones.) Too many emotional bias, social and political parameters, fashions, as well as expectations of our time versus expectations of times to come are intertwined to be able to have a trustworthy clue about the old (and totally vain) question “whose work will survive?” (A magnificent example of the vacuity of this question is to be admired on the façade of the Victoria Hall in Geneva: carved after a series of indeed famous and very dead composers, two comically forgotten names lay there, as a marvellous monument to irony.) Of course guessing which artists in the margins will later be recognised as the Satie or the Ustvolskaya of our time is equally vain, as reassuring as it might be for some of us to identify with these miserable geniuses. (Not me, of course, I never do that. Ever.)

It is a lot easier to spot the Roussel, the d'Indy and the Dukas of our time. What do they have in common? They all produced a second rate, conventional, yet very decently written music; they all had a great public recognition during their lifetime, a rather comfortable professional situation, and, more importantly, they made Satie possible. No one can be even sure they liked (or understood) the latter's music, but they had the intuition that they had to give him their support. Against fashions, against society's brutality towards anything new, they benevolently helped him, through both moral and financial support. (Shostakovich helped Ustvolskaya as much as he could, but he was not a second rate composer! As far as I know, the rest of the USSR let her rot in her misery, and still ignore her, not to say dismiss her to this day.)

There is an extremely high chance that all of our works, as artists, are dull and conventional. As hard as we try to figure this out, we just cannot. Neither can our friends nor our enemies. But we can and should all be Roussels. This is very easy. Every time we teach, every time someone comes for advice or comment, we can choose to be constructive and supportive. If after a couple of hours or a couple of years some students of ours are as bad as when they arrived, they do not suck, we do. We cannot make geniuses out of all of them, but if we can make one single Satie blossom, then we must not miss this opportunity. Otherwise we are just another dick-Saint-Saens cancelling his holidays in order to attend and boo Debussy's première of Pelleas et Mélisande. (While Dukas and d'Indy — them again! — praised it.) While we all went through our art studies (and life) surrounded by proud, loud and well-established Saint-Saens, let us not forget to be grateful to our few personal Roussels, and let us at the very least be a Roussel ourselves, permanently, with our students, our friends, our partners and our children.



commons.wikimedia.org

At this stage you may think I'm just writing all these dedications to brag about all my exes. Well, firstly, I am not, because if I were, I would have to compose many more pieces. (And I would also have to write one long piece about the months of bitter solitude and lack of any kind of social interaction, sending, from my 9 square meters bedroom, witty yet subtle poems to young women I'd never meet while my housemate screams things in a language I do not understand all night long at his fellow online gamers, and I don't want to write that piece. Except if this is what the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule* is about, and I am the *femme seule*. I'm not sure anymore. Anyway, leave me alone, I don't like your silly questions.) Secondly, I read this impressively mediocre book about Karlheinz Stockhausen recently and it made me reflect on the notion of "off-camera" when it comes to composition. I'll try to explain myself briefly. In this book, the author did not do anything more than paraphrase, reword and summarise Stockhausen's own writings. In other words, "this is the official story as dictated by the central committee, move along, there's nothing to see here!". The last section of the

book suddenly and accidently became fascinating though: it presented a collection of testimonies from some of Stockhausen's widows, totally off-camera from the *offizielle Geschichte*. Finally, it was made obvious that most of Stockhausen's inspiration came from his love for his mistresses and from his mistresses' love: most of his ideas, and even his powerful mysticism and magical thinking were coming from one specific lover, Nancy Wyle. And most of his works were to be performed by dedicated, inspiring lovers, such as Suzanne Stephens and Kathinka Pasveer. Yet the official version is always something like "I invented *Formelkomposition* which allows me to write one formula and develop it to build melodies, structures, counterpoint, blah blah blah". Truth is you were madly in love, my dear old Stocky, and this love was your drive. The rest is just a method. Why not admit it?

Similarly, I can claim that *Four Piano Strings* is the result of years of research on minimalism, care for and attention to the instruments' own voice, as well as a consequence of my interest for bells in general and Yorkshire change-ringing in particular. It would all be true. But in the end, if Charlotte had not brought me to this desert Andalusian beach at dawn and kissed me with this marvellous and delicate appetite of hers, would I have ever been in the state of mind to listen to what this piano wanted to tell me?



FOUR PIANO STRINGS

For the Soloist alone (playing the piano)
Duration of *part 1, on the Keyboard*: 7 minutes or more
Duration of *part 2, on the Strings*: 4 minutes or more

To Charlotte.

Self-portraits. ©Charlotte Norman (2017).

(None of the things written in pink need to be read either in order to perform the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*.)

From: Charlotte Norman <[redacted]@[redacted]>
Date: Thursday, 1 November 2018 at 11:28
To: Brice Catherin <bris_catrin@yahoo.fr>
Subject: Re: questions on luminosity

Hi Brice,
Yes, I do like them dark! I took them very dark. Probably too dark.
(but I suppose that's something)
(...)
Hope you're well xx
Sweet kisses,
Charlotte

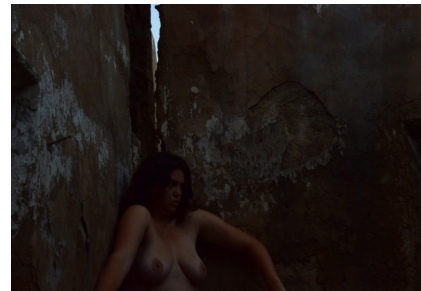
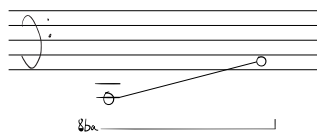
Performer and Instrument

You, the Soloist of the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*, will play *Four Piano Strings*.

You play on a grand piano of any size and kind. It is a lot easier to perform on a piano with a sostenuto pedal (or “middle pedal”), but it also works without. Do not use the sustain pedal (or “right pedal”) at all. The lid should be wide open.

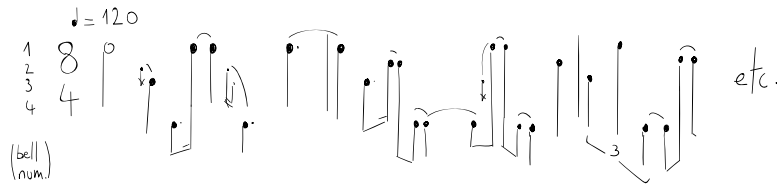
Concept

The concept is rather simple. You choose freely (according to your taste) any four pitches for each part within the ambitus below. Just do not choose four semitones nor four whole-tones in a row.



Self-portraits. ©Charlotte Norman (2017).

But it ends up sounding as follows because handling bells is rather difficult and always a bit aleatoric:



Keeping in mind these possible and common accidents of manipulation, imagine that each of your fingers (playing the four pitches) has to pull a gigantic bell attached to it. This way, you play these four pitches with an extreme rubato that becomes an improvised complex rhythm. Although change-ringing usually implies rather fast tempos, with two to four bell sounds per second, we wish here to take a lot of time to listen to each sound carefully, and therefore ask you to play at maximum crotchet = 60. (With extreme rubato inside an overall regular tempo.)

The Yorkshire change-ringing tradition has a repertoire of set sequences for the bells that act as proper scores. In *Four Piano Strings* however, we leave the order of the pitches totally free. I would say that you should never repeat the same note twice in a row, but other than that, any combination is possible. Only the memory of actual bell-ringing remains.

Part 1: On the Keyboard

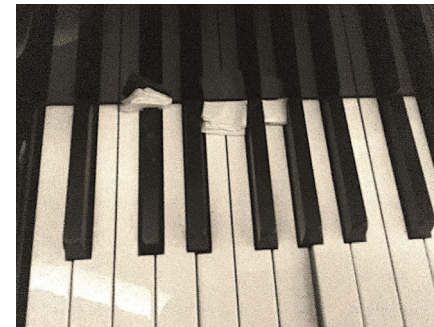
For part 1, you are required to apply the aforementioned guidelines as follows:

- Play the four pitches on the keyboard (that is to say “normally”).
- The other hand, the one laying on the strings, is going from as far as you can reach to the dampers.
- The minimum duration of part 1 is 7 minutes. It may, of course, be a lot longer.

Part 2: On the Strings

The part 2 follows the same guidelines, but:

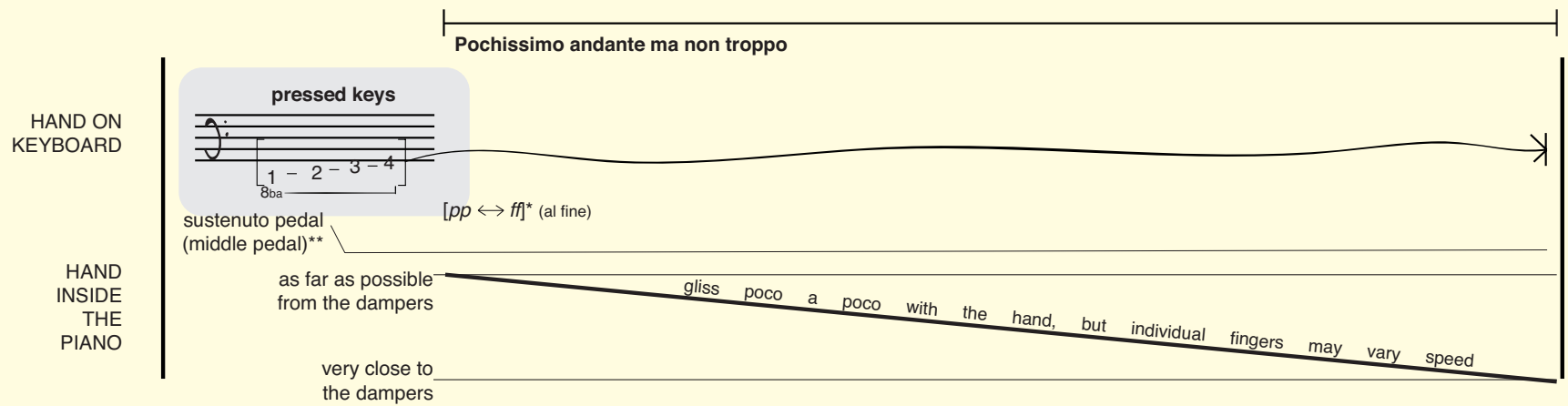
- This time you pluck the strings (pizzicato) directly instead of using the keys. The hand doing the pizzicato can move everywhere from the bottom of the strings to as far as you can reach. This also has an influence on the sound. The hand should move very gradually though, like some kind of slow glissando.
- The other hand, the one laying on the strings, is going the other way around: from dampers to as far as you can reach.
- The minimum duration of part 2 is 4 minutes. It may, of course, be a lot longer.
- If the piano does not have a sostenuto pedal, you may ask one of the improvisors (since they are not playing at the same time) to keep the four keys pressed for the duration of part 2. Another option is to block the keys with little pieces of paper like this:



(Blocking C#, E, F, G)

Performance Score — part 1

> 7 mn

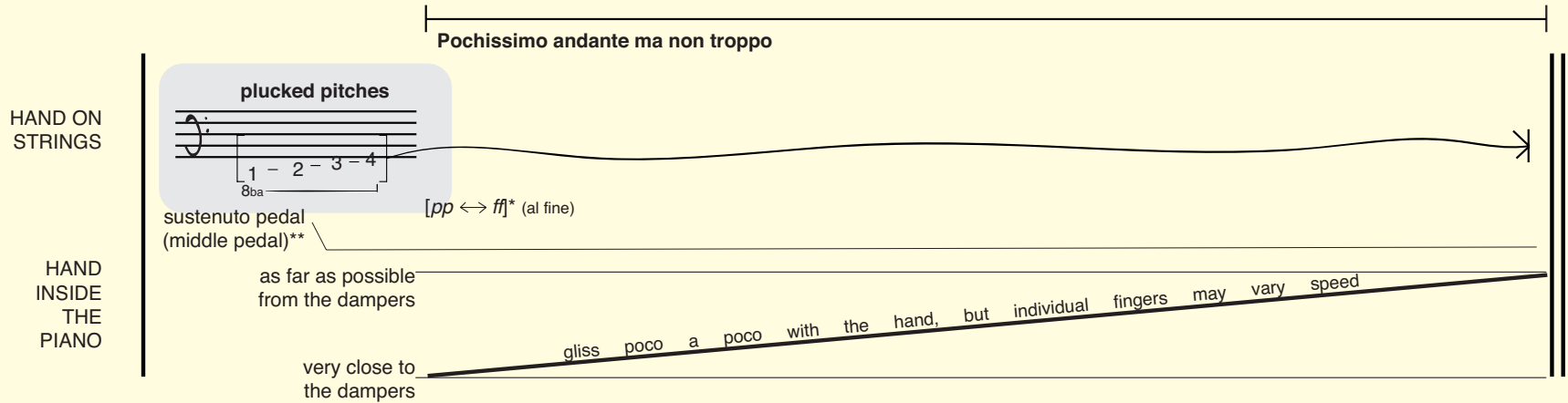


*Each bell has its own dynamic line, independent from one another.

**Before starting, press the four keys you chose for this part and lock them with the sostenuto pedal. Alternatively, you can play extremely legato, releasing a key only to reattack it immediately.

Performance Score — part 2

> 4 mn



*Each bell has its own dynamic line, independent from one another.

**Before starting, press the four keys you chose for this part and lock them with the sostenuto pedal. Alternatively, you can ask an assistant to keep the corresponding keys pressed.

As an illustration of all these instructions and scores, the performer can refer to the audio examples *fourpianostringsPart1.mp3* and *fourpianostringsPart2.mp3*.



©Cedric Lefèvre (2011).

I actually met a guy who signs "Maestro Professor Doctor". I'm not sure many people call him that though, since his only performers are midi instruments (with all due respect to midi instruments).

Viva performed my four most difficult works ever: *Number 3* (2008) for piano, *la confirmacion* (2012) for clavichord and electronics, *Galina Ivanovna Ustvol'skaya* (2014) for five performers playing on one piano, and *Number 2* (2016) for piano and fixed media. Sorry, Viva, and thank you. Really.

Simon is the soloist of the *Symphonie* for the première. Please follow!

The difficulty of Simon Desbruslais's part is not of usual, "classical" nature (fast rhythms and articulations, intonation, clear, centred-sound). Yes, it certainly does require an extremely high level of instrument mastery, but since it hardly uses any classical technique, it probably places any type of performer in the same situation: relearning (almost from scratch) how a trumpet "works". Talk about putting one's ego aside... But hopefully this (minor) ego sacrifice will be generously compensated by the many discoveries, not to say fulfilling surprises, which our instruments have in store for us when we finally decide to follow and serve them.

In the end, be it for Viva or Simon, I am not really interested in the question "did you apply what you know at the highest possible level?" but "after this piece, do you feel you know your instrument more intimately?"

Now don't believe my faithful performer and dear friend Viva Sanchez Morand when she says I only write difficult stuff. This is not true, and she knows it, since she also sang in my (very easy) second cello concerto *Verklärte Nacht* (2012). Don't believe her either when she complains about the amount of text in my scores. (Mean Viva!) Now, why is there so much text in some composers' scores (including mine)? For the past four Centuries (which is not that many), composers of western written music tradition have developed very specific ways to compose very specific music based on very specific instrumental/vocal techniques. These techniques are mostly based on a rather "square" rhythmical organisation of (a limited number of) pitched-sounds within a range of dynamics. (Any composer using extended techniques knows how clumsy it is to integrate them as proper, self-sufficient material rather than as "additional" material to the pitch-based rhythmical usual vocabulary.) This gave birth to the very efficient scores we know, and highly specialised performers who are unbelievably brilliant at playing... this specific music. Therefore, an imaginary but realistic dialogue between a young, less experimented performer and most composers would be like:

- Maestro Professor Doctor, may I perform your piece even though I am only a young performer without too much experience and hardly any classical training?
- Yes of course, but you will make a fool of yourself because my piece has so many notes going so fast that you would need to spend weeks on the score practicing them if you had happened to be a classically trained performer but since you have not dedicated 15 years of your life practicing these specific techniques you will just make a fool of yourself anyway, even though you are a sensitive, subtle and highly competent musician, who just happened to be trained otherwise.

In all honesty, this is also what I would answer to a young pianist willing to play my *Number 2* for example. But in the case of most of my ensemble pieces, including this *Symphonie*, the dialogue would go like:

- Yo dude, may I perform your piece even though I am only a young performer without too much experience and hardly any classical training?
- Yes of course, young Padawan. You will have to read pages of explanations, but after you will be done with them, you will be going straight to the music: most of your rehearsal time will consist of experimenting, not to say playing around the explanations, rather than practicing endlessly difficult lines. There are no complicated fingerings, no twisted rhythms, no intonation hazard, only the music. A sensitive performer like you, with a good understanding of your instrument and great musical skills (such as the ability to listen, adapt, put aside your ego, and cherish sound) will be a great asset for the *Symphonie*.

Rephrased with less words: the next persons who say my explanations are too long will have to catch with their head a Hammond organ (with the speaker) thrown at them by a catapult.

From: Brice Catherin <bris_catrin@yahoo.fr>
Date: Wednesday, 16 June 2018 at 20:45
To: Outi Condit [redacted]@ [redacted]
Subject: an idea

Hi Outi!

(...)

The whole point of this work is to be a practical example of freedom. First, I wanted to talk about freedom, and then I thought it was better to just be free. So, I am trying to do this on various levels:

- [by designing] musical situations in which musicians can discover their own freedom. (You remember written music performers are voluntary slaves.)
- [by designing] a global form that self-applies this freedom. (I can explain this later.)
- [by offering] to the audience a situation that they are free to interpret (or not).
- [by letting] artistic objects of different nature coexist freely, and, hopefully, meaningfully.
- ...

(...)

Have a great weekend!

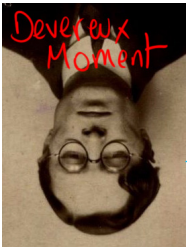
Brice.

In 1976, Cellist Oleg Stolpner premièred Ustvol'skaya's *Grand Duet* together with Oleg Malov (piano). Ustvol'skaya dedicated the piece to the former. Later on, after a disagreement with the cellist, she erased his name from the score and dedicated it instead to Rostropovich. (The dedication you now find on the official Sikorski edition.) In 1937, very soon after Ravel's death, his children opera *l'Enfant et les Sortilèges* was performed again. Stravinsky attended the performance, quietly sobbing in his balcony, an empty seat next to his: his BFF was not here to listen to one of his dearest works, which, for the first time ever, was not booed from beginning to end by idiots. In 1590, Gesualdo killed with his own hands his wife and her lover. Since this was normal practice at that time in the region of Naples, the only reason why he was sent to exile for a few years was because people were a bit upset he had asked servants to help him.

These anecdotes are of no usefulness to understand or perform more accurately, beautifully or sensitively these composers' music. Yet they make these composers more real, more human. They stop being pure spirits. They are made of flesh, feelings, weaknesses: they are closer to us. There are closer to being our friends.

I enjoy performing my friends' music.

Libretto by Colette, another extraordinary modern Parthenos (see page 4).



In *Basic Problems of Ethnopsychiatry*, George Devereux declares that in no (so-called) primitive society he personally studied or read about has any case of schizophrenia ever been recorded. There are, of course, other kinds of mental disorders, but no schizophrenia. Devereux's theory is that in all these primitive societies, each individual has an actual social role, that both the individual and society recognise. In other words, no one is left apart, no life feels meaningless. You might be a warrior, a gatherer, a shaman or a transvestite, you all *belong*, and you belong at the best of your abilities. And again, there might be rivalry, betrayals, affairs, still you will never be left out, and, perhaps more importantly, you will all be accepted for who you are.

No need to be a social science specialist to understand that our contemporary society works more or less in the opposite way. It does not need individuals with idiosyncrasies, but anonymous consumers who all buy the same iPhone (and feel freer than ever when they have the choice between this and a Samsung). One of the dark sides of Western written music tradition is that from the early baroque music to nowadays, it has been gradually erasing performers' idiosyncrasies and made them more and more the anonymous players (as in some kind of mp3 player) of "famous" and almighty composers. (Compare the amount of decision making between a figured bass piece and any work by Ravel — to stick to a composer I cherish.) This is fine, to some extent. I am delighted myself to be in the skin of Galina Ustvolskaya, Fernanda Aoki Navarro or Franz Liszt from time to time. And even though a little bird told me there is something slightly psychopathological in spending one's life using other composers' notes to express oneself, I can totally understand the pleasure and the comfort of doing so. Besides, it would probably be peremptory to think that the impressive (yet rather unspoken) level of alcoholism and depression in classical orchestras could be due to the lack of meaning in the life of highly trained performers who spend their career obeying a conductor they never chose, or being the last violinist of a section that even the second-to-last can't hear because the trombones are too loud anyway, while playing repertoire they never have any say on. (Is their loan on the holiday house worth this? The debate remains open.)

I would like to write primitive music. I would like to write music which allows all the performers to be fully themselves in the environment I humbly designed. My score is a territory: sometimes it's a savannah, sometimes it's a jungle. And everyone works together as a group to make the best of this territory, by using everyone's idiosyncratic techniques and ideas. I would like all my performers, whatever their background, their skills and their history, to find meaning, freedom, and happiness in my territory.

From: Brice Cathelin <bris_catrin@yahoo.fr>
Date: Wednesday, 4 July 2018 at 16:56
To: Alexander Harker [redacted]@ [redacted]
Subject: Re: Re: score as it looks like today

Hi Alex,
(...)
I'll start with your correct guess that I am "resistant to an overly pragmatic or utilitarian view of the score". This is actually the core of this score. I stopped believing in the widely spread convention that the score is an objective document for objective performers. (Roughly said: a message sent from a robot to other robots.) Actually, I think any kind of written text says as much by its style (or lack of) than by its words. Therefore, yes, cracking jokes, being lyrical, and sharing purely technical information are *all* important to me. [Speaking of which, if] you allow me a second of lyricism [right now], I would say I want my heart to speak to the performer's heart. If some musicians are friendly and benevolent enough to play my music, the least I can do is to address them with warmth, trust, and, somehow, intimacy. One might recognise the influence of Stockhausen (the *Aus den Sieben Tagen* period) as well as Satie's, whose jokes were also musical indications to be considered as seriously (if not more) as any other kind of traditional indication.

(...)
The fact that reading this score (and listening to the mp3 files!) is very time-consuming is also voluntary, but I'll develop that later since I'm now in a train with a very large person trying to suffocate me against an outrageously greasy window, while the lady in front of me seems to be plotting to pour her canned gin & tonic on my laptop. I'm also thinking a lot about the issue of oral tradition in the context of written music (as I mentioned in the score itself), and we could share thoughts about this soon. (...)

Best wishes,
Brice.

Annini Tsiouti reacts:

I don't agree, it is not the music itself which blocks the creative process, nor the way it is written, but the way it is being taught.

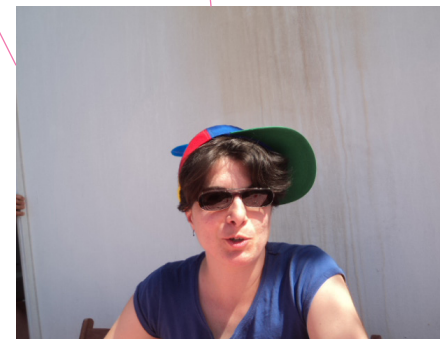
To develop further: I believe traditional notation encompasses a wealth of information on the way the music is to be performed, and on the meaning/atmosphere/feelings whatever you want to call it that the composer was trying to convey ; the problem is that traditional teaching methods tend to obliterate certain parameters by excessively focusing on others (like you say yourself somewhere, playing the correct notes in a fast tempo, for example). Let's not forget numerous cases of interpretative freedom in repertoire dating before the 20th century, such as cadences in concertos, ossia passages in certain difficult works, written by the composers themselves, even transcriptions or paraphrases of works by others, which are, *in fine*, new interpretations of older works and existing melodies. I've even had the experience of working with composers who use very traditional notation, and of playing something completely different than what was written, and they were extremely happy. Which goes to say that it is not always restrictive. It remains a guideline, and this is what makes the difference between interpreters.

Brice answers:

I mention the process of decision making for performers on page 18. It is a real, important one, yet I believe it is of very different nature. Ravel's performers (to stick to the same example) do not *create* material, they *decide* (hopefully in a creative way indeed) how to perform the existing one. A figured bass performer is creating material. These are two very different ways of being creative. They are probably equally demanding, but *performing* feels psychologically *safer* than creating, like using someone else's words (even with your own voice) rather than your own to express yourself. This is not an attack against performers. I am a performer and I enjoy both roles equally, yet differently.

Lastly, writing very detailed scores proved to be necessary and meaningful to achieve certain aesthetics/styles. It is nonetheless amusing and revealing that the whole written music tradition embraced these detailed/closed scores before it eventually got opened again in the 20th century by people like Cage. It is even more revealing to observe the violent anxiety of most classical musicians facing this relatively recent re-opening of scores.

Annini Tsiouti, pianist and modern musicologist.
©Panos Christodoulou (2017).



We need to talk about the word “free”. I had this fascinating and slightly absurd conversation a year ago with a young performer who was getting paid to play music I had composed for free (but in the other meaning of the word):

- So, when you write “free” in the score, you mean “random”?
- No, I mean “free”.
- Okay, so it’s random, I can do whatever I want?
- You can do whatever you feel is right to do, freely, not randomly.
- Exactly, like any random rhythm, right?
- No, any free rhythm, you choose freely and willingly.
- Okay, so it’s random then.

This non-conversation went on for a while, and obviously there was no way to make the distinction any more tangible to my dear colleague. This made me reflect on how well-educated conservatory kids were. (I am one of those.) “Do it this way and not differently” is the motto we learn and follow there. And if we want to get in an orchestra (oh, the dream), we obey. Yet, how can one play anything this way? Each single note, in any piece of music (written or not) needs at least three parameters to be taken into consideration: attack, sustain and release. Of course, there is a certain style that frames each work. But within this (immense) frame, this question remains: how does one attack, sustain and release every single note? (Thank you, Marc Jaermann, for explaining me this. It took one whole month on one single low A in one single Beethoven sonata, but I got it eventually. Not saying I’m handling it perfectly, but I’m handling it the best I can.)

Yet it’d be ridiculous to narrow down this phenomenon to conservatory education victims. The world is one big conservatory. The infamous social constructions dictate every single pattern of behaviour, thought and word of our life. “What will my neighbours think of me?” could be the epitaph for all of us. I’m not a moralist, I’m just a musician. Therefore, all I can do is explain to you what I mean by “free” in my score, and encourage you to treat your personal life as you would treat a contemporary music score: with care, attention to details, passion, conscious of belonging to a group, willing to serve this group’s best interest as well as yours (they are ultimately the same), and with an awareness to constantly allowing yourself as much freedom (and hopefully a bit more) as the frame permits.

MOVEMENT IV

For the Soloist (playing one or more trumpets), the Improvisors, and the Ensemble

**Duration of part 1, *Verklärter Tag*: free
Duration of part 2, *Unknown Combination*: free**

Performers and Instruments

Movement IV is played by all of you: the Soloist, the Improvisors, and the musicians of the Ensemble of the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*.

For both *parts*, you, the Soloist, play at least two different trumpets of any kind, chosen freely according to your taste, including prepared trumpet and trumpet with electronics. (See *Soloist's Instructions* below for details.) You may also sing and play the piano.

You, the Improvisors and the musicians of the Ensemble, use any instrument (including electronics) you wish to play, and consider the most appropriate for this piece and the specific combination of performers of each concert. You can also sing, use more than one instrument, or produce sound by any means, again, as long as it works with the piece. (If you are a keyboardist, avoid playing the piano since the Soloist is already playing one. But on the other hand: why not?) The guidelines below apply to anything from voice, traditional instruments, homemade or prepared instruments, to electronics. In the case of amplified instruments and electronics, however, please use one single speaker near you, positioned and set (in terms of volume) as an acoustic instrument. You may change instruments at any point if you wish to do so. Just follow the guidelines. (Meaning: change only if you really need to.)

Concept — part 1, Verklärter Tag

Soloist: Simply put, you have a reservoir of limited material to explore, develop, and vary freely by any means. You never cease to play, either in a soloistic way when playing together with the Improvisors or alone, and in a discreet, accompanying way when playing together with the Ensemble.

Improvisors: You play one long improvisation following a series of guidelines. You stop playing every time the Ensemble chooses to play one of their *Unknown Pieces*.

Concept — part 2, Unknown Combination

All of you play together following new guidelines. At some point, you will perform *le Baiser par Contagion* during *Unknown Combination*. It is all explained in *le Baiser par Contagion*.

Performance, Communication and Recommendations

Since you are all spread out in different spots of the concert venue (please refer to *Performers, Tasks and Positions in the Venue* if you have no idea what I am talking about), some of you will most probably be out of sight. Therefore, you need to communicate with each other through a group chat on your phone or computer. This will mainly be used by the musicians of the Ensemble, who will announce which *Unknown Piece* they will play, with whom, and give the departure cue with a simple message such as “now”, or “go”.

Before we proceed to the specific instructions for each of you, I would like to ask you all, whatever instrument you play, to always focus on producing rich, complex, multi-layered, mysterious and personal sounds. Avoid simple pitches. Step away from the traditional (very straight and clear) “centred sound” of traditional classical playing. Favour off-focus sounds by mixing techniques freely (Soloist: embouchure shape, voice, air flow, air pressure, vibration change, head cavity shape for you; Improvisors and Ensemble: any other kinds of techniques), in order to explore multiphonics, noisy, complex, parasitised sounds, saturated sounds, noisy pitches, as long as you are able to stabilise/control them. Anything that makes your sound lively, colourful, beautiful, alive. Think of these sounds that are usually considered “wrong”, such as pseudo-multiphonics, parasite sounds, accidental changes of pitches. Learn to control them, to stabilise these so-called “mistakes”. Love them, dig into them, shape them, transform them gently and constantly, always keep in mind that they should sparkle like a “shimmering fire”, to use Karlheinz Stockhausen’s words. (*Set Sail for the Sun*, in *Aus den Sieben Tagen*, 1968, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Universal Ed.) Cherish your shimmering fire, keep it, grow it, give it a real life worth living. Do not change any sound before it is done living a long, happy, sometimes epic life. But transform it constantly, let

it bloom. Trust your sound, let it live the life it wants to live, just accompany it the best you can. Trust your instrument, your strings, your pipes, your vocal chords, they want to go a certain way, follow them, they know.

I also need to explain the relationship between the three different sources of music in *part 1, Verklärter Tag*. First, the relationship between the Soloist and the Improvisors. Musically speaking, I would say that you, the Soloist and the Improvisors, have a soloist/accompanist relationship. Soloist: you are “in front” in terms of density and musical “hierarchy”. Improvisors: you use very different kinds of material than the Soloist, but you should still play all together, with one member of the group, the Soloist, playing a soloistic part. Note that you have to follow the Soloist’s dynamics. Soloist: if you decide, therefore, to go full *ppppp*, the Improvisors will follow you. This is something you can play with too. They can also play softer than you do, but never louder, or only very briefly.

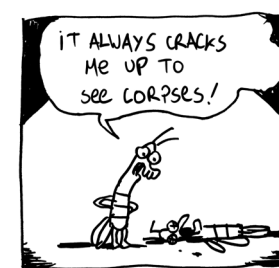
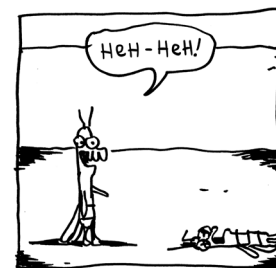
Yet, I think a visual comparison will explain my point better than these purely technical facts. Improvisors, you are the colourists of the Soloist. The latter draws (with a pencil, a brush, charcoal or any kind of instrument) an ever-changing line, or a contour, with different qualities of black, thickness or texture, but contours nonetheless. You are *colouring* this self-sufficient contour by filling it with flat tints, colour gradients, patterns, whatever you want that gives volume, contrast and life to the pure contour of the Soloist. You never cover the contour (this is why you cannot play louder than it), but since this is not a kindergarten colouring exercise, it is okay to cross the line (without erasing it) any time it feels beautiful.

Now, let us describe the relationship between the Soloist and the Ensemble. Soloist: As soon as the Ensemble plays an *Unknown Piece* (after they have sent a message on the group chat), you become an accompanist, playing your usual material in a more discreet (yet ever present) manner. Again, using a visual metaphor, think in these terms: the Ensemble paints independent and self-sufficient objects, figures, shapes, whatever. Your playing is still present, but like the watermark in the paper, or like the texture of the canvas. As discreet as it is, it gives a peculiar volume to whatever is painted *on* it.

Finally, I should remind you all that If I am still alive, just practise with me. If I am dead, well, first of all, thank you for playing this piece, and second of all, find Mark Slater’s great granddaughter who will tell you how her ancestor used to play this piece. Because written music is merely a supporting tool to what music actually is: an oral tradition transmitted from one individual to the next with care, patience and generosity.

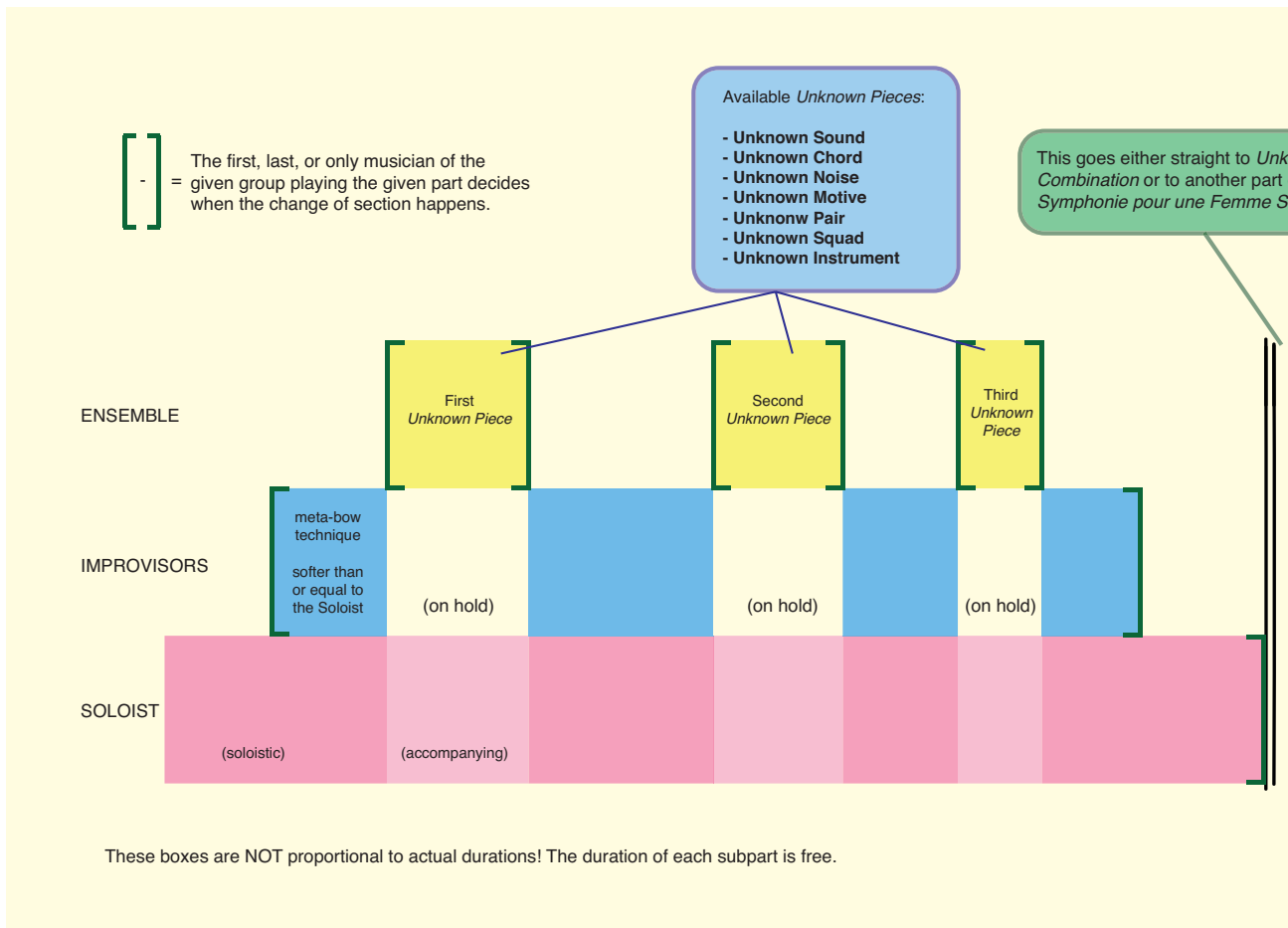
Jeanjo

THE STUPIDEST INSECT OF THE PLANET.

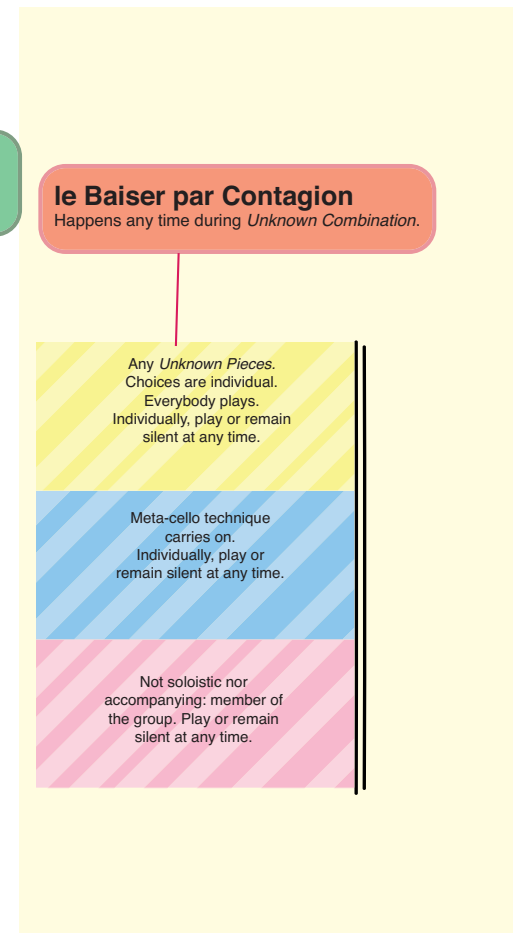


What I would like my death announcement to be.
©Olivier Texier (2013), translated by myself.

Global Score for *Verklärte Tag*



Global Score for *Unknown Combination*



MOVEMENT IV

PART 1: VERKLÄRTER TAG

1) Soloist's Instructions

General Concept

You, the Soloist, are playing non-stop from beginning to the end of *Verklärter Tag*. Remember though that in terms of density, you play as a soloist (very dense material, free dynamics that the Improvisors will follow and respect) when you are alone and when you play together with the Improvisors. When the Ensemble plays, though, you lower the density of your playing and become an accompanist to the Ensemble: a discreet, supporting, benevolent presence.

You use 12 different kinds of sonic material freely. I will detail them all below. I doubt you will have time to exhaust all 12 of them in one concert. This is not the point. The point is to choose your favourite material on the given day of the concert, explore, develop and vary it. You can play one, two, or three kinds of material at the same time, and vary freely between these numbers. Do not worry if some of the 12 different kinds seem difficult or impossible to play. Just get as close as you can, listen to them, and, more importantly, listen to how they merge (or not) together: their combinations and whatever blooms out of them are just as important, if not more, than their individual existence. For each single kind of material and combination of materials, please remember and apply these rules: keep and develop anything you do for a very long time: after each breath, restart exactly where you stopped to breathe, or go back to it; if at any point you think you have been transforming your material slowly enough, and you developed it long enough, you are probably wrong! Keep it longer and transform it more slowly!

In order to combine the different kinds of material, you can play one or two different trumpets at the same time, you can use your voice, and, possibly, the piano. The trumpets may be played “as they are” (without any kind of preparation or electronic processing), with or without mute, and you may also use one or more prepared trumpets (see below) and/or a trumpet with electronics (effect pedals or computer). But in general, and whatever instruments you choose to use, focus on producing rich, complex, multi-layered, mysterious and personal sounds as I mentioned earlier.

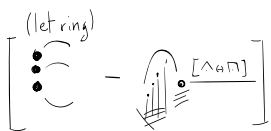
12 Different Kinds of Sonic Material — Description

The 12 kinds of material are divided into two categories.

- 1) The directional material: as *Verklärter Tag* goes, you will gradually switch from the middle tessitura (of the trumpet, the voice and/or the piano) to the extreme lower and higher tessituras. Since there is no precise time-line, change the tessitura wisely!
- 2) The free material: the tessitura and sometimes the ambitus of this material are entirely free. The drawings on the score are only examples.

You can always choose freely the instrument you want for a given kind of material. Obviously, certain kinds of material do not work on certain instruments. For example, the piano cannot play white noise, nor hold multiphonics, except if you use extended techniques on a prepared piano. (Which you are welcome to do if you feel like it.) The three-pitch-class chords, on the contrary, can probably be achieved only on the piano. Yet again, do not forget that the combinations of material and whatever blooms out of them are just as important, if not more, than the individual kinds of material.

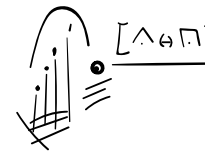
1) Directional material



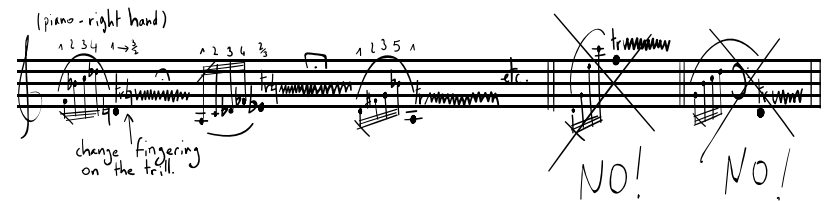
Choose and vary freely between the two motives in brackets: the three-pitch-class chord and the tremolo with an appoggiatura. You may also choose only one of these two motives and stick to it. Direction: over the whole duration of *Verklärter Tag*, these motives must gradually switch from the middle register to either the extreme lower or higher registers. If you play this motive only at some point of *Verklärter Tag*, choose the corresponding tessitura. For example, at the beginning, use the middle tessitura, and at the end, any extreme tessitura. Change freely (but gradually) the dynamics and the sound qualities.



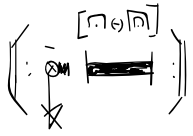
The three-pitch-class chord can contain between 3 to 5 notes in it (meaning up to two unisons and/or octaves), played arpeggiando or not, and should be able to be performed by a single hand on the keyboard. Change chord on each iteration of the motive, inside the accurate tessitura.



This is a quick ascending appoggiatura followed by a free tremolo (on the trumpet) or trill of any interval between a semitone and a minor third (on the piano or the voice). On the trumpet, the tremolo should vary freely (but gradually) between single, double and triple tonguing, as well as doodle and flatterzunge. On the piano, the whole motive must fit in one single hand (not changing position during the motive). During the trill, you may change fingering in order to move your hand slightly, but the next motive should not be further than anything your hand may reach from the previous motive. (See examples below.) On the trumpet and on the voice, follow the same kind of rules (regarding the potential intervals inside the motive and from one iteration to the next) as much as possible.



Continuous noise. Vary the colour, the dynamics, the thickness and the inner activity (very smooth noise or very hectic — yet always continuous — noise). Direction: over the whole duration of *Verklärter Tag*, this motive must gradually switch from the middle register to either the extreme lower or higher registers.

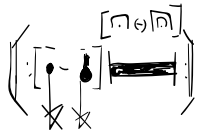


Brief, loud noises, with a long break between each of them. Vary the colour, the dynamics (from loud to very loud), and the thickness. Direction: over the whole duration of *Verklärter Tag*, this motive must gradually switch from the middle register to either the extreme lower or higher registers. You must also gradually change the duration of the noise, from very brief to a few second long. The break becomes shorter and shorter until it disappears completely.

~~Continuous descending glissando. Vary the colour, the dynamics, and the sound quality. On the keyboard, the glissando can be replaced by descending minor and/or major seconds.~~

~~Continuous ascending glissando. Vary the colour, the dynamics, and the sound quality. On the keyboard, the glissando can be replaced by ascending minor and/or major seconds.~~

Choose and vary freely between the two motives in brackets: the short loud pitch and the short loud multiphonic. There is a long break between each iteration of the motive. You may also choose only one of these two motives and stick to it. Vary the colour and the dynamics (from loud to very loud). Direction: over the whole duration of *Verklärter Tag*, these motives must gradually switch from the middle register to either the extreme lower or higher registers. They must also switch gradually from being as short as possible to a few seconds long. The break becomes shorter and shorter until it disappears completely.



2) Free material



Each cross corresponds to anything between a tongue start (soft to hard) to a tongue slap. Vary freely, projecting the sound inside or outside of the trumpet(s). Depending on what you play on the trumpet(s) at the same time, it will have different kinds of influence on it. (From no influence to an extreme influence.) This is the point. These quavers are to be played very slowly (crotchet = 12 to 30 bpm). Nevertheless, they must never be perfectly regular. Think of a *Femme Seule* (lonely/single woman) walking on a slightly uneven surface: her steps are meant to be regular, but the unequal ground varies her pace constantly albeit slightly.



Free cloud of very short, lively pitches covering your whole tessitura. Vary the density (very crowded cloud to slightly scattered cloud) as well as the tessitura you cover (whole of it to any part of it). The drawing on the score below is just an example of variation, and certainly not a realisation you should follow.

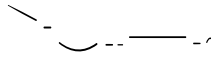


Hold a multiphonic by any means on the trumpet (embouchure technique, voice or prepared trumpet), the voice and/or the prepared piano (if you find a way to do so). You may change the multiphonic after a while but favour free and gradual variations of colour and dynamics on one, single, long multiphonic.

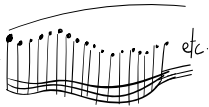


Hold a simple pitch by any means on the trumpet, the voice and/or the prepared piano (if you find a way to do so). You may change the pitch after a while but favour free and gradual variations of colour and dynamics. Favour the influence of such a pitch on your global sound. For example, holding the proper pitch with your

voice may have a beautiful and radical influence on your trumpet sound. Use it more as a tool to transform any other sound than as an independent motive. Yet, it is still possible and okay to just hold a simple pitch at a certain moment for a while and just change its dynamics and sound quality.



This motive is like an endless free glissando inside a small ambitus, something like a fourth around your starting pitch. This endless glissando has “holes”, meaning you must articulate it into lively, *marcato*, *molto andante e agitato*, short and sometimes even spiccato notes. If you play this motive for a while, you may leave the initial fourth and slowly explore the rest of your tessitura. Always vary the dynamics and the sound quality.



This motive is like an endless garland of lively, fast, legato notes going upwards and downwards by means of any interval between a microtone and a major third minus a quarter tone. On the trumpet, you may use both your embouchure technique and the intonation slide to constantly vary intonation. (Equal semitones and equal temperament are boring.) Always vary the speed of the garland (like a permanent and gradual rubato), the dynamics and the sound quality.

Prepared Trumpet(s)

As I wrote earlier, you can use one or two trumpets at the same time when playing *Movement IV*. You can switch freely from one to two trumpets, you can switch freely from one trumpet to the other, and you can use as many different trumpets as you wish. I only ask that you do not use two similar trumpets (for instance two trumpets in C), and that you change only when you feel it is necessary, after you have exhausted everything you could get out of each trumpet.

Now, one or more of these trumpets can be prepared. You may prepare them freely, by any means you can think of, and invent your own extended trumpet, as long as there is still the possibility to get a “brass” sonority somehow. For example, in the cornet-recorder I show below, the recorder should always have the possibility to be mixed with a brass sound, either by pressing the valve only partly, or by playing the flute while still using the mouthpiece with a brass technique. Yet, there can also be a moment of “pure” recorder moment, as long as it emerges from the brass sound and returns to it. Think in terms of sound metamorphosis rather than a clear dialogue between different instruments. Of course, in the examples below, each instrument fixed to the cornet can sound by itself at some point, but I insist that if this does happen, it should emerge from and/or return to the brass sound.

Here are pictures of some of the cornets (in place of a trumpet) I prepared to experiment a bit. I will not go into details since they are only here for inspiration purposes.



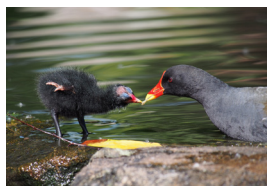
Example 1: cornet with trumpet mouthpiece. Valves go to a lark birdcall, a recorder, and a common moorhen birdcall.



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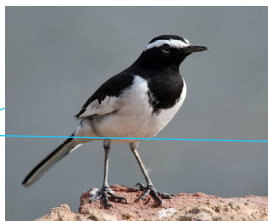


Example 2: cornet with trumpet mouthpiece. Valves go to a duck birdcall, a common moorhen birdcall, and a melodica.



Example 3: cornet with trumpet mouthpiece. I tried the melodica on valve 1, as well as the following birdcalls on the other valves: lark, common moorhen, meadow pipit, tit, seagull, crow, wagtail, duck.

Again, your preparation is totally free and can have nothing to do with recorders, melodicas or birdcalls. These instruments just happened to be in my magic drawer of random sonic objects when I experimented with this cornet.



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Using the Voice and the Piano

As you probably realised when reading *12 different kinds of sonic material* above, all the material “works” on the trumpet, except the three-pitch-class chords. If you decide to play these chords, your only option is to play the piano. The glissandos, on the contrary, do not “work” on the piano. It is your responsibility to choose freely on which instruments (trumpets, piano, voice) you play a given kind of material. Whenever you have made a choice though, explore it, enjoy it, develop it, shape it, vary it.

Since I am asking you to favour complex, rich trumpet sounds, using one or two trumpets together with the voice might be a convenient way to achieve this. I think this should be your priority in general. Yet you may have moments with voice only, piano only, or “clearer” (centred-sound) trumpet moments. They should, however, be exceptional.

Finally, you may prepare the piano if you wish to do so. This is very free too. My personal taste which, again, I am not imposing on any performer, is to add a large strip of tape perpendicularly to the strings near the dampers. This produces a soft sound somewhat close to a Fender Rhodes sound. If you choose this option, leave the pitches you use in *Four Piano Strings* free!

Playing with the Improvisors and the Ensemble

As you can see on the global score of *Verklärter Tag* above, you start and end this part alone. The Improvisors will start and stop playing at some point when they feel like it. The Ensemble will interrupt the Improvisors whenever they feel like it three times during *part 1*. I have described your relationship to all of them earlier in *Performance, communication and recommendations*.



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Trumpets with Electronics

One of the trumpets you use for both parts of *Movement IV* could be processed electronically if you wish so, as long as at least one other trumpet is still acoustic, and as long as the speaker of the electronically processed trumpet is on or near the processed trumpet itself. Indeed, the sound, whatever its nature might be (acoustic, prepared, electronic) must always come from you, the performer.

The electronic processes you use must be coherent with the guidelines I listed above in *12 different kinds of sonic material*. As long as they are, you are free to use any kind of process. Please do not use samples or delays, though. Just instant/synchronous processing of your trumpet sound.



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Movement IV part 1: Verklärter Tag

2) Improvisors' Instructions (Four musicians or more)

General Concept

In *Verklärter Tag*, you will all improvise following guidelines I will share a bit later on.

As you already understood from the *Global Score* on page 21, the Soloist starts *Verklärter Tag* alone. At some point, any of you, the Improvisors, can start the improvisation you will develop during this part. Then, every time the Ensemble starts playing one of their *Unknown Pieces* (three in total), they will announce which one on the group chat, who will play, and then send a short message such as “now”, or “go” before actually starting it. As soon as the Ensemble plays, you, the Improvisors, stop playing. You are “on hold”, meaning that as soon as the last (or the only) musician of the Ensemble is done playing, you start again from where you left your improvisation.

After the third *Unknown Piece*, keep on improvising for as long as you feel like it. There is absolutely no time limit. When you are done, the Soloist will keep on playing for a while alone. When the Soloist stops playing, this will be the end of *Verklärter Tag*.

Guidelines for the Improvisation

First of all, listen to the files *soissurA1.mp3* to *soissurC3.mp3*. These are solo improvisations with one cello, played sometimes with a normal bow, sometimes with a curved bow. I know this represents four hours and a half of music, but you can do it while cooking, driving, vacuum cleaning, changing someone's diapers, anything, just listen to them. This is the model of what we will try to achieve with the improvisation as a group.

Before you produce any sound, tune down your instrument. Tune down your strings (using different intervals for each of them), your pipes, your mouth-pieces, your skins, anything you can. Tune them down a bit, at the interval you feel is right, in order to make them still responsive, but slightly more flexible, slower-to-react than usual, borderline flabby. (But not flabby yet!) Make a very tender instrument, like an old couch with huge cushions. If your

instrument reacts as usual, you have not modified it enough. It must react differently. Learn how to use your new instrument; rediscover it as you improvise *Verklärter Tag*. If you play an instrument that cannot be tuned down easily, such as the human voice, the accordion, the laptop, think of strategies that will emulate this feeling. Release the “usual” tension of your instrument (or your body for instance, if you are a singer); find a way to play in a softer (in terms of reactivity, not power), mellower way.

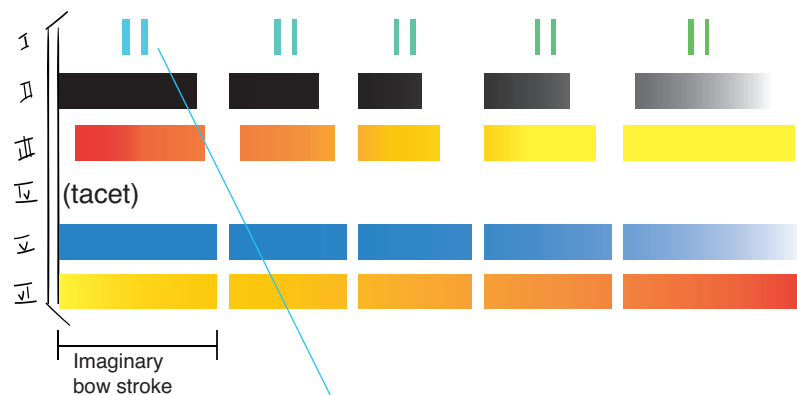
Now, imagine each one of you is a different string of a meta-cello. Each string can have a different sound quality. Some strings are vibrating during the whole length of the bow, some only for a part of it, some not at all for a while. (If you do not believe me, you have not listened to the files, or you have listened to them badly. Start again.) Some strings can just be plucked briefly while the others are bowed. But in no case can a sound continue over a change of bow. This means that you all have the same general rhythm: the rhythm of an imaginary, common meta-bow. This rhythm can be really slow (long bows), or rather fast (short bows). As you heard on the files, it is never perfectly regular. Avoid perfect regularity. Repetitions, yes, but always with some kind of life, meaning some kind of imperfection.

In order to achieve this imaginary common meta-bow, you can start by following the bow of a string player in the group of Improvisors, if there is one. Or someone can “conduct” imaginary bowings while playing. Hopefully later you will be able to get rid of the conductor and just handle the bow collectively.

So, having a common bow, what does that imply? It implies that every few seconds, there is a teeny-tiny articulation, even with the best legato bow of the world. But there can also be a proper accent every few seconds, or more often. Or even a break every few seconds. You know what can happen with a bow. You listened to the files already. The imaginary common meta-bow gives you a common pace.

Now, inside the quasi-homophony of the meta-cello, please consider the following parameters:

— Again, you do not have to play during the whole bow. You can vibrate only during part of it. Any part of it. You may also not play. Not all strings of the meta-cello have to vibrate constantly. Actually, only vibrate when you feel this is the right thing to do.



- As you heard in the files, enjoy anything you do, repeat it, a lot, but modify it constantly, steadily and lovingly too.
- You can all have a different sound quality, different dynamics, etc. The only common thing is the pace.
- Again, as you heard in the files, favour complex, rich sounds, as I wrote earlier.
- Always keep in mind that your personal sound is a part of the global sound of this imaginary common meta-cello. The global sound should be lively, colourful, beautiful, and alive too. Since you are a group, it means that some of your sounds can hardly change, as long as the global sound is always in the process of becoming something else.
- You also heard in the files some moments with short pizzicatos happening during the bowed sounds. This is possible to imitate. While the group is playing in the imaginary meta-bow pace, one or more Improvisors can play short interventions. But again, repeat them, vary them, give them a real, happy, fulfilling life.

— You play together with the Soloist. I have described your relationship earlier in *Performance, communication and recommendations*. One last word regarding the possible *ppppp* of the Soloist though: in order to not be louder than the latter, you always have the option to stop playing, as long as one Improvisor at least keeps on playing.

Again, the Ensemble will start their three *Unknown Pieces* whenever they feel it is right, so they will interrupt you three times. But after they are done, you have all the time in the world to finish your improvisation. It might be very short, or very long. You will feel it. It is in no way proportional to the drawings in the *Global Score*, page 21.

Movement IV
part 1: Verklärter Tag
3) Instructions for the Ensemble
(seven musicians or more)

General Concept

In *Verklärter Tag*, you, the musicians of the Ensemble, will intervene three times, in order to play three of the seven *Unknown Pieces* you will find below. Some of them are for one to three musicians, some are for one or two pairs of musicians, and one is free. You need to practice them all. On the day of the concert, you will play only three of them, but you will not know which of them until just before they start.

As you saw on the *Global Score* page 21, the three *Unknown Pieces* may happen at any moment during *Verklärter Tag*. The Soloist starts *Verklärter Tag*, and then the Improvisors join in. Always allow the Soloist and the Improvisors to enjoy whatever they are doing. We are not in a hurry. We should enjoy our moment on stage. At some point though, when any one of you, the musicians of the Ensemble, feels it is the right moment to start an *Unknown Piece*, announce it on the group message by sharing the title. (Example: Shakira can announce “Motive”, for *Unknown Motive*.) Then, give a few seconds to your colleagues to announce if they will join or not. Musicians who want to join should share their name in the group chat. (Example: “Gudule”, “Obi-Wan”, or simply “me”, since names usually appear on a chat group.) After a few seconds, Shakira sends “go”, and the trio Shakira/Gudule/Obi-Wan starts playing *Unknown Motive*. If no one wishes to join, Shakira plays *Unknown Motive* as a solo. Then *Unknown Motive* ends when the last musician of the trio (or the duet, or the solo) stops playing. At this precise moment, the Improvisors start playing again.

If you choose *Unknown Pair* or *Unknown Instrument*, you must announce the piece as well as the person you want to play it with. If a second pair wants to join, one musician must announce the name of the person who will be part of the second pair. The musicians who are “called” cannot refuse. (Example: Athena announces “Pair, Thor”, meaning she will play *Unknown Pair* together with Thor, and the latter cannot refuse.) Galina now has a few seconds to announce “Dmitri”, meaning she wants to play together with Dmitri and the latter cannot refuse either. Then Athena sends “go” and *Unknown Pair* starts.

Regarding the ending of each *Unknown Piece*, when you think it lasted long enough, stop playing. If you are alone, this is the end of the *Unknown Piece*. If you are in a duet or a trio, the *Unknown Piece* will end when the last musician stops playing. In *Unknown Pair* and *Unknown Instrument*, the first performer of a pair who stops playing ends the pair de facto. In *Unknown Squad*, the first performer who stops playing ends the piece.

Unknown Sound — for 1, 2 or 3 Performers

Play and hold a pitch-based sound which is still unknown to you. This means that the moment before you start it, you will not know what it will sound like. You can play one or two pitches (single or double stop on a string instrument for example), or a multiphonic, but you must not know how it will sound before you actually produce it, before you trigger the vibration. In order to do so, modify one or more parameters of your usual way of producing a sound: you can change the bow pressure, the bow position, the air pressure, the lips' pressure, the lips shape; if you are a singer, you can change the pressure in your body, the air flow; if you are a wind player, you can invent a strange fingering on the spot; you can also think of what a beginner would do "by mistake", and do it on purpose, and control it, stabilise it.

Whatever this sound is like, accept it. Hold it.

- If you love it, if it is expressive in any way (it can be beautiful, dark, rough, anything, as long as it has a personality), transform it very gradually and steadily by modifying at least two of its parameters: dynamics, pitch (preferably with a glissando), bow or lip pressure, bow or lip position/shape, bow speed, air pressure, adding or retrieving harmonics on a multiphonic, any two (or more) parameters, including any other kind of audible parameter. Yet the transformation into another sound must be so gradual and so steady that the spectators should realise only after a while that your sound has gone somewhere else. You should not change the pitch, or pitches, or multiphonics, more than twice during *Unknown*

Sound. When you do, use only intervals bigger than a minor third. (I consider anything smaller than a minor third, or a glissando, as a kind of variation rather than an actual change.)

- If you do not love the sound that came out, if it is not expressive in any way, has no personality, hold it anyway. Hold it and transform it gently and caringly until you love it, until it is worth living, like an ugly duckling you care for so much that it eventually blossoms into a magnificent swan, and then go back to the instructions of the previous bullet point.

Never stop modifying this sound. You may however change the parameters you are modifying. For example, you can first change the bow pressure while playing a slow glissando, and after a while change the dynamics while changing the bow position. Just take your time, go into details, and carve your sound with immense care.

When playing as a duet or a trio, do not forget that anything you do modifies your own sound and the group sound at the same time. Therefore, these individual guidelines also become the group guidelines. This means that you can modify your sound even more slowly since the group sound is modified by two or three musicians at the same time. Think of the trio (or the duet) as one meta-instrument you are just a part of, playing one complex meta-sound you are producing one part of.

Unknown Chord — for 1, 2 or 3 Performers

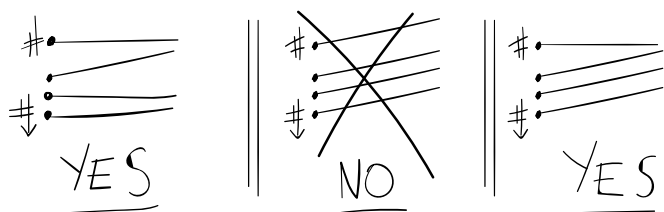
Play a chord of 3 to 7 sounds (made of 3 to 5 different pitch-classes maximum, meaning having two unisons and/or octaves when playing 7 sounds) that you never played, heard or read before. You can use any pitch including any kind of microtone, any scale, temperament, tuning, etc. Some of your pitches might even be multiphonics. You may play all the pitches at the same time (on a keyboard, a harp, a guitar...) or play them arpeggio (at any speed). This is up to you. But, in both cases you must reattack the chord (or the arpeggio) regularly with a tiny bit of permanent rubato. If you play arpeggio, there can be an

internal rubato inside the arpeggio itself that should change very slightly at each iteration.

All the other parameters of the chord are free: dynamics, sound quality, etc.

Right away, start modifying your chord very gradually and steadily, but never in a parallel way either:

- By modifying it by changing one pitch at a time with any interval smaller than a major third minus a quarter tone (using any kind of micro, semi and full tones). You do not have to modify all the pitches.
- Or by sliding the chord (on a cello or a fretless bass for example) but in a non-parallel way.



Besides the pitches, at least one parameter of the chord must be constantly, gradually and steadily modified: bow pressure, dynamics, lip shape, air pressure, anything. You should change any parameter you want to modify at any moment, but without ever being abrupt.

When playing as a duet or a trio, the attacks of the chord need not to be synchronised at all. You should all have your own pace, although it is not forbidden either to synchronise the attacks at some point for a while if it feels natural and beautiful.

When playing as a duet or a trio, do not forget that anything you do modifies your own chord and the group chord at the same time. Therefore, these individual guidelines also become the group guidelines. This means that you can modify your chord even more slowly since the group chord is modified by

two or three musicians at the same time. Think of the trio (or the duet) as one meta-instrument you are just a part of, playing one complex meta-chord you are producing one part of.

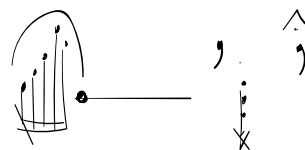
Unknown Noise — for 1, 2 or 3 Performers

The guidelines are exactly the same as those for *Unknown Sound* (above). Just replace the word “sound” by the word “noise”. By noise, I mean something unpitched, or very unclearly pitched. You may also modify the thickness of your noise (larger/narrower frequency band), as well as divide a single noise into two distinct noises and back. Besides these particularities, just apply the guidelines for *Unknown Sound*.

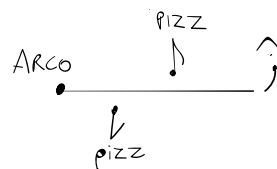
Unknown Motive — for 1, 2 or 3 Performers

Here is my definition of “motive” in this context: two, three or four distinct elements, played simultaneously or one after the other, over a short period of time. Short enough to not feel like “a phrase”.

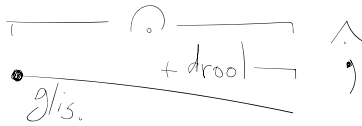
Example 1: 1 long note + 2 short notes (played during the long note)



Example 2: 1 appoggiatura + 1 long note + 1 short chord (played one after the other)



Example 3: 1 long note with a downward glissando + addition of a drool effect (added during the long note)



Play a motive you never played, heard or read in your life. You can use any pitch including any kind of microtone, any scale, temperament, tuning, any kind of noise, multiphonics, or any kind of sonic event.

Repeat it with a brief breath between each iteration. Change the duration of the breath very slightly every time, without ever being abrupt.

At each iteration, change at least two parameters, in a very gradual, steady and gentle manner:

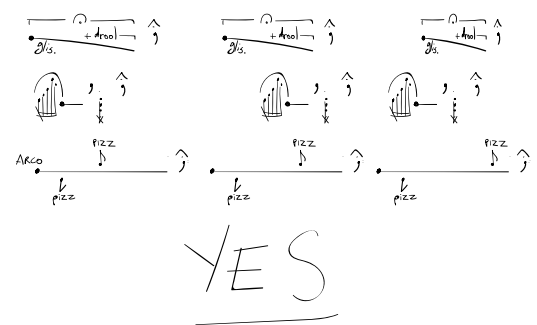
- Internal rhythm;
- Total duration;
- Sound parameters (dynamics, sound quality, etc.);
- Pitch, multiphonic, noise;
- Etc.

Any element of the motive can disappear either progressively or abruptly as long as the total number of events stays between 2 and 4.

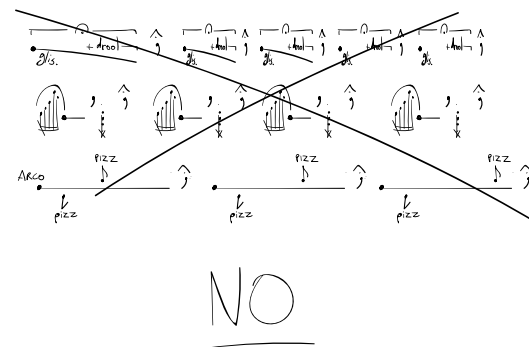
Never stop modifying this motive. You may change the parameters you are modifying though. For example, you can first change the bow pressure while playing a slow glissando, and after a while change the dynamics while changing the bow position. Just take your time, go into details, and carve your motive with immense care.

Unlike the previous three *Unknown Pieces*, when playing as a duet or a trio,

build one single meta-motive synchronised vertically. Therefore, these individual guidelines become the group guidelines, and are not individual anymore. This means that the meta-motive, in the case of a trio, is made of minimum 6 (2 motives times 3 people) and maximum 12 (4 motives times 3 people) elements. You must breathe all together, even though the motives themselves can be of different durations. In this case, the shorter motives happen (once, with a breath of corresponding duration) during the longest one. This also means that you can modify the meta-motive even more slowly since the group motive is modified by two or three musicians at the same time.



(The motives are synchronised vertically.)



(The motives are not synchronised vertically.)

Unknown Pair — for 2 or 4 Performers

Unlike the previous four *Unknown Pieces*, *Unknown Pair* is to be played by 2 or 4 musicians (no solo, no trio).

If you decide to play *Unknown Pair* during the concert, you must announce it on the group chat together with the name of the musician you want to play it with. (Example, if you want to play it with Apichatpong: “Pair, Apichatpong”.) Take into consideration where Apichatpong is located compared to you. Since you will need to play on one single instrument, Apichatpong will need to join you, or you will need to join him. If he is on the opposite side of the venue, this might not be such a great idea.

Now for example, let’s say Apichatpong is within reach. He plays the flute, and you play the saxophone. Apichatpong replies in the group chat by deciding which instrument you guys will play together: “Sax” (he will then join you), or “flute” (you will then join him).

Allow a few seconds for any other musician who would wish to form another pair. This possible other musician will call someone on the group chat. The latter will choose which one of their instruments they will play together. When everything is set, send the message “go” or “now” and start *Unknown Pair*.

So, as you probably already understood, the concept of *Unknown Pair* consists of two musicians playing on one single instrument. But you should choose an instrument only if each musician’s actions have an actual influence on the other one’s. For example, on a flute, one performer can blow, while the other one changes the fingerings. On a cello, one musician can play the bow, while the other one plays the left hand. On a keyboard, do not play four hands since this is not an actual mutual influence. But, for example, one musician can be on the keyboard while the other one prepares or interacts with the strings that are being played on the keyboard. I cannot think right now of a way to do this with a singer, but there might be a (not too trivial nor sordid) way to do it. When the pair is established (or the two pairs), play any of the above

Unknown Pieces on your common instrument. If you are two pairs, you may play two different *Unknown Pieces* simultaneously as a duet.

Unknown Squad — for any Number of Performers (piece by Alex Dexter-Mills)

The guidelines are the same as those for *Unknown Pair*, but with an unlimited number of performers playing on one instrument.

Unknown Instrument — for 2 or 4 Performers

The guidelines are the same as those for *Unknown Pair*, except that instead of joining forces on one single instrument with your partner, you will exchange your instruments and play your partner’s instrument next to the latter, while the latter plays your instrument. (You will go back to your usual spot with your usual instrument after *Unknown Instrument* is over.)

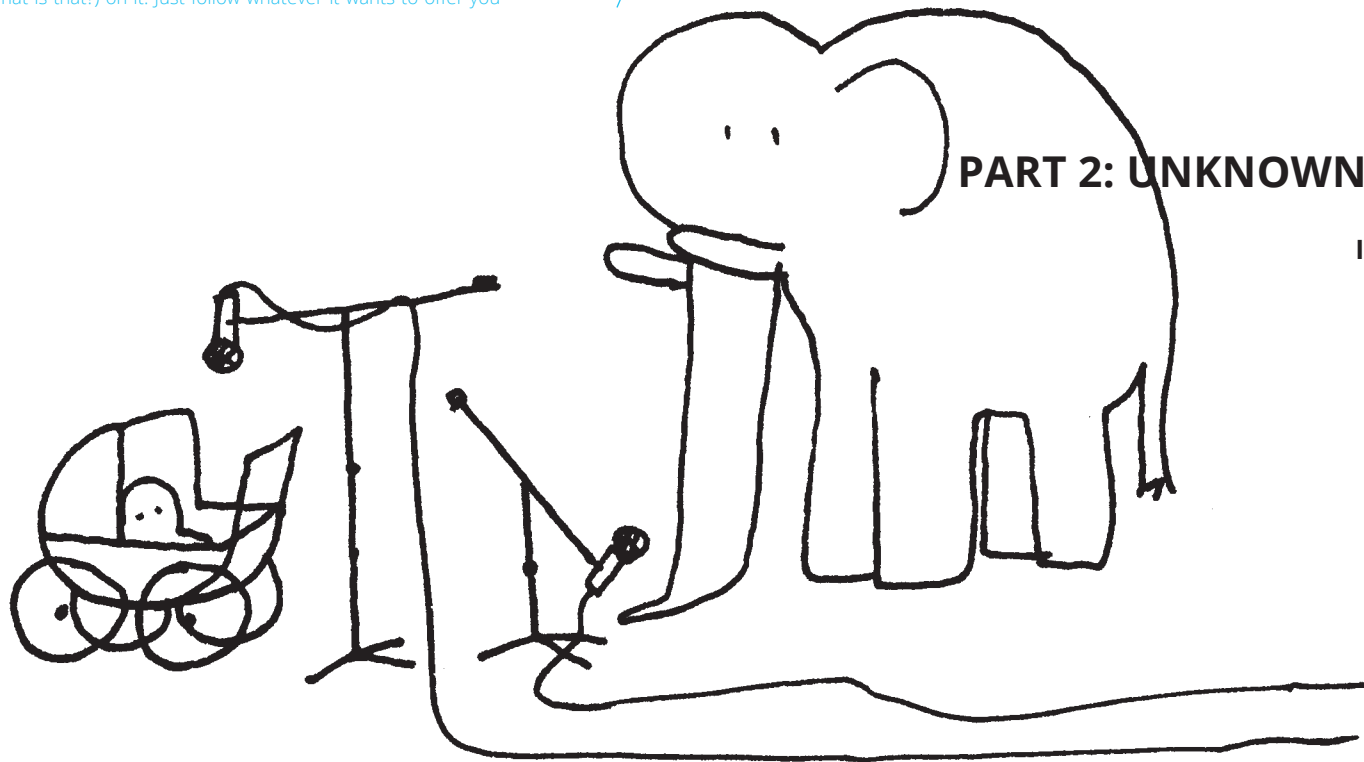
It is very important that when you call a partner, you take into consideration that both of you should be unfamiliar with each other’s instrument. If you are a cello player and you exchange with a flute player, but you happen to also know how to play the flute, it does not work. You must discover the instrument while playing *Unknown Instrument*.

All two or four musicians of *Unknown Instrument* can perform a different *Unknown Piece* (out of the first four ones) at the same time.

This is a drawing I commissioned to Andreas Kundig, one of the three or four funniest persons on the planet, in 2007 to illustrate a series of concerts and performances I was doing at the Théâtre du Grütli (Geneva, Switzerland) that year. It pretty much sums up everything I would like to say with the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*. I am not sure there is any ugly sound per se. There are ugly contexts. An alarm going off in my house in the middle of the night for no reason, a whining kid in a plane, dogs barking randomly, or a new work by Alexander Schubert: of course, all of these things are profoundly and aggressively annoying. Now make all the alarms of the street go off together, with different pitches and different paces of glissando; after a few bars, add one whiny kid in each house and organise one homophonic duet per house with a barking dog; finally, put A. Schubert in a soundproof bin, preferably in the former whiny kid's plane setting sail for the sun; now, sit in the middle of the road: you have got a beautiful, powerful sound and visual installation.

This applies to your instrumental sound as well. It might be "wrong" when you play Hildegard von Bingen, Clara Schumann or Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou, since they require very specific intonation and sound quality. But whatever your sound is, you can make music with it. You just need to make the music that can be born from this sound. This is why I am asking you to listen to your sound, and trust it, this is why I am saying your instrument knows. Don't force a "beautiful sound" (what is that?) on it. Just follow whatever it wants to offer you

when you change a bit the lips pressure, the air flow, the right-hand technique, whatever. All your life you have tried to tame your instrument, but you may have forgotten it knows a lot more things than we generally are asking it to do. It is now time to release it. Be the person that will take out its chain and let it return to the wild. And when you become the instrument of freedom of your instrument, when your instrument will be using you to sing freely, instead of you using it, just go hand in hand with it towards a shimmering group sound.



MOVEMENT IV

PART 2: UNKNOWN COMBINATION

Instructions for Everyone

All the musicians now play together. Of course, individually, you do not have to constantly produce sound, and should even remain silent for as long as you wish, but you are all part of *Unknown Combination*.

You, the Soloist, carry on using your material from *Verklärter Tag*, but without the concept of being a soloist or an accompanist: you are these two things at the same time, you are part of the group. You can also start with or return to silence at any time. When using the directional material, take their arrival state in *Verklärter Tag* (mostly extreme registers).

You, the Improvisors, keep on using your material from *Verklärter Tag*. Each of you can also start with or return to silence at any time.

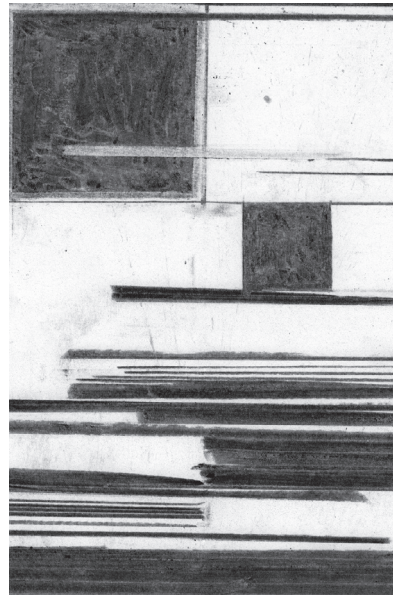
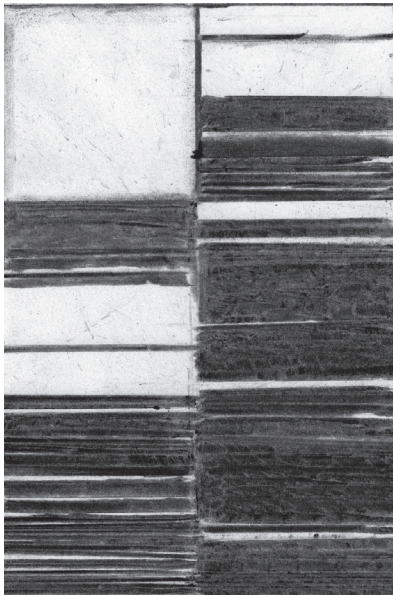
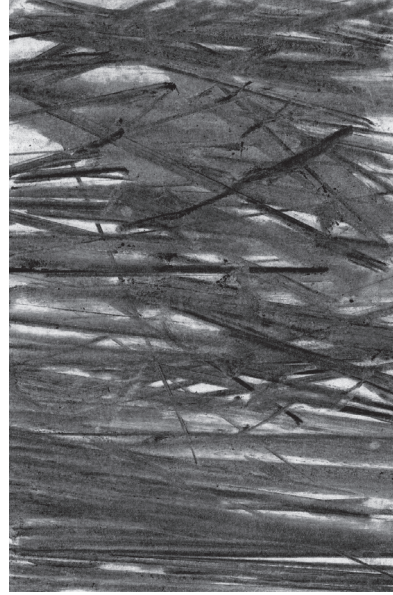
You, the performers of the Ensemble, each choose freely any of the first four *Unknown Pieces* above. No need to announce it anymore, you are on your own, and part of the whole group at the same time. However, if you want to play specifically as a sub-group at some point, then announce which one and whom you want to play it with on the group chat and proceed with it. At some point, you may individually switch to a new *Unknown Piece* freely, but only if you have exhausted the previous one, only if it feels right to change. Each of you can also start with or return to silence at any time.

All of you, the Soloist, the Improvisors and the musicians of the Ensemble, play together as one big ensemble, but you do not have to synchronise your different kinds of material in any way. Yet, it is still allowed and perfectly fine to synchronise them at some point. If this happens, do this for a while. And then leave it.

Enjoy playing all together. Enjoy filling the space. Love your sound. Love your fellow musicians' sound. Love the group sound. Offer it a long, happy, shimmering life. You are at least twelve people playing together, so enjoy not playing too. Listen to your colleagues for long moments, then join in for long moments, then leave again. There can be only one musician playing, or twelve, or any combination in between. But produce sound only if you feel it is right.

You are now part of a very complex meta-instrument, listen to the sound of the group, you may make it live by playing or by being silent, but you are always part of the sound group.

Unknown Combination lasts for as long as at least one performer is still playing.



CUT

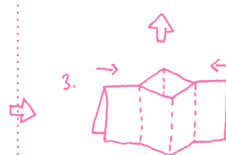
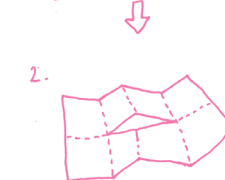
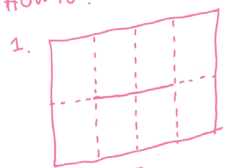
page 6

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HOW TO :



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CUT

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(Pages 39 to 40: Score by Aude Barrio, Summer 2016. Can be removed from this book and performed by any free ensemble.)

page 5

page 4

page 3

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CUT

GOOD OL' POSTERITY

OR: "REMEMBER CICILY FARQUAR — PLEASE?"





Seven Ustvol'skayas

SEVEN (OR MORE) HAMMER LADIES

For the Ensemble (seven or more Performers)

Duration: 6 minutes or more

Performers and Instruments

You, the musicians of the Ensemble of *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*, play *Seven (or more) Hammer Ladies*.

Each of you sings. You can have any type of voice, any ambitus, any timbre.

Each of you also has two sticks:

- one soft stick; preferably quite thick, a tam tam or a timpani stick for example;
- one hard stick; any kind, from a drum set wooden stick to a glockenspiel stick with a metallic head.

Performance and Tips

Remember you have to be spread into the whole space of the concert venue. You must preferably be hidden, but still be quite near the spot you chose for *Movement IV* and in a spot that offers two different percussive sounds. (See *Concept and Instructions for the Percussion* below.)

Since the cue for the beginning of *Seven Hammer Ladies* might be unclear if you are hidden, you may use a group chat on any phone application to give the departure. More simply, you can take Performer A's first hit as the departure cue for the singing (see *Instructions* below), but this is particularly difficult if *Seven Hammer Ladies* is at the beginning of *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*. Then all the rest of the piece is played by ear.



The voice part and the percussion part are to be played together and simultaneously by each musician. (See the *Instructions* and *Global Score* below.) Practice them separately, though. When you are confident with both, put them together.

Concept and Instructions for the Voice

The voice part is derived from the Shepard tone. This process is used in electroacoustic music and was made popular by Jean-Claude Risset. It sounds like an “infinite” glissando. By mixing, in a specific way, octaves and dynamics, the listener perceives a continuous glissando that perpetually goes up (or down).

In order for this process to work, the glissando must be sufficiently slow so as to prevent the ear from “catching” the diminuendo in the highest voice or the crescendo in the lowest voice. (In the case of an ascending shepard.) The ear has to “jump” unconsciously to the lower ascending octave.

For *Seven Hammer Ladies* (as well as in previous works of mine), I have applied this process to the human voice but have abandoned the strict parallelism between the different voices. The glissando of each voice “melts” into the other voices through the use of dynamics.

The glissando for each voice must not be strictly regular: it can evolve at different speeds as long as the musicians use approximately the same pace. The jumps between each individual cycle should also be scattered between the performers. (See upper part of the score.) The listener will be confused enough by the glissandos and the dynamics, and therefore will hear an infinite glissando as an end result.

It is also essential that the highest voice always ends up each cycle being covered by the others, and that the lowest voice begins each cycle covered by the others. This way, the beginning of the lowest glissando and the end of the highest glissando are rendered inaudible.

You can sing using any convenient vowel. You can also hum for the *ppppp* singing at the beginning, and open/close your mouth for the *crescendos/diminuendos* if you find it more convenient.

There is no tempo indication for this process. Any tempo that “hides the trick” of the Shepard tone is correct. If you sing too fast, the loop becomes too obvious. The larger the ambitus is, the more you need to decrease the tempo. The goal is to find the speed that works best (for your specific group). My advice is to favour slowness. After a few rehearsals, you will find your perfect duration for a cycle. You all stop singing as soon as the last percussion part is over.

Breathe briefly whenever you need it, as well as on the pitch jump, but preferably never simultaneously with another performer.

The general dynamic follows the percussion part. In other words, the cycle will get louder and louder, reach a peak, and remain loud until the end. (See *Concept and Instructions for the Percussion* below.)

On the score, you will find a version for seven voices. If you are more than seven musicians in odd numbers, divide the total ambitus into more voices, each one singing smaller intervals. Just make sure that the lowest pitch of a given voice is lower than the highest pitch of the voice immediately under, and that the highest pitch of a given voice is higher than the lower pitch of the

voice immediately over. This way, all the glissandos are interweaved. Another option is to double any voice, except, if possible, the lowest and highest ones.

Concept and Instructions for the Percussion

These instructions and the score (page 45) are for seven musicians but can be applied to as many musicians as needed by adding the corresponding number of parts. A greater number of performers would make the piece last longer, as each performer begins and finishes freely one after the other.

Each one of you must find a spot in the venue with two surfaces (of any nature) to hit:

- a resonant one with the soft stick, such as a vibrating metallic structure, a hollow wooden surface, a slightly soft door, anything;
- a dry one with the hard stick, such as a fire extinguisher, a hard floor or wall, the skull of a living composer, anything.

The two surfaces must be solid enough to be struck loudly and powerfully without breaking.

You choose a leader who happens to be the most central or loudest one of you, that everyone else will be able to hear both in the *ppppp* and the *fffff*. The leader is referred to as Leader on the score. The other musicians are freely attributed the other voices.

As you will see on the score, each musician starts with the soft stick *ppppp* and then performs a crescendo to *fffff*. When Performer A adds the hard stick, all the other musicians do the same thing and they all play *fffff*. After a while, you all stop one after the other, freely and irregularly. The last active musician must play alone for some time before stopping. The total duration of this process must be at least 6 minutes.

Now the rhythm of the hits follows a strict instruction: every time you hit (with any of the two sticks), you must wait for the resonance of the sound to end, and then strike right away. This means that as you will play louder and louder, your soft stick is likely to play more and more slowly (as the resonance should be longer). Then from the *ffff* on, its rhythm will be consistent. Regarding the hard stick, since it only plays *fffff*, its rhythm will be consistent, and probably quite fast because of the dry sounding surface.

Global Score

● = Start and finish on any pitch included in the potato note.

Repeat these cycles as many times as needed.

VOICE

PERCUSSION

Stop singing exactly when the last musician playing the sticks stops.



As soon as A starts playing with the hard stick, all the other musicians add theirs too. After a while, they all stop playing one after the other (both sticks at the same time), freely and irregularly, except one (undefined) musician.



A starts. All the other musicians enter one after the other freely and irregularly, when they feel like it. They all reach the *ffff* after a while.



The *tutti ffff* state lasts for a while.



The last remaining musician keeps on playing for a while before eventually stopping too.

LEADER

OTHERS

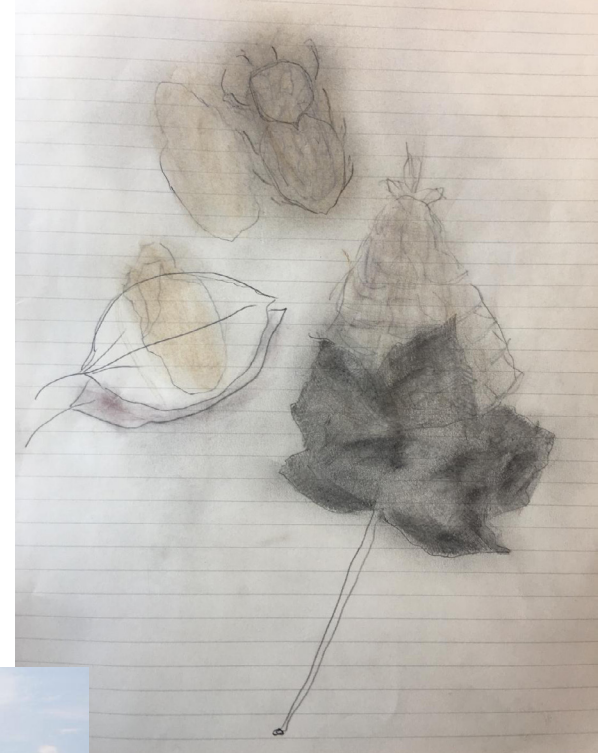
(The order of these entries and the duration of these crescendos are just examples.)

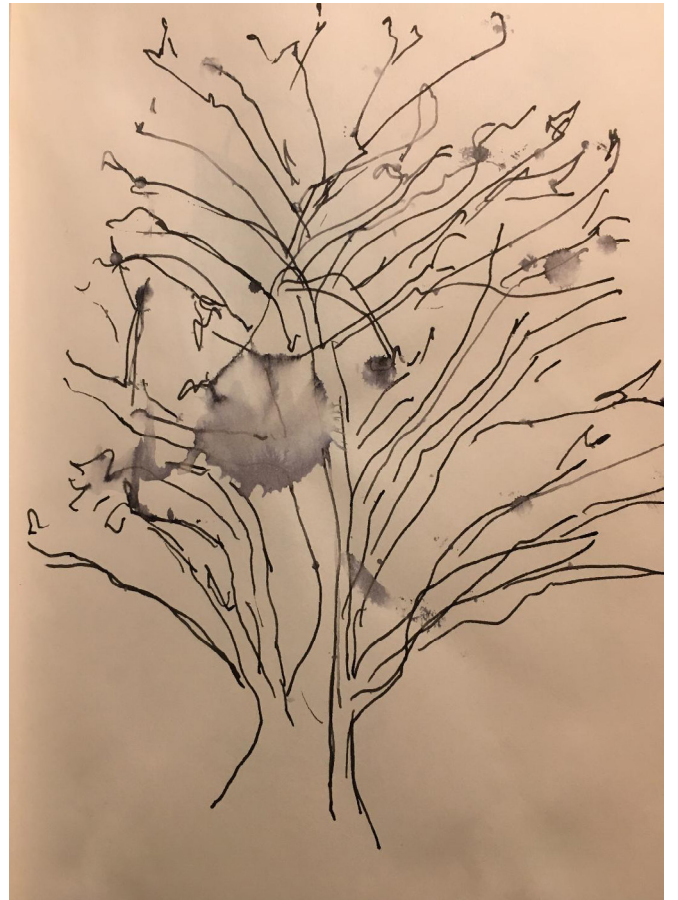
(The musicians can stop playing in any order, and any of them can be the last one. This is just an example.)

↘ = soft stick

↗ = hard stick

"These images are the sweet, happy, harsh or melancholic traces of a *femme seule*." (Karelle Ménéne, 19 October 2019.)







Bearded composer and fool hanging from a Cypriot contemporary idol's neck (allegory). ©the author (2009), published with the full and happy consent of the idol.



Chalcolithic idol, Cyprus Museum. ©Thomas Lauer (2005).



For the Soloist (speaking voice)
Duration: about 7 minutes

Performer and Performance

You, the Soloist of the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule*, will read *II*.

You will read the text rather enthusiastically, in a friendly, spontaneous manner. The proper tone of your voice should be the one a presenter would adopt to share informally a pleasant anecdote about a composer who is going to be performed. Your discreet casualness and your genuine good mood must never be altered by the sombre story being told.

Visually speaking, I would say you should address the audience like for a normal, casual program introduction. You can have the text in hand, which emphasises, in my opinion, the casualness of the situation, but you should be familiar enough with the text to make it flow.

The Text

Hi. Good evening. So, I lived in Cyprus for a few years some time ago. I met this wonderful man there, I'll call him II for the story. II's got an interesting story indeed. When he was a young teenager in Cyprus, he was living in a beautiful village in the North of the island. One day a group of young people belonging to EOKA β came to his house. EOKA β was the Greek Cypriot criminal organisation serving the extreme right wing junta that wanted to get rid of the Turkish Cypriots and also wanted a so-called reunification with Greece. As a reminder, the last time Cyprus was Hellenic was in the 9th century. Before Christ. Since then it has been Phoenician, Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Roman, Byzantine, Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman, and British, but this is another story.

So, these young EOKA β lads came to II's house and told his older brother, a young lad himself doing his military service at that time, to go with them, in order to find and kill a group of rebel soldiers who refused to serve the coup. As he was not a big fan of the

junta himself, he told off the EOKA β lads, who, in response, shot him dead in front of II and his mother, calling him "a traitor".

II told me they knew the young lads. He and his brother had been playing football with some of them a few weeks earlier. They were neighbours. Just like the Greek Cypriot rebels and the Turkish Cypriot civilians these lads would end up killing. In the meantime, as the junta had managed their coup, backed-up by the Greek military dictatorship of the time, they had put all the leftists of the island in prison. This included II's father. They were liberated only later, when the Turkish army arrived and entered Cyprus like a knife in yogurt. There is a little-known fact, not to say a denied fact on this topic: when the Turkish army arrived, some Greek Cypriots rang their local church bells in celebration, because they knew it'd mean their leftist husbands, fathers and brothers would be freed. They could not know at this point that the Turks would occupy a third of the island a few weeks later. Forty years later the occupation is still going on.

Let's go back to before the Turkish invasion. At this stage, if II had been Steven Seagal, he would have avenged his brother's death and freed his father by killing the whole junta with his bare hands one fascist at the time. Then the war of summer 1974 would never have happened, saving the lives of many, including all these Greek Cypriot teenagers who were sent by their glorious leaders to the front with the benediction of the Church, crappy guns from the 40's and two bullets in their holster, just in order to make martyrs for future street names. This handful of neurotic separatists would not have plunged the country into chaos, dividing it in two, offering de facto a third of their land and citizens to mainland Turkey, triggering a massive exodus, and destroying five Centuries of profound friendship, not to say brotherhood, between two cultures, religions and languages that had become beautifully and movingly entangled.

But Π was no Steven Seagal. On the contrary, at this very moment, Π decided to be the most genuinely benevolent man I ever met in my life. Whatever the circumstances have been since, he has always managed to be the best possible human. Even when he arrived in England as a refugee and was kicked out of the country right away for not having the correct piece of paper, he did not abandon his benevolence. And yes, England told him that running away from your village with your mother, your younger siblings and three chickens in an old Mercedes when it's 45° because the Turkish army is arriving with tanks and planes to burn it down is no excuse for not calmly finding your nearest war-zone UK embassy, cueing for a few days and getting the appropriate coupon. It's a good thing that nowadays Europe is so much more welcoming with refugees. (This is where you may laugh.)

Anyway. Forty years later, I met Π in Nicosia, the most beautifully melancholic city in the world, with its scar running between narrow streets from one side of its Venetian wall to the other, to this day. Π is genuinely benevolent, caring and generous with his family, his friends, his employees, his sons-in-law... With everyone around him. You might think it's a Christian thing, he wants to be loved by God, or by the others, or to earn some points for his ticket to paradise. Well it is not. He could not care less about judgment, even the judgment of God. Π is just one of these exceptional guys who are programmed to genuinely spread benevolence and generosity all around. He just cannot act, nor think otherwise.

The last time I saw Π, he was back from the yearly memorial at his local church for the victims of the 1974 war. The name of his brother was mentioned in the list of victims of the Turkish invasion, even though he had been shot weeks before that. The real murderers, the EOKA β lads who were now in their early sixties, were proudly standing next to the Orthodox priests and local politicians reading the names.



Electricity boxes, Cyprus.
©the author (2016).

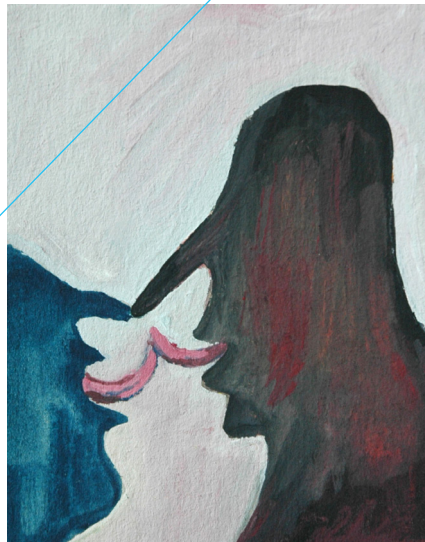


©George Gabriel (2000).



Jésus II, le retour (1991), screenshot. ©Les Inconnus.

These considerations about kisses bring me other thoughts. As soon as Manon declared “the musicians will kiss”, I was blown away on one side by a wind of enthusiasm (that I explained in the other light blue text) and blown away on the other side by a wind of panic: “this is a university production; the ethics committee will be on my back”. Oh, the evil self-censorship. Let us be clear: we cannot advance any cause, be it artistic or social, without breaking some conventions (and here we advance both types of causes). But then, as I confessed in another light blue text, here I am, in the skin of a subsidised wolf. Am I free, or am I my studentship’s dog? At the risk of disappointing my most fanatic readers, I shall not answer with a romantic cliché, sweeping away everything with a twirl of my sleeve. Experience has taught me eventually that one can negotiate, not in order to split the difference half-way, but to achieve one’s own ends. (All the more as I suspect the dog handlers to have invited the wolf to guard the sheep very consciously: my paw print was all over my CV.) Except that in order to negotiate, one needs to start by proposing. On this matter, Manon caught me red-handed: I already had the reflex of self-censorship. Thank you, therefore, Manon, of having put me back *sine die* on the right track of untamed integrity. If the ethics committee resists, I will know how to convince them of the merits of our approach, should I French kiss them myself, one member at a time.



Pelle. ©Nicolas Party (2007).

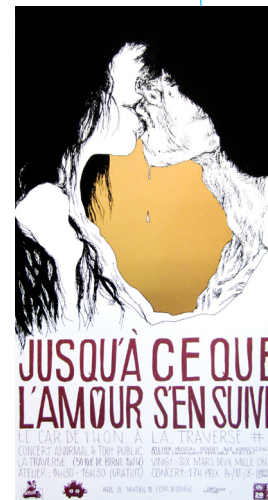
This permanent return of the kiss in my work is kind of amusing. All the more so as Manon, whom I only met recently, does not know much about my work. Yet she suggested this spontaneously, without me explaining more about the project than “it is going to be for ensemble”.

Because no, these kisses will not be a first in my career. Kisses, or, more globally, intimacy. My work, however, is not about intimacy between lovers (that would be too easy), but intimacy between strangers. One might see this as a reaction to my father’s inability to love anyone, possibly including himself, but this light blue text is too narrow to contain my psychoanalysis — which remains to be undergone. I will thus content myself with more direct explanations. We live in a society of hyper-individualists. This is no revelation. Capitalism, far from encouraging idiosyncrasies to bloom within a group, normalises, on the contrary, individuals in order to isolate them more efficiently. Fine. What can be done against that? Discourses are often powerless. Therefore, loving each other, “for the length of a song”, meaning trust each other, from one homo sapiens to the other, might eventually allow us to survive as a species, or, more modestly, as a civilisation.

Henceforth, a part of my production of music and performance art has been about making possible, or actually authorising, against a societal super-ego, intimacy: between two musicians (*Opus 69*, 2005, and *Opus 40 centimetres*, 2009), between a musician and the audience members (*my piece with something like hope in the end*, 2010), between performance artists and their audience (*the Cypriot Ball of Bodies and Souls*, 2016), between two performance artists (*le bisou*, 2018), and so on. “Will you bloody love one another, goddammit?” yells a fake Sylvester Stallone in the role of Jesus according to the French comedians Les Inconnus. And this is exactly and simply what we are talking about. If, on a stage, land of utopia par excellence, we are not able to kiss each other for a few seconds, genuinely and generously, while we work, talk and live together sometimes for years, then are we humans or robots? Against oppression: bloody love one another, goddammit.



©unknown.



Poster. ©Bastien Gachet (2011).



©lidl.de.



©unknown.

LE BAISER PAR CONTAGION

Manon Parent

For all the Performers

Duration: unknown

“Action de poser sa bouche sur le visage, le corps de quelqu’un ou sur un objet quelconque.”

“The communication of disease from one person or organism to another by close contact.”

The act of kissing, in the context of the *Symphonie pour une femme seule*

- questions what certain established social boundaries are, why they are, and if they should be;
- is a process of understanding how intimacy between people is or is not at play in art making and how; furthermore, it asks how this intimacy influences collaborations, potentially in a productive way because depending on communication, trust and complicity;
- is an element of surprise, intended to freshen up the attention of the audience;
- is a suspension of time, a surface on which to slip and surf, a pool;
- is a dive into someone else’s mouth;
- is somewhat absurd, somewhat natural.

Le Baiser par Contagion Performed

The way I imagine this kiss interlude is, in respect and consideration of all political, personal, sensual and emotional implications it may have for each and all involved performers and watchers, very factual and technical.

Kissing here, shall be seen as an extension of the music playing, or else can be understood as sculpture making.

Sometimes it is a leap of faith to strike a string with a bow and establishing a connection between two mouths shall be seen as such: an encounter between two surfaces which reveal two respectively fascinating universes and may induce pleasurable or disturbing consequences.

The friction of a kiss is no different from the frictions or impacts which we use to create sound. Kissing even makes sound itself.

In terms of rhythm, the kiss will spread, “contagiously”, and over the right amount of time, among all performers.

Le Baiser par Contagion Rehearsed

Rehearsing will consist of talking about it collectively. Each person will be able to talk about their personal experiences, boundaries, fears, fantasies revolving around kissing. They will also be given the opportunity to listen to their colleagues.

We will learn and establish together physical ways to approach each other in a respectful, professional, technical and creative way. This will eventually lead to building a proper kissing score. Communication and consent are at the center of this process of writing the kissing score.

No one will be forced to kiss another person. As defined at the top of the page, kisses can be directed to objects, therefore one may also kiss objects if it is preferable. There is also no restriction in terms of how many people can kiss at the same time, that is to say, group kisses are allowed.

The discussion and practice will revolve around the relationship between kissing, love, freedom and transgression (of social preconceptions, of one’s own internal boundaries or apprehension).

(Pages 55-56 written by Manon Parent.)



©Aude Barrio (2008).

When a disorder of [the Crazy Dog syndrome] type occurs in a particularly dramatic form or threatens to provoke a public crisis, or even when it simply stimulates the group's imagination, it acquires so great a "social mass" that special measures may be taken to control it and possibly exploit it for the benefit of the group.

(...)

Ethnic neuroses are controllable; this is one of their distinctive traits. (...) The Crazy Dog is easy to control because, being consistently negativistic, he does the opposite of what he is told to do. Thus, when a mounted Crazy Dog gallops toward a group of people eating in front of their *tipi*, one need only shout, "Come, trample on us," to make him turn aside. Moreover, the Crazy Dog is negativistic *only* to the extent to which he is expected to be. Thus, if a warrior wishing to pay homage to this hero, dedicated to glorious death, sends his wife to him for a night, the Crazy Dog proves normally cooperative and cohabits with her without needing the command, "Don't cohabit with this woman!"



Devereux, G., 1980. *Basic Problems of Ethnopsychiatry*, chapter 1, *Normal and Abnormal*. 1st ed. Chicago: Chicago Press.

*Ce que le temps oublie,
que décèle, encore, la poésie...*

des vestiges de fleurs entre les pages d'un livre
à peine lisibles sur une tablette assyrienne:

*des fleuves de sang ennemi,
dans les torrents ;
une plaine illuru –
rouge fleur/rouge sang*

quelques éléments d'une botanique de la mélancolie,

quand les déserts s'accumulent,
et que les jardins s'assèchent,
au seuil d'une saison froide

domine la cou-
leur sombre
souffle le vent du
nord

(: ainsi le veut le moyen-âge chrétien,
son discours-monde)

de l'hellébore pour la mélanco-
lie

et ailleurs:

de l'illuru pour les hémorragies

ainsi le veut la poésie:

la saison froide,
les jardins en ruines
de l'imagination

tandis qu'ailleurs on se questionne
à propos d'autrefois:

*le contraire des fleurs
l'hiver?
ses racines?*

(l'arme tranchante du détachement)

Ferai-je encore pousser
des violettes dans les jardins?
Des géraniums
que je poserai dans le ciel
derrière la fenêtre?

aux âmes végétatives,
qui puisent leur force du sol
et
croissent

opposer le lieu d'acédie, le jardin minéral
de l'être *trassailitz* (muet, jeté hors de soi)

[d'où nécessité pour le corps
en déprise de voyager;
besoin de déplacement
pour s'en aller
retrouver quelque chose de soi:
fragment d'âme, arbre de vie...
tirer le sort poétique
qui, peut-être,
ramène aux sens]

où gèlent les quatre fleuves, ses quatre jardins,
la terre et l'arbre sec qui en marque le confin;
où les langues se retournent de n'avoir pas su
parler pas pule faire; où les langages se perdent dans les méandres
de leurs chemins tortueux,
incapables d'arriver.

les lèvres rouge sang
la langue boueuse, ses conquêtes violentes

*trancher
faire des coupes
tracer des lignes aux corps,
aux territoires*

quelques détails infimes,
quelques traces, sanglantes,

de la couleur de l'illuru

rouge hémorragie
des plantes analogiques,
qui soignent par partage de propriétés

[ses parents ont dit qu'elle se scarifiait; qu'elle avait des troubles
alimentaires ne mangeait plus, mangeait trop]

dans les ruines du jardin
alors que gisent les violettes
les géraniums

les livides
les insaisissables
les impatientes et celles qu'on ne touche pas
on déterre la *flors enversa*,
ses délicates racines tendues au ciel

qui chamboule le monde
sans lieu ni ordre

(pour la maladie impossible à situer,
la plante qu'on ne peut ni cueillir
ni attraper, de la famille des insaisissables);

la langue de la fouille; un mot extrait du passé, intact (comme
une coupe en argent bruni, comme une statue poussiéreuse
retrouvée dans une collection du XIX^e siècle)

(faire re-luire ces éclats de mots des corps à suturer)

*Ainsi, si une recette médicinale
fait référence à des déjections humaines
ou au rongeur hulû, il s'agit de
mots-couverture. Le véritable ingrédient
à utiliser est le šumuttu, une drogue utile
contre les hémorragies; mais le šumuttu
peut aussi être remplacé par la plante
illuru verte (qui, d'habitude, est rouge)*

Dans le jardin des racines, ce qu'on croit retrouver par-delà les époques, les lieux : fragments végétaux encore à cueillir ; des mots brisés qu'on reconnaît mais qu'on ne connaît plus – jamais utilisés, sans doute, à cet état de démembrement initial dont on veut qu'ils proviennent.

[quels textes émergeraient de ces racines de mots, de ces ossements ? Jardin mélancolique, langue acédique des morts ?]

une fleur rouge
connue sous le nom d'*illuru*
avec une baie rouge,
est fréquemment représentée dans la main des rois,
des courtiers et des déités,

mais ne peut être identifiée

topographie incertaine (mon corps,
le dehors)

la croissance douloureuse des trembles au jardin

par-delà la saison sèche, assoiffée,

avec moi

une femme, seule

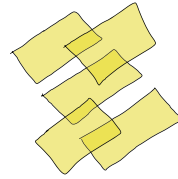


Untitled. ©Emilia Giudicelli (2018).

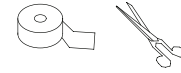
I said "highly partial". It's okay if you are not in it. I still think you are great.

Highly partial journal of awesome artists I met these past two years in chronological order (September 2016-October 2018): Sophie Fetokaki, Emilia Giudicelli, Judith Desse, Cléa Chopard, Gaia Blandina, Fernanda Aoki Navarro, Manon Parent, Lynette Quek, Charlotte Norman, Outi Condit, Karla Isidorou, Camille Rosset, Shiva Khosravi, Emilie Girard-Charest.

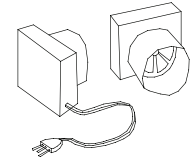
Making the Bubble Seats



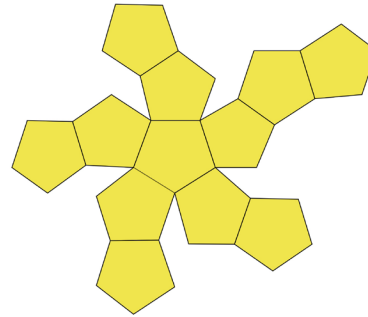
plastic sheets



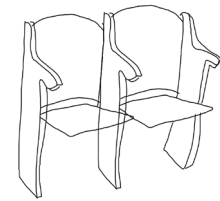
scotch tape



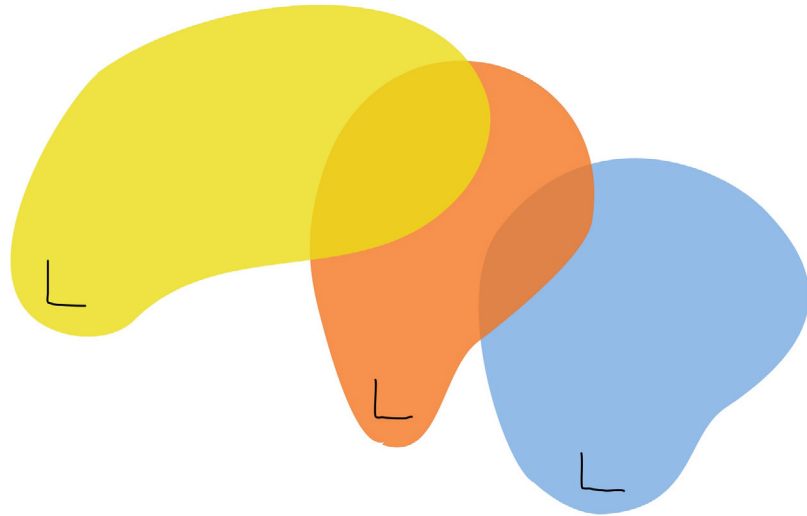
air blowers



geometry



audience seats



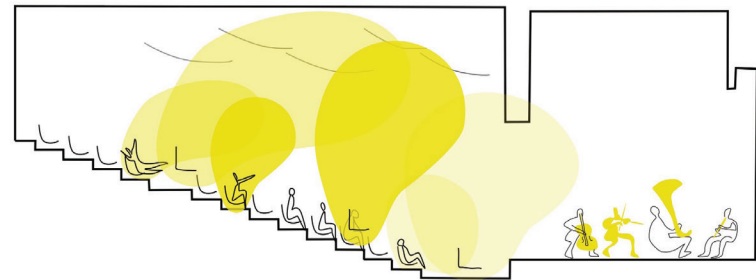
BUBBLE SEATS

Irene Gil Lopez

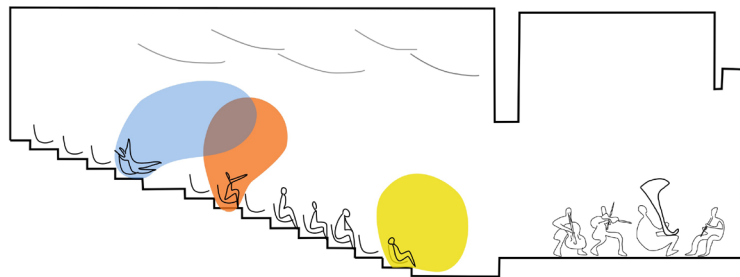
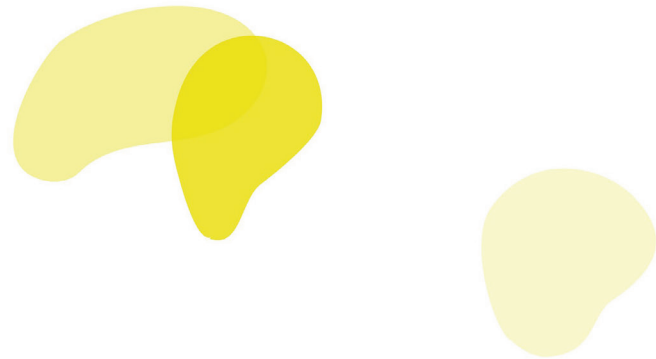
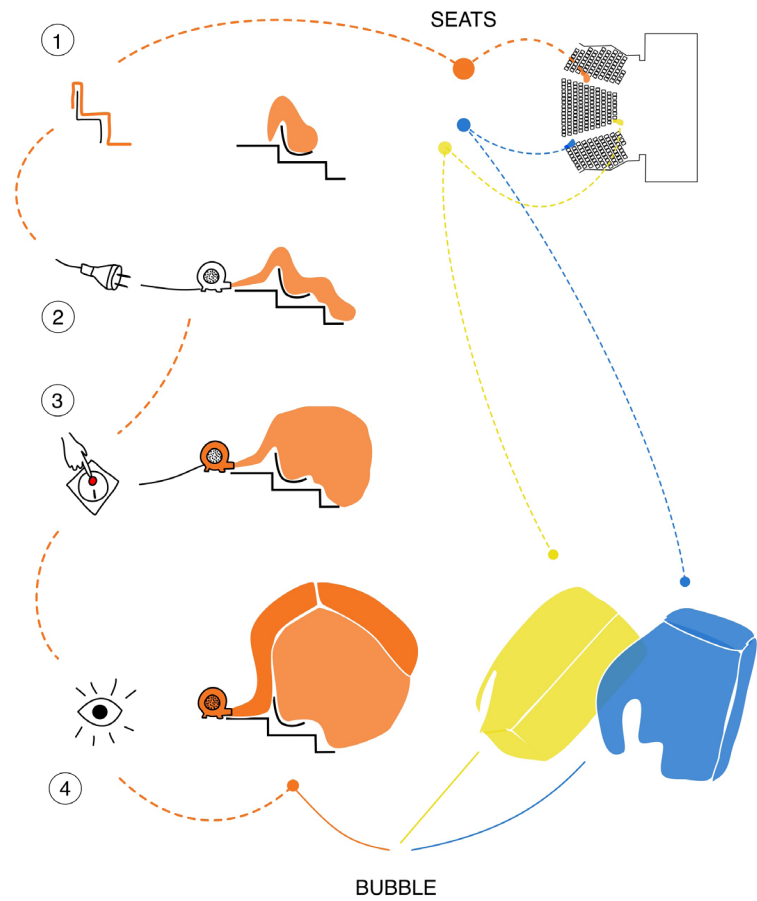
Art Installation

Duration: unknown

(Pages 62-63 designed by Irene Gil Lopez)



Bubbling Instructions



www.irenegil.com
05072018



Stills from three untitled iPhone films.
©the author (December 2018, West Yorkshire).



NO TITLE
Mélissa Garcia Carro

THE HYPERTROPHIED HEART
Emilia Giudicelli

Videos
Duration: unknown

Screening

There is 1 video by Mélissa Garcia Carro, *No Title*, and 1 series of short clips by Emilia Giudicelli, *The Hypertrophied Heart*. They must be shown on the biggest possible screen, in the best-quality possible format, behind and/or on top of the stage.

They can be screened at any moment during the *Symphonie*, during or between any piece. Any of *The Hypertrophied Heart* clips can be screened more than once.

The person in charge of screening the video and the clips may choose when to proceed freely during the performance or arrange it in advance together with the performers.

Instructions for the Performers

If the video or any of the clips are screened while you, the performers, are playing, at no point should you try to illustrate, comment, or react in any way to the images. They constitute separate events, parallel and independent to the music.



And now for a totally random, unjustified picture of the composer holding a Chinese cello.
©Andy Brydon (November 2018, University of Hull).

In August 2015, I entered the main room of Gerðarsafn museum (Kopavogur, Iceland) and was immersed into one of the most refined pieces of music I have ever attended in my life. The members of the South Iceland Chamber Choir performing Eyvind Gulbrandsen's *Surrounded by Strangers* were scattered all around the room, all standing alone, their eyes closed, singing very softly. The room was crowded with an enthusiastic audience, yet there was an obvious feeling of intimacy and calmness. Not only had the singers surrendered their voices and their secrets to us, the members of the audience, they had surrendered their *bodies*. They were not only surrounded by strangers, they also had surrendered to them

With one simple set-up, Eyvind, whom I hardly knew at that time, had made the world a better place: he had given back their body to classical musicians, who have been denied the existence of their muscles, their skins, their bones, their flesh, their guts, their genitals and their fluids for longer than one can remember; and he restored trust between strangers, as these singers were as much strangers to us as we were to them. The feeling of intense happiness that stayed with us as we walked out of the performance was more than something one would get from a beautiful moment of music: it was the feeling of having lived a utopian moment of perfect harmony within a group of humans.

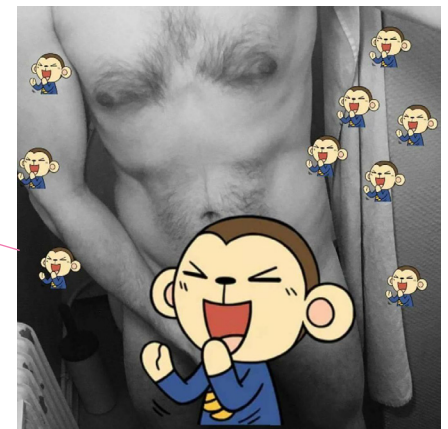
His modest (in terms of number of opus) but impressively consistent (in terms of quality) catalogue of compositions shows that the man breathes refinement, care, intelligence, pertinence and originality.

When I asked Eyvind to participate in my score?, he spontaneously sent me this picture. First confused, not to say puzzled, I asked him if he was certain this was the one thing he wished to share with the people who might run into this humble score? of mine. Indeed, the low quality of this style-less, soulless drawing of monkey seemed to not meet the standards of the other illustrations one can find in these pages. Yet, whom are we addressing these pages to? If you are

reading these lines after our première in December 2018, you are probably one of the few survivors of the climate apocalypse of the late 40's. Previously, you might have seen the planet sink into the voluntary happy fascism of social networks while praising demagogic politicians arrogantly murdering modern democracies. You probably witnessed the oceans quietly drowning the Pacific Islands, Bangladesh and other places I cannot remember right now, while Africa was reaching temperatures so intolerable for humans that half of its population disappeared in the Mediterranean Sea while begging Europe to show some kind of brotherhood that of course we would have been shamelessly unable to demonstrate. The fact that, in these conditions, you are reading this score? is both astonishing and flattering.

My point is: this picture, commonly referred to as "Eyvind's dick pic", is a self-portrait of the decade 2010-2020 itself. The triviality of this monkey, the poor layout of its iterations, the redundancy of the symbol,* the absolute lack of taste of this mise-en-scène, as well as the vertiginous realisation that centuries of science and technology led mostly to facilitating the making and the distribution of trivial pictures almost instantaneously all over the planet, remind us of what I was talking about in my short text about Stockhausen (page 10): not only do the best composers find inspiration from their real life (and not from divine inspiration as commonly believed), they also have a *body*. Behind the mp3 file, as well as behind the grand piano on stage, there is one or more bodies performing music that has been composed by other (or the same) bodies. We can fully understand (and perform) music only when we accept that musicians (performers as well as composers) are made of muscles, skin, bones, flesh, guts, genitals and fluids, as much as we and they want (or not) to escape it. These are all the things that Eyvind is telling us in one single, awkwardly synthetic picture.

* Symbolically speaking, monkey = penis, making it redundant as a picture to censor an actual penis.



Self-portrait, also known as Dick pic.
©Eyvind Gulbrandsen (March 2017).

The première took place in Middleton Hall, at the University of Hull on the 7 December 2018 and lasted 1 hour and 50 minutes, but we were on the clock. (We had the venue only for two hours, and I was sending text messages to the performers during the performance asking them to rush during *Movement IV*). It was followed on the 9 December by a second concert in Saint-Paul's Hall, at the University of Huddersfield, where it lasted for 2 hours and 20 minutes.

The musicians were:

Simon Desbruslais, trumpets, piano and voice.

Ensemble Fractus (as the Ensemble): Simon Ashmead (voice), Alex Dexter-Mills (violin), Erin Catherine Marsh (flute), Rebecca Stone (cello), and George Sztuka (violin). They also shared and played the piano, the tam-tam, the chamber organ, the celesta, the vacuum cleaner, etc. The Improvisors were Hannah Firmin (clarinet, in Hull only), Colin Frank (percussion), Ilona Krawczyk (voice), Bethany Nicholson (cello and bow master), Irine Røsnes (violin, in Huddersfield only), Dejana Sekulic (violin, in Huddersfield only), Mark Slater (Fender Rhodes) and Pierre-Alexandre Tremblay (electric bass, in Huddersfield only).

Ilona Krawczyk also directed the musicians for Manon Parent's performance art moment *le Baiser par Contagion*.

Mark Slater also organised and trained Ensemble Fractus.

Sophie Fetokaki screened the videos and assisted me in countless tasks.

These were the programme notes:

I believe the *Symphonie pour une Femme Seule* lays the foundations of a new aesthetic I'd like to describe as "extravagant minimalism". It is like a long, quiet walk in the mountain on a fresh but sunny day, alongside a person you love. This person is either by your side or in your heart, it does not matter.

Our quiet walk passes through these different landscapes:

- . *Bubble Seats*, art installation (designed by Irene Gil Lopez);
- . *Seven (or more) Hammer Ladies*, for Ensemble Fractus (composed by Brice Catherin);
- . *Four Piano Strings, part 1: on the Keyboard*, for Simon Desbruslais (composed by Brice Catherin);
- . *Movement IV, part 1: Verklärter Tag*, for all the musicians (composed by Brice Catherin);
- . *Movement IV, part 2: Unknown Combination*, for all the musicians (composed by Brice Catherin), happening together with *le Baiser par Contagion*, for all the musicians (performance art moment written by Manon Parent and directed by Ilona Krawczyk);
- . *Four Piano Strings, part 2: on the Strings*, for Simon Desbruslais (composed by Brice Catherin);
- . *∅*, for Simon Desbruslais (written by Brice Catherin);
- . *No Title* (video by Mélissa Garcia Carro).

During the whole *Symphonie*, you will see, from time to time, short videos by Emilia Giudicelli. The series of videos is called *the Hypertrophied Heart*.

"(...) I aspire to nothing more in this existence than getting by fine while having pleasure, that is to say, to say things with a bit more dignity, strength and elegance: the essential, plus love!" (Robert Walser)

Tony Courts, after he made me fill up at least one new security form each week for a couple of months and provided us generously with rather inappropriate but still tolerable ironic comments during the rehearsals, was kind enough to take care of the lighting for the première. He arranged a very simple and efficient light, dimmed over the whole space (stage + audience area), with a bit of emphasis (but not too much) on the performers on stage, as well as on the bubble seats in the room. He switched off the latter after the bubble seats had deflated. He also triggered a slightly brighter, more focused light on the performers during *Le Baiser par Contagion*. A very satisfying setup in conclusion, as I am not a fan of spectacular lights. (Thank you, Tony.) In Saint-Paul's, Sophie Fetokaki and myself had to arrange something using the seven pre-set light options of the venue. We found two decent pre-sets for the performance and for *le Baiser*. We could not light the bubble seats though, which was a shame because the two seats in the back got a bit lost in the dark.

The other three minor issues we encountered have been:

- 1) The blue bubble seat did not inflate properly in Hull because the hose broke.
- 2) I thought it would be wise to tell the performers to move slowly from one spot to the other (the Fractus musicians ended up moving around a lot to play some of the *Unknown Pieces* as well as *le Baiser*), but they ended up looking a bit too solemn. In Saint-Paul's, Sophie and I told them to move more naturally, which indeed worked much better.
- 3) *Le Baiser* became de facto the main anecdote of the whole process. People in Hull and Huddersfield started teasing me with questions such as "will performers make love in your next piece?" or "can I participate but just for the French kiss part?". Most of the professional performers (the Improvisors) made it clear from the start that they would not kiss. Some of them did not express their concern but were clearly worried. Only two of them were perfectly fine with it from the start. The students (of the Ensemble Fractus) vetoed the kiss too after a long (yet fruitful) discussion we had with them, Mark Slater (my supervisor and the organiser of Fractus) and myself. The biggest concern seemed to have been "what if it ends up on social media?". Obviously, this general refusal of the kiss makes my light blue text on page 54 totally obsolete now, since I did not even have the opportunity to send an ethical clearance form to the (self-appointed) qualified university office. Yet Michèle Pralong convinced me to leave it

there, since it shows the process one goes through when dealing with anything slightly unusual in an academic environment.

Now allow me to make it clear that I am not blaming any of the musicians for their refusal to kiss. The naivety with which I approached the whole situation made me realise that even performers who are willing to challenge their musical practice on stage might not necessarily be ready to do so with their bodies. This is perfectly fine. The first explanation that came to my mind has been qualified of "cheap psychoanalysis" by a close friend, and she is probably right. In reality, analysing the performers' relationship to their body calls for a whole new light blue text to avoid oversimplifying a web of complex feelings, social constructions and personal trajectories, that I will or will not write at some point in the future. Alex Harker (one of my two supervisors) asked me if there was a contradiction between my desire to give the performers freedom and a desire for that freedom to be on my terms. But the freedom I offer always exists within very specific frames. In *Seven Hammer Ladies*, they have the freedom to hit the surfaces they want, and the responsibility to find the best ones. In *Unknown Noise*, they have the freedom to choose any noise they want, and the responsibility to find the most beautiful one. In *le Baiser*, they have the freedom to kiss who they want the way they want, and the responsibility to do it in the most sensitive way. Ultimately, they have the freedom to participate, or not, in the *Symphonie*, and the responsibility, if they do, to give the best of their skills and imagination. It is important to notice though that the performers of Fractus and some of the Improvisors did not know about *le Baiser* when they signed up. Considering this, it was only normal that we adapted the score for them, otherwise it would simply have been a trap.

This is why Manon (in a discussion with Ilona and myself) decided to go for another performance. Instead of kissing, the musicians of Fractus, during a 2-hour workshop, would have to touch any part of their partners' bodies with any part of their own body. Then they would write a movement score of this process. The Improvisors and the Soloist would then choose their favourite score and perform it with their partner(s). There was even one score without any touching, consisting only of eye contact and air-caresses. Following this new set of instructions, Ilona was able to train the performers and put together the beautiful performance one can see on the video of the Huddersfield performance. This is probably an appropriate moment to mention Ilona's incredible contribution to this whole piece. In less than a couple hours, divided into two sessions (one for the Fractus musicians, one for the Improvisors and the Soloist), she was able to listen to and understand the performers' fears and taboos; she was able to gently, caringly, and, ultimately, organically bring each musician to perform *le Baiser* in their own idiosyncratic, sometimes movingly clumsy way, allowing this complex (yet simple and generous in its sincerity), sweet, short and quiet mime to emerge as an unexpected counterpoint to these almost two hours and a half of sound.

The groups were permeable since Alex (from Fractus) ended up performing *le Baiser* with Ilona and Colin (two Improvisors). Interestingly, most of the performers were of the opinion that the movements and touches of these three scores were actually more intimate than a French kiss (a statement I personally agree with). Manon and I have not changed the score and consider this movement scores version merely as an ossia, and we are hoping to be able to première the actual *le Baiser* in the next performance. (If it ever takes place.) To be perfectly clear though, we do not consider this version as an invalid one, it was actually perfectly fine and very beautiful, but it is just not the performance art moment Manon designed for the *Symphonie*.

The movement scores eventually composed by the Fractus musicians are here:

Erin and Simon

Movement 1:

Exploration of each other's fingertips, tentatively at first with just the tips meeting. From this meeting there is a gradual moving over each other's fingertips, slowly and beginning lightly but increasing in pressure, noting the roughness of the ridges on our respective fingerprints and the way they change and continue down the rest of the fingers themselves. After finding our way along each other's entire fingers the exploration becomes more lateral, going around the sides and into the spaces between, noting the creases of the finger joints and the protrusions of the underlying bone structures where they raise the skin.

Movement 2:

Having explored the ridges on the undersides of each other's fingers, we move until our hands are fully touching each other, palm to palm at first and then moving so that palm touches the back of the hand, then the sides of the hand along the fleshy part below the thumb and the outer edge where the small metacarpal bone is detectable through the skin. The initial sensation is one of hands gliding lightly against each other, but then the fingers of each envelop the other's hand and begins to apply more pressure, still gently but with enough firmness to feel where the underlying muscles and bones are. Instead of gliding, the movement becomes more probing as pressure is applied and then released in one specific place, then a movement to another adjacent part of the hand, and the motion then repeated. Changes in the thickness of muscle, the proximity of the skeletal structure, and the tautness or looseness of the skin, is all paid close attention to as the overall structure of the components of each other's hands gradually come into view.

Movement 3:

Beginning with left palm flat against the other's left palm, one facing upwards and the other downwards. The fingers of one stretch outward and feel the contour of the other's wrist, and this action is then mirrored by the other. The movement further up the arm continues its natural course, with each moving their hand towards the other's elbow. The pressure is light, and the hands glide smoothly, and as the hand moves upwards the arms remain in contact with each other. The gradual movement along the arms is matched by a rotational movement around each other's ulna, the bone that runs from the elbow joint to the little finger. Upon reaching each other's elbows, the hands continue and the fingers curve around the upper arm until each is cradling the other's elbow with the full length of the lower arms pressing against each other.

Rebecca and George

Gesture 1:

Approach your partner and reach slowly toward the inside of their right arm with yours slowly working up towards their elbow. Once you've reached their elbow, grasp it and move closer to your partner.

Gesture 2:

Move up to the inside of their upper arm, bring it round and progress up onto their shoulder as you begin to walk behind them running your fingers across the top of their back, placing a hand on each shoulder.

Gesture 3:

The third gesture consists of navigating your way back round your partner and down their arm so that the last point of contact with them is your finger tips.

Ilona and Alex

I walk in the space. When I get into eye contact with my partner, I slow down and stop in a spot. I make three, four steps towards him/her and suspend, watching as he/she approaches me. I let him/her to get close and walk around me (we look into each other's eyes most of the time, except for the moments when we get closer and reveal the texture of the partner's skin with eyes). I let him/her to observe me first.

I take over and start to move around my partner, while he/she is standing. I get closer to him/her with my face, as if I would touch him/her with my cheek. I move with my left cheek around his/her left cheek. When I withdraw, he/she began to move around me again. I follow his eyes, but when he/she is behind me, I stay focused in the same position sensing his/her movement and eyes on me. When he/she stops, I go around him/her again.

I stand behind my partner. I look at his/her head and hear. With my right palm I move around the surface of his hear, just before touching. I travel with my hand and eyes around the top of the head and then slowly going down to the neck. I get as close as possible, almost as if I would touch my partner. But I don't do it. I walk around and stand in front of him/her. I look into my partner, in his/her eyes. We stay like that, looking at each other's eyes for few seconds, long enough to get familiar and calm. I look at my partner's neck and a line guiding from his/her left ear to chin. With my right hand I trace these lines without touching, but being very close. I trace the movement with my eyes, as if I was touching my partner this way. When I put my hand down he/she can start his/her movement around me.


Following pages: screen shots of the messages we exchanged during the performance in Saint-Paul's. "Brice Suisse" is actually Pierre-Alexandre Tremblay to whom I lent my Swiss phone.

Okay when you're all at your place, I'll change the light and we start. 17:05 ✓
Bubble people, ready? 17:05 ✓

Erin Marsh
Ready 17:05

Rebecca Stone
Ready 17:05

Simon Ashmead
Ready 17:06

Sophie Fetokaki
 17:06

Alex Dexter Mills
Give us a min pls 17:06

Okay Alex let me know. 17:07 ✓

Alex Dexter Mills
We good 17:07

Erin Marsh
In place 17:08

Start. 17:08 ✓

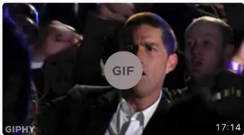
Rebecca Stone
Me too 17:08

Simon will catch up. 17:08 ✓

George Sztuka
Started 17:08

Sophie Fetokaki
Man my timing is so good 17:13

Ilona Krawczik
Yeeeeeaah 17:14

Sophie Fetokaki
 17:14

Alex Dexter Mills
Have started hard sticks? 17:15

Mark, tell Simon to relax, he's got a good 5 minutes to wait. 17:15 ✓

Sophie Fetokaki
WWWWAAAAAAA 17:15

Mark A Slater
I was going to let him sweat 17:16


Sophie Fetokaki

Sophie Fetokaki
 17:16

Erin Marsh
Stopped 17:17


Rebecca Stone
Stopped 17:17


George Sztuka
Stopped 17:17

Colin Frank
 17:17


Simon Ashmead
Stopped 17:18

Erin Marsh
Siiiiick 17:18

Sophie Fetokaki
 17:18

Mark A Slater
 17:19

Sophie Fetokaki
Τι όμορφα χεράκια 17:20

 17:20

Sophie Fetokaki
Τι όμορφα χεράκια 17:24 ✓
"What a cute little hand." And what a beautiful F_{our} Piano Strings! Thanks Simon!

If they don't build actual four string pianos after that... 17:25 ✓
Beth

Give him time for the solo! 17:28 ✓
Too late... haha 17:28 ✓

Simon Ashmead
Unknown pair piano Becca? 17:33

When the time is right of course 17:33

Rebecca Stone
Yes 17:33

Should we have another piano pair the other side? 17:33 ✓
(No pressure)

(No pressure) 17:34 ✓

Alex Dexter Mills
Yeah I'm in 17:34

Who's pairing with Alex? 17:34 ✓

George Sztuka
I can come down 17:34

Rebecca Stone
You're at the piano on the audience's left Simon? 17:34

Erin Marsh
Yes 17:36

Simon Ashmead
Yep 17:35

Rebecca Stone
On my way 17:35

Sophie Fetokaki
Is the piano thing happening yet? 17:36

Erin Marsh
Not yet 17:36

They'll say go 17:36

Sophie Fetokaki
K thanks 17:36

Didn't read the memo 17:36

Sophie Fetokaki
K thanks 17:37 ✓
You sound like you have an evil plan.

Sophie Fetokaki
 17:37

Nice spacey improv stage people 17:38

Alex Dexter Mills
We're off! 17:38

Mark A Slater
 17:39

There's no 11 17:39

Sophie Fetokaki
 17:39

Simon D, don't hesitate to double trumpet more tonight. 17:40 ✓
Kids, tell Simon you love it when he double trumpets. 17:41 ✓

Erin Marsh
Uhh 17:41

Hmmm 17:41

Mark A Slater
His phone is his poche 17:41

In 17:41

Sophie Fetokaki
He didn't get the memo either 17:42

Mark, do you have an easy way to show him the message? 17:43 ✓
Is it too intrusive? 17:43 ✓

Erin Marsh
In baiser XD 17:43

Sophie Fetokaki
Watching Mark trying to subtly transmit a message to Simon is deeply amusing 17:43

Alex Dexter Mills
Stoped 17:44

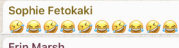
Sophie Fetokaki
Watching Mark trying to subtly transmit a message to Simon is deeply amusing 17:44 ✓
This was MY evil plan. 17:44 ✓

Rebecca Stone
Also stopped 17:44

Simon Ashmead
Stopped 17:44

Sophie Fetokaki
That's a trumpet. 17:44

Imagine two of these. 17:44 ✓

Sophie Fetokaki
 17:45

Erin Marsh
For the next one can we do a squad one? On a non-piano instrument (not for ages obviously but to give people time to think) 17:45

Rebecca Stone
Cello!! 17:45

Erin Marsh
Yes! 17:46

Simon Ashmead
Yes 17:46

Sophie Fetokaki
Yeeeeaaaaa Ilonaaaa 17:46

Alex Dexter Mills
What about anything that uses electricity? 17:46

Erin Marsh
Tell us when you'd like us to come over :) 17:46

Alex Dexter Mills
Floor cleaner, organ 17:46

People won't see. 17:46 ✓
It's fun to have a visible squad. 17:46 ✓

Save the cleaner and the organ for the grand finale. 17:46 ✓

Alex Dexter Mills
Ok how about singing from behind the organ? 17:47

Erin Marsh
Not seen 17:47

I like cello 17:47

You can play another squad as the third unknown piece. 17:47 ✓
Although I miss George's solos a bit. 17:47 ✓
(No pressure.) 17:48 ✓

George Sztuka
I'll do some noise 17:48

Maybe another squad for part 2? 17:48 ✓

Erin Marsh
Yeah :D 17:49

Simon Ashmead
Well, we could do a squad ensemble on that side 17:49

Move from instrument to instrument, and one of us could bring the tan tam over 17:49

Alex Dexter Mills
Can we interact with the improvisers? So do a squad on a non Simon instrument? 17:50

Simon Ashmead
Move from instrument to instrument, and one of us could bring the tan tam over 17:50 ✓
There's an obvious lack of Unknown Pieces in this Symphonie. 17:50 ✓

Rebecca Stone
Can we do a squad chord on the cello? 17:50

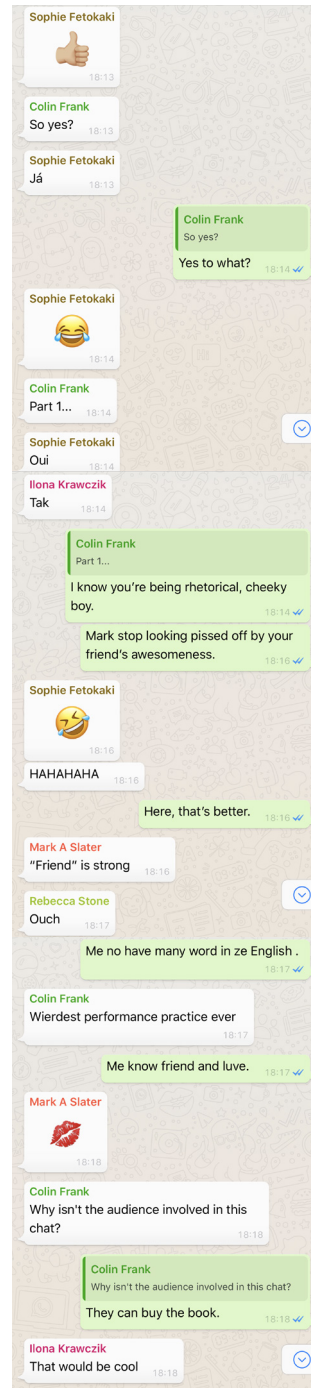
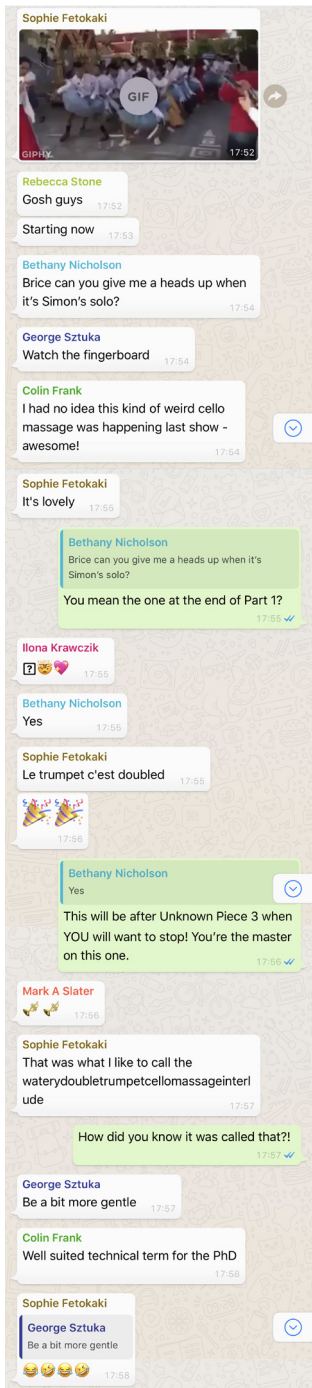
Erin Marsh
Yeah I'm omw 17:51

Alex Dexter Mills
We could do a string chord? 17:51

Alex Dexter Mills
Can we interact with the improvisers? So do a squad on a non Simon instrument? 17:51 ✓
You mean as Unknown Piece 3? 17:51 ✓

Rebecca Stone
Anyone else coming? 17:51

It's a squad, they have to. 17:51 ✓



Sophie Fetokaki
I am changing the name of this piece to
Symphonie pour un waterytrumpet 18:38

Beethoven also didn't choose the title of
his symphonies. 18:39

Alex Dexter Mills
Pair Becca, tam tam? 18:39

Sophie Fetokaki
Symphonie for a wet trumpet? 18:39

Rebecca Stone
Yes 18:39

Sophie Fetokaki
Too suggestive perhaps. 18:39

Rebecca Stone
Which side are you? 18:39

Alex Dexter Mills
Your right 18:40

Audience left 18:40

Sophie Fetokaki
What are les enfants preparing for? 18:40

Oh I see 18:40

Sophie Fetokaki
Oh I see 18:42

Yes. 18:42


Tell me you're gonna give us more of this
delightful tam tam. 18:42

Erin Marsh
They're still going! 18:43

Rebecca Stone
We're now stroking it 18:43

Delightful. 18:44

Alex Dexter Mills
Stoped 18:44

Sophie Fetokaki
 18:45

resisting urge to have another watery
trumpet moment 18:47

Why resist? 18:47

Sophie Fetokaki
Hmmmmm it becomes heavy if it's too
predictable 18:48

Nice tapping Mark 18:48

You're the screening master. 18:48

Sophie Fetokaki
I prefer the term
Videostimulationcontroller 18:49

The French translation of this sounds
really hot. 18:49

Sophie Fetokaki
It is hot 18:49

One hour fifty minutes. This was the
total duration on Friday. 18:52

Erin Marsh
Simon, can you let me know your
location? I want to do le baiser soon but I
can't see you 😊 18:52

Simon Ashmead
I'm round by the other piano 18:53

Erin Marsh
Fab, thanks! 18:53

 18:53

Ilona Krawczik
Should we start. Le baiser? 18:53

Erin Marsh
This stuff sounds cool, in a minute
maybe? 18:54

Sophie Fetokaki
Remember to keep it playful :) 18:54

I'll ya always gonna sound cool. 18:54

Go when you feel like it. 18:54

And yes to the playfulness. 18:55

Erin Marsh
Okie 18:55

Sophie Fetokaki
Playful but not goofy 18:55

Sophie Fetokaki
 18:55

Le Baiser started. 18:55

Erin Marsh
@Simon Ashmead I'm emerging now
just so you know 18:56


Sophie Fetokaki
PA has just invented a new superhero:
Fretlessbassman. 18:57

Reb and George, give us some sound!

Erin Marsh
Becca pair flute? 19:00

Sophie Fetokaki
PA has just invented a new superhero:
Fretlessbassman.
As long as he doesn't wear his
underpants over his pants... 19:01

Bethany Nicholson
I'll let you guys have some fun without
me for a bit 19:01

 19:01

Rebecca Stone
I'm on my way Catherine 19:02

Erin Marsh
Yay! 19:02

Bethany Nicholson
I'll let you guys have some fun without me for a bit
We miss you already. 19:02

Bethany Nicholson
Nawww how kind 19:02

Bethany Nicholson
Nawwww how kind 19:04

Come on Beth, give us some bow
mastery here. 19:04

Bethany Nicholson
All in good time 19:05

END OF PART 2 19:05

Bethany Nicholson
Got to find the special moment 19:05

Soon 19:05

Alex Dexter Mills
Where are we now? 19:05

Think Simon wants to finish part 2? 19:05

He gave us looks. 19:05

But he's still playing 19:06

Colin Frank
One could only guess 19:06

Yep 19:06


Part 2 done 19:06

George Sztuka
What a nutty geez 19:06

Colin Frank
Whao 19:06

Bethany Nicholson
Told you had to find the right moment 19:06

Bethany Nicholson
Told you had to find the right moment 😊 19:06

 19:07

I want Mark to hold the pedal in all my
pieces from now on. 19:07

Even those without piano. 19:07


Mark A Slater
But look at my feet 19:08

Mark A Slater
But look at my feet
This looks like something I could report. 19:09

Brice Suisse
I feel bizarre texting after all this
Thaaaaaanks! 19:22

Sophie Fetokaki
Hull people - stay for a 🍷??? 19:35

Mark A Slater
I can't - sorry! Would be nice. But need
to head back. 19:44

Sophie Fetokaki
 19:46

Bethany Nicholson
I would love to 😊 19:47

Colin Frank
😊 nice playing with you! 19:47

Ilona Krawczik
Yeeees! Nice indeed 19:48

What about Huddersfieldians?are we
going to bar Maroc or something like
that? 19:48

Sophie Fetokaki
You guessed it 19:50

Remaining people (aka non-traitors) ->
bar Maroc 19:50

Mark A Slater
Bye all!! A real pleasure to play with you!
We're off back east... 19:51

Bethany Nicholson
It was a pleasure performing with you
all!! 19:51

Ilona Krawczik
The same here! Thank you guys for this
beautiful encounter and Brice for
bringing us together 19:52

The musicians seemed very pleased by the performance. So was I, especially in Huddersfield, where it felt clearly that the performers were now familiar with the style, the form and the duration. In Huddersfield again, the Fractus musicians had access to more instruments: two pianos (one on each side of the audience), a chamber organ, a celesta, a tam-tam, a vacuum cleaner, and probably one or two more things I forget, which they took full advantage of, creating marvellously colourful *Unknown Pieces*. In general, they were extremely creative and enthusiastic, which also shows in the chat group. (See above.) A few weeks earlier, one of them, Alex, had even invented on the spot a new *Unknown Piece*, which I added to the score (*Unknown Squad*), and which is, for me, the apex of involvement and understanding that can be reached in and of my music. Beth (the bow master improviser) told me later in a private message that Fractus had been the stars of the show. I would not go that far (I honestly thought all the musicians were the stars of the show), but truth is, one rarely encounters a student ensemble which is as involved in a project as they were. As a matter of fact, the Improvisors (a mix of PhD students from Huddersfield and Leeds and professors from Hull and Huddersfield, as well as Beth who had finished her master's a few months before) were just as brilliant. During the rehearsals, Colin came up with the adjective "extravagant", which gave me the idea for the expression "extravagant minimalism". (See programme notes above.) Mark told me "you know good people". I do, but my "real" talent, one I gladly acknowledge, is that I have always been good at putting "good people" together. It pays off. It's also one of the many reasons why I like free

ensembles so much. They allow one to choose specific *people* (Dejana, Beth, Mark, Pierre-Alexandre, Ilona, etc.) rather than *functions* (violinist, cellist, keyboardist, etc.).

Gaia, the dedicatee of the *Symphonie*, did not attend any of the concerts. This is not a reproach. I just realised it made me a bit sad. Besides a handful of people I did not know, a few fantastic friends as well as some acquaintances showed up. Graziana told me "you always surprise me". Jez Riley French wrote on facebook (on another acquaintance's wall) that the trumpet was too loud and that I had not invented any new aesthetic (unlike what I had claimed in the programme notes) and accused me of only copying Fluxus (which I do get inspiration from, truth is). He contacted one of my performers to ask her to perform his music. (I advised her to do it.) I am tempted to interpret Jez's radical opinion as the expression of a form of (unidirectional and unconscious) rivalry between an established composer and a younger peer. (And again: no reproach. Also, this is just my hypothesis. I still think highly of his music and hope I will get to know him better personally in the near future, since we obviously have very similar interests.) My lovely and dear friends Adèle and Madenn were excruciatingly bored, which, again, they were absolutely entitled to, and were able to express with a very caring litotes. Mukuka sent me a text message later that evening to inform me she had written 10 pages of notes as soon as she got home. She has not shared these notes with me as I write this paragraph. S just gazed at me with the usual distant look he cold-showers everyone with, not even bothering to comment with one word, which I never cease to find hilarious. (It might as well be an extreme form of shyness or a strategy to protect himself, for what I know.) J was puzzled by the text messaging on stage, which amusingly reminded me of people who were puzzled by electricity on stage, clarinet on stage, and polyphony on stage some years/centuries ago. Keesia had mixed feelings about the whole performance, which she was kind and sincere enough to express to me in

detail a couple days later. She particularly challenged the concept of *Femme Seule*, which allowed an interesting private conversation. She also pointed out that Saint-Paul's hall was too cold in December for 140 minutes of music. Michèle Pralong was ecstatic, but her profound affection for me (see last page of this score?) makes her the most subjective audience member of this day. Alex Harker was extremely positive. Besides the questions of aesthetic and politics he prompted me to reflect upon, he used the expression "you can be proud of". I have difficulties with the concept of pride. I think the refugees who travelled the Mediterranean Sea on a dinghy after they survived crossing Libya can be proud of their achievement. I tend to think that putting together some art is a skill, a nice skill, but nothing to be proud of. Yet, yes, I am really happy that I was able to put 5 makers and 15 performers of different ages, backgrounds, cultures and hierarchical positions together, and that they were all more dedicated than I could have dreamt of. For this I am less proud than I am grateful.

Thank you section

This is where I thank people who helped me in one way or another to write this piece, as well as where I offend people who also helped but whom I forgot to mention in this list.

Michèle Pralong, my fairy tale godmother, for support, ideas, feedback, inspiration, etc.

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Gaia Blandina and Lynette Quek (aka qb) for being a great source of inspiration as artists and as human beings.

Ioannis Mandafounis for being a great source of inspiration as an artist and as a human being too.

Charlotte Norman, who, simply put, opened the doors of paradise on Earth before I eventually had to leave it by bus.

[?] and his daughter for the story of the former and for their generosity. George Koumoulis and Marios Constantinides for helping me get some Cypriot historical facts right.

Yannis La Macchia and Jean-Yves Duhoo for helping with the layout of the score?.

Aude Barrio, who eventually accepted the mission to be in charge of the extreme makeover of the score?.

Pierre Henry, Galina Ustvol'skaya and Karlheinz Stokhausen whom I blatantly plundered.

All the illustrators, photographers and models who kindly authorised me to use their pictures.

All the musicians who perform this piece.

The score? has been entirely cleaned up by Aude Barrio, who also added the blue line between the contemporary idol's right tit and the chalcolithic idol's ear.



October 2017, Mojácar (Spain);

June-December 2018, Hull, Huddersfield (UK), Saint-Genis Pouilly (France), Geneva (Switzerland).

The dogs' god

Two years ago, I lived at my future ex-wife's sister Σ's house for a few months. Σ is Mrs Androula's daughter-in-law. And Mrs Androula, as you probably remember if you performed my piece *The Fourth Cypriot Dimension* (η Τέταρτη Κυπριακή Διάσταση, 2015), is my ex-wife's sister's husband's mother, and the best cook I ever encountered in my life. (This was just to help you situate the characters.)

Anyway, Σ had this little dog, Cooper. I didn't like Cooper. He was a sneaky, aggressive, moody dog who'd shit on your bed to express any form of minor disagreement (such as "what the hell are you doing in my house?"). To be fair, Cooper was a Pomeranian, meaning a highly degenerate "pure" race, which decades of consanguineous breeding had made irremediably idiotic and partly disabled. Yet, as Σ's guest, I felt obliged to walk Cooper, and, before I knew it, I had become his official daily walker.

Something funny happened then. Cooper was about two years old at that time. Σ and her husband were living in a very quiet, actually very, very, very quiet neighbourhood, surrounded by fields and hills. But they were very afraid that something (what?) might happen to Cooper, and therefore had never walked him without a lead. I felt sorry for Cooper. (I feel sorry for sneaky assholes, this is a problem, I know.) One day we were on a dirt path, not even a road, far from any possible danger such as cars or big dogs. I did it. I unleashed Cooper. Usually, like most dogs, Cooper would be pulling on his lead constantly. I assumed he would run like a maniac as soon as it would be set free. But no. Cooper looked at me. He looked at me with wide eyes of amazement. And his look was saying: "Brice, you have set me free. This new, formidable feeling, flowing from my heart to my paws at this very moment, I cannot describe it. I cannot, because it is new, and it is immense, and it is unimaginable. I am standing still in front of you, staring at you, but my soul, already, is running all around this field, and I can feel tears of ecstasy pushing my eyeballs out of my skull. I do not wish to bark anymore. I will remain silent and listen to the sound of the wind caressing my fur, my snout and my eyelashes while I run on my pathetic tiny legs. Brice, what have you done? Brice, I do not know what you have done, but I love you deeply and for ever."

Then Cooper ran, and ran, and ran, in silence. He wouldn't go far though. The newly freed dog would run like crazy around me, but never further away than 5 meters or so. A bit later, after he was tired enough, Cooper came back to me and looked at me again. His eyes were even more widely open, and humid with the aforementioned tears of joy. They were stating with intense gratitude: "Brice, you are the dogs' god."

Freedom and love

Brice Catherin's usual salutation is:

Hi!

In shape? [Literally *The shape?* >> *Are you in good shape?* >> *How are you?*]

And his usual valediction is

The kiss

If you were to stack transparencies of all the emails that you've exchanged with him over the years these elements would remain legible, superposed, inalienable: *In shape?* / various thoughts / *The kiss*.

Hi! In shape? Orally, we might answer *yep, great, meh*, while wondering if we should be engaging on the double meaning [shape and form are one word in French] and directly approaching the question from its aesthetic side. Maybe dare a playful *Oui oui in the shape/form of a pear*. We answer while also suspecting that the question is not really being addressed at all: we're privy to the inner thread of a constant meditation on artistic activity that's suddenly being delivered aloud. Brice constantly questions form in everything around him, as he cooks, plays the cello or reads Charlie Hebdo. So inevitably, at every opportunity this concern bubbles up into his dialog with others.

While reading *Symphonie pour une femme seule* and Manon Parent's performance proposal to open a space-time during which musicians kiss each other on the lips (*the kiss* becoming *the contagious kiss*), we understand that this is it. A reflection that has become a mantra, regularly shared with those who cross his path. For Brice Catherin's answer to the question of form — if only to read this score — is freedom and love. No more, no less. In other words, *the kiss*.

Michèle Pralong