IM-OS

Improvised Music – Open Scores

Proposals from readers are invited

CONTENTS:

EDITORIAL

Open scores can offer choices for the performer and/or broad ranges of possible interpretations. My research into these two classical ways lead into analysing uses of them in compositions from the sixties by Chr. Wolff, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati and Karlheinz Stockhausen, and also to more recent composers, Henrik Ehland Rasmussen, Peter Schuback, and the Japanese follower of John Zorn's game pieces, Shiba Tetsu. Extensive notation examples are part of the article. So much for the first part - second part with more composers to follow in the next issue.

Traditional notation in a very broad context is a theme in the compositions by both Rasmussen and Toxværd. Read additional observations in the small notes.

Readers - have you reflected on your own methods (as composers) and/or repertory and playing practice (as interpreters) with regard to the hows of openness?

CBN

HENRIK EHLAND RASMUSSEN: CYCLE

Cycle

for ensemble of melody instruments ad libitum

Play the cycle shown below individually. The notes in the beginning serve only as a rhythmic indication and may contain several tones or chords. No attacks should be played simultaneously with the other musicians. However, strive to let the statements of the rhythmic motif alternate regularly.

common Soundscape

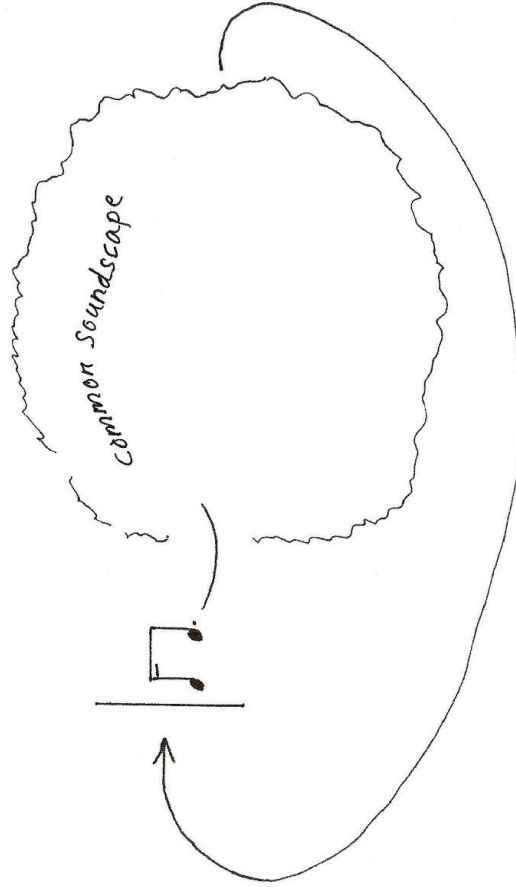A: The indicated rhythm occurs often
(2 – 4 min.)

- G.P. / short break -

B: The indicated rhythm occurs more seldom
(2 – 4 min.)

- G.P. / short break -

C: The indicated rhythm ad lib.

The piece stops when the right intensity has been arrived at.

Henrik E. Rasmussen 1998

RABR ANALYSIS - RATING DEGREES OF OPENNESS IN EXPERIMENTAL REPERTORY
Part 1

by Carl Bergstroem-Nielsen

Summary: "Openness" in experimental music is an imprecise notion. Works may be characterised according to Random Access and Broadness. The first describes whether, and how much, elements may be played independently of a fixed sequence. The second, how much latitude can exist in the interpretation of individual elements, if they can be discerned. Analysis of works by Chr. Wolff, Shiba Tetsu, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, Stockhausen, Peter Schuback, Henrik Ehland Rasmussen and Miles Davis exemplify different degrees, and combinations, of RA and BR. Even though a number of works may be "flexible" in ways that fall outside the scope of this method, it is hoped that it can contribute to an easier, and more differentiated, overview of the repertory in question.

INTRODUCTION

Experimental music since 1945 has brought forward a vast and still growing repertory in which the standardised traditional notation has been abandoned in favour of different and individual ways to notate. In many cases, improvisation becomes a vital part of its performance practice. Overviewing this repertory can appear difficult. Not only do traditional notions of "difficulty" and "style" not readily apply, moreover, it may be hard to find common denominators at all for comparing works. RABR analysis aims at making it easier. It deals with works being open for improvisation, in a broad sense of the word, and for decision-making during the performance.

As a musician and composer I have had opportunities since 1971 to immerse myself in such repertory, to practise it on a daily basis, to contribute to it, to discuss it, to exchange with colleagues and to discover ever new works and ideas (published, internet, unpublished) . This experience has been further deepened in my research,

which includes a large annotated bibliography with summaries of texts on improvisation, related composition and new notations[1]. My personal archive of open compositions includes slightly more than 200 authors.

This investigation will present the RABR method by explaining its basic ideas and by stating a number of analyses. These will comprise both works that seem very well apt for this kind of analysis, as well as borderline cases. Possible benefits, limitations and perspectives will then be discussed.

THE RABR (RANDOM ACCESS / BROADNESS ANALYSIS) METHOD. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The method departs from the simple observation that words like "openness", "freedom of interpretation", "ambiguity" mean not just one, but several things, and they can vary independently of each other.

Openness regarding the order of elements could be related to what I will term the degree of *Random Access*, a notion stemming from computer science. If there is complete random access, every element can be accessed independently of the other - a book can, for example, be flipped open anywhere, just like it is the case with RAM, Random Access Memory inside a computer. By contrast, a scroll, as used in ancient times, has to be accessed in a sequential way, unrolling it from the beginning - like the so-called stack in the inner functioning of a computer.

Random Access can be found in the arranging of concert programmes - works are put side by side ad libitum. Radio practise may be even more libertarian: in non-stop programmes with classical music individual movements mix freely, suspending

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1) See Bergstroem-Nielsen (2002ffA) and (2002ffB)

the unity of the original works. This is RA applied to creating programmes, but not to performance - because there would probably not be any decision-making in real time during the concert or airplay. A more performance-oriented example is the colloquial singing of songs using a common songbook. Participants may, by spontaneous associations, suggest a song they would like to sing as the next, as I have experienced it with friends. Exactly the spontaneity in letting the next song "pop up" seems to be important here. This can be so even if the songbook is a little one for the occasion and one is likely to have sung them all or nearly all by the end of the singing session - then it might still not be satisfactory for most participants just to start on page one and proceed ahead.

The other dimension of openness I have named *Broadness*. Broadness in interpretation of musical elements means latitude in interpretation and could include the free variations on the melody made in jazz solos, how themes are played in individual ways, and within classical music it is also found, although more confined in current practise, concerning for example tempo, phrasing and in some cases embellishments. The cadenza in solo concerts was originally a place for free, virtuosic improvisation related to the material of the surrounding movement. These are probably the more well-known kinds of musical openness.

Now turning to experimental music, aleatoric procedures and indeterminacy are well-known and influential approaches, and were especially prominent in the fifties and sixties. *Aleatoric procedures* represent a RA principle - there is randomness as well as a fixed range of possibilities[2], and notably this is often unfolded in performance, rather than before. The ideas of *indeterminacy* such as primarily known from John Cage may lead to openness during performance but not necessarily

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2) Cf. the fact that "alea" means dice in latin. "Aleatorisch (von alea=Würfel) nennt man Vorgänge, deren Verlauf im groben festliegt, im einzelnen aber vom Zufall abhängt" ("Aleatoric processes are those having a fixed overall direction but with details depending on chance"), a classical definition in Meyer-Eppler (1955), p.22.

- the performance may have been fixed beforehand so that the aesthetic attitude prevails over the performance aspect[3]. These tendencies did break away with previous aesthetic notions and helped pave the way for a new performance practice involving improvisation, even though the overall picture of different ideas of openness in performance and improvisation, where present, are certainly characterised by "heterogeneousness"[4] when comparing the various American and European representatives. However, the existence of openness in performance in a number of experimental works has generally been noted in music history books, and improvisation as part of a new kind of performance practice in its own right begins to shine through in some cases[5]. I will use the term improvisation in a broad sense, as the examples will show. However, as I understand it, it must imply some exercise of the performer's conscious responsibility through choices made *during performance*, not only before, even if new kinds of notations are interpreted and even if there are collective preparing procedures[6] - notwithstanding the possible far-reaching importance of these procedures.

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3) "Indeterminacy refers to musical material that is unpredictable before a performance. The term is also used for music that is predictable before performance but was composed through chance operations...", Childs (1974), p.336

4) Feisst (1997), p.0, Index -: "Die Heterogenität des Begriffes Improvisation bei Cage, Boulez und Stockhausen" und "Begriff und Sache der Improvisation im Kontext" "The heterogenity of notions of improvisation with Cage, Boulez and Stockhausen" and "Notion and reality of improvisation in its contexr").

5) Written as early as 1975, Brindle (1986) features chapters about "Improvisation - Graphic Scores - Text Scores" as well as "Notation". Bosseur (1999) has one chapter named "vers la creation collective". Sutherland (1994) has a subchapter about "Improvised music". Schwartz and Godfrey (1993) look at performance aspects in their own right in "New views of Performance: Space, Ritual and Play" in addition to also dealing with "Notation, Improvisation, and Composition". Cox (2004) takes up the classic concept of "open work" as a heading that includes, among other things, both an excerpt from the influential Eco (1986 - written 1962) and another one about composer John Zorn's game pieces. The inclusion of Zorn reflects the fact that his contributions to open composition has been influential - see the category G.2.3 in Bergstrøm-Nielsen (2002ffA and B) with presently 14 entries.

6) A number of works by John Cage exemplify this, as for instance the Variations series and Fontana Mix. Porfiriadis (2016) is an elaborate analysis of decision processes in open form music, written by a composer specialising in devising them.

Philosophical and aesthetic notions have developed around experimental artistic creation after 1945. Umberto Eco interprets the situation as being derived from an acceptance of modern science, having as a consequence a "devolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice, and social context"[7]. Works appear so to speak "unfinished" (p.169), since "there is a tendency to see every execution of the work...as divorced from its ultimate definition. Every performance *explains* the composition, but does not *exhaust* it. (p.171)". - Different, maybe complementary views of this, are offered by John Cage's Zen-inspired philosophy about the significance of the single moment (leading to negation of the importance of logical continuity) and the "momentform" aesthetic of Stockhausen[8].

Artistic creation, very generally seen, implies some "freedom", that is, some degree of openness and ambiguity at a general level, besides exercise of craft - both for composition and in performance[9]. However, the recent openness in performance can be seen as something more, an essential historical innovation - the rediscovery of improvisation[10]. In this case, the "content" or "message" of the performance will not consist exclusively of what the composer previously wished to "say" but will be given

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7) Quoted from Cox et al. (2004), p.170.

8) See Cage (1969) and Stockhausen (1963)

9) "Freedom of interpretation" exists of course also within "fixed" notation. Jahn (2006) discusses whether the free spaces in music, including traditionally notated, are "paradises" or just excuses for "sloppiness", thus carrying on a classic Western mistrust in improvisation. Sancho-Velasquez (2001) traces the origin of this mistrust to a change in cultural attitudes in the field of music around 1850 in Germany. There was a striving for cultural legitimation of the emerging pan-German state; older composers like Bach and the Vienna classics were edited and canonised with a classical status and improvisation became looked down upon as something superficial despite the former interest in virtuosic performance extending back to the very composers being canonised, like Mozart and Beethoven. Even such well-known solo improvisors like Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann strongly distanced themselves from improvising in public during the later part of their careers.

10) Brown (1966) saw it as an "inevitable and important step", expanding not only the musical work but also its "inherent multiplicity of "meaning"". (p.58). Toncitch (1970) describes it as a quantum leap in music history, expanding the range of human consciousness states which music can express, underpinning his line of thought with references to Aristotle and Hegel.

its shape in performance, directly addressed by performers to the situation and those present to listen.

Even if the notation is new, a work could still appear fixed for the performer. Maybe many detailed instructions must be obeyed, maybe there is simply "hard work" requiring all of the performer's concentration. On such a background, Fell (1998) coined the notion of *"invasive"* versus *"non-invasive"* compositional procedures. But even though these notions have a psychological basis, that is, the judgement being possibly different if made by different performers, there is an objective side to the openness as well, based on the amount of tasks to do and their complexity. Gresser (2010 p.194) goes further to present such a classification of co-creator performers:

structuring co-creator (puts defined elements into an order)

improvisatory co-creator (determines details)

creative co-creator ("neither the structure nor the sonic ideas are determined absolutely by the notation"). This is an interesting classification, based on performance criteria, even if one could remark that the word "improvisatory" appears in a somewhat narrow sense. The RABR analysis developed here has a similar aim but attempts to go into more detail.

For both RA and BR, these scales from 0 to 4 will be used in the following:

0: no or almost no degree (traditional as well as proportional[11] notation will be placed here)

1: to a small extent

2: medium

3: to a large, but not maximum, extent

4: to a maximum, or almost maximum degree

The RABR rating is written this way: RABR [x,y] where x and y are integers from 0 to 4. RABR [4,1] for example thus means maximum degree of Random Access, very slight degree of Broadness (but not zero).

IMPROVISATION IN EXPERIMENTAL WORKS - A GALLERY OF EXAMPLES

From the investigation to follow I hope to show how this method of rating creates a differentiated overview of a large repertory of experimental compositions. And also to uncover limits: which kinds of works do not fit in?

Works have been selected with a view to show varied combinations of rating, to include a diversity of new notations and to include some well-known ones.

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11) By proportional or optical notation I mean letting space on a time-line represent measured time. There is an element of estimating for the performer, but as I see it not amounting to a co-creative function in the context discussed here.

RA ratings can only take place with works having discernable, separate elements - where the whole has undergone what could be termed a segmentation from the composers' side. The gallery focuses primarily on complex examples having both dimensions[12].

CHRISTIAN WOLFF: FOR 1, 2 OR 3 PEOPLE

This belongs to the group of pieces by Wolff known for being based on cue systems[13] and was published 1964[14]. No limits of instruments/voices are stated, but from the notation and the explanations it becomes evident that the ability to read and execute given pitches is crucial. In other words, the piece could be said to be for melody instruments played by classically trained musicians. As the title says, 2 or 3 could play, or it could be solo. Duration may vary greatly, from less than a minute upwards ad libitum. There are 10 numbered pages to play from and two pages with explanations.

There is freedom of choice as to how much to play and in which sequence. One must play one page at a time, but in any order. Within each page, what is there may be played "in any convenient sequence" and distributed between players "in any way" (with one page as an exception).

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12) The common genre of graphic notations presenting themselves as integral pictures and in a number of cases with a maximum degree of BR, are not exemplified here, notwithstanding its general importance. To be sure - with a work having an explanation of symbols and maybe some further remarks, a more complex situation with both dimensions could easily emerge.

13) Cf. the title of Gronemeyer et al. (1998): Cues. Writings and Conversations. - Comparable works can be found as early as Duo for Pianists I and II from 1957. "For Five or Ten Players" (1962) is, as Wollf notes "my first attempt at writing for unspecified instruments in variable numbers" (p. 490). Judging from the collection of program notes in this publication, the last work employing cues extensively might be Pairs from 1968. The program note for the piece in question begins with "This music is drawn from the interaction of the people playing it. It requires for its performance independent self-discipline (unpoliced by a score defining fixed relationships and timings) and a capacity and special alertness for responding to what one's fellow performers are doing..." (p.492). Here, we are at the heart of the matter concerning re-inventing music as interaction, not as a sequence, a "story", having been determined beforehand. RA is a necessary consequence of this.
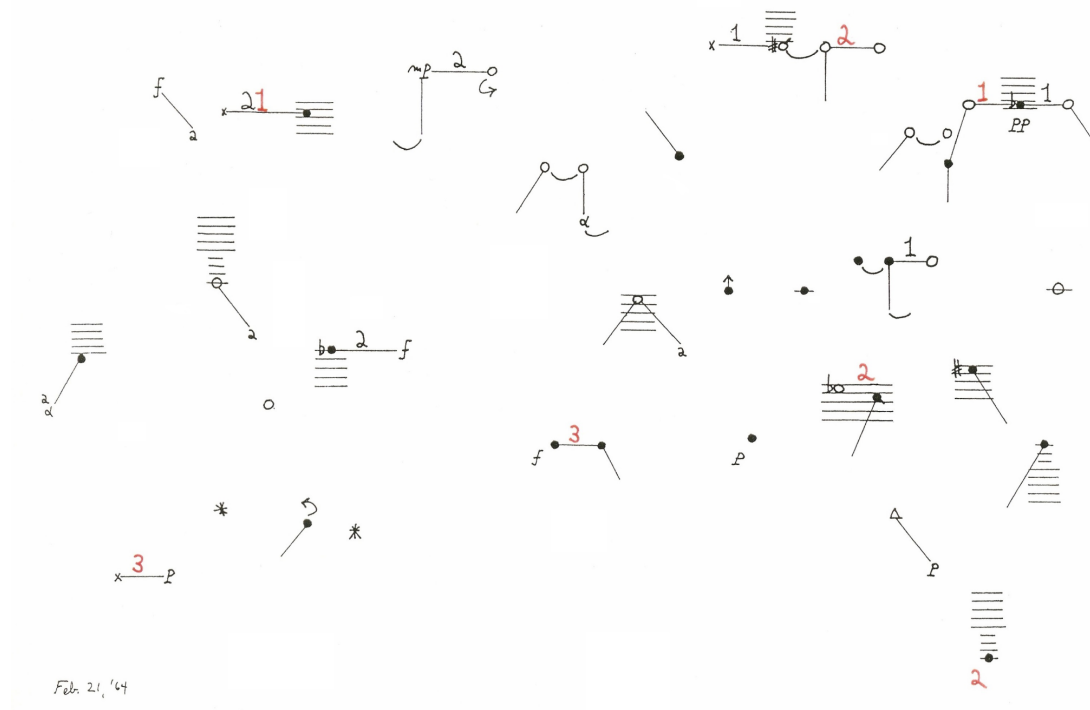
Fig.01. Page I from Wolff: For 1, 2 or 3 people. © 1964 by C.F. Peters Corporation. Reproduced by kind permission of Peters Edition Limited, London.

To provide an idea of how the playing is to proceed, look at Fig.01. Assume that you are one of the players and start from the beginning (upper left at the "f" letter). One or two other players are playing at the same time, independently much of the time. For solo, special rules apply. There is first a "f " letter, meaning that the player is to "assume a note to go with it" (this could mean to freely choose one) or assign it to any note given on the page. Having played this first sound, then the end of it should coincide with the beginning of the second sound heard after its start (produced by

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14) Some good and fairly extensive treatments of pieces by Wolff dealing with indeterminacy in performance can be found in Nyman (1999) pp.66-69, Feisst (1997) pp.63-69 and Sutherland (1994) pp 145-146.

the other player) - this is indicated by the diagonal line and the number at the end of it. It seems this aspect must be taken into account before starting the first sound - it has to last long enough for two new sounds to happen. Next, an "x" sound is to be played - x means "anything" and it leads to a black note. The duration of black notes is "variously short, up to about one second". Pitches are to be read either with bass or treble clef, and in case they are not playable they are to be transposed at least two octaves. The tone must be transformed on its way: two kinds of "changes of some aspect(s) of the sound before reaching the next note". The red number one indicates that there must additionally be one change of the timbre. - There is now a white space on the paper, and although no mention is made of breaks and how freely they can be applied, it might invite one. In what seems to be the following group on the page, there is a mp note, which has started after a previous sound has begun and which must be held until the other sound stops. Then, after two transformations of the sound one arrives at a white note (of any length). The turning arrow indicates that there must be a change of direction in space of the sound (portable instruments could be moved... for pianists, there would be a challenge to be thought over and solved). Instructions do not specify what it means to have elements placed higher and lower in relation to each other on a page. Whatever interpretation it may receive or not, next come two white notes which however are to be read as one. It must start directly after a preceding one as the diagonal line leading to it shows, and the second one must be coordinated with the start of another sound. The vertical line ending with a sign having an arc underneath it indicates that this sound must come from another player (certain options, with use of own sounds or environmental ones do not apply here). - Next "group" of signs situated somewhat up the page is one short sound directly after a preceding one.

The above section described a sample of around one fifth of the first page. There are more signs and combinations than those mentioned here, but they have in common the use of conglomerates of individual sounds or tones. The player must respond to up to several demands at the same time concerning the individual sounds, their

relation to each other and their relation to other sounds that can be heard. Players have to pay much attention to details and often coordinate precisely with each other.
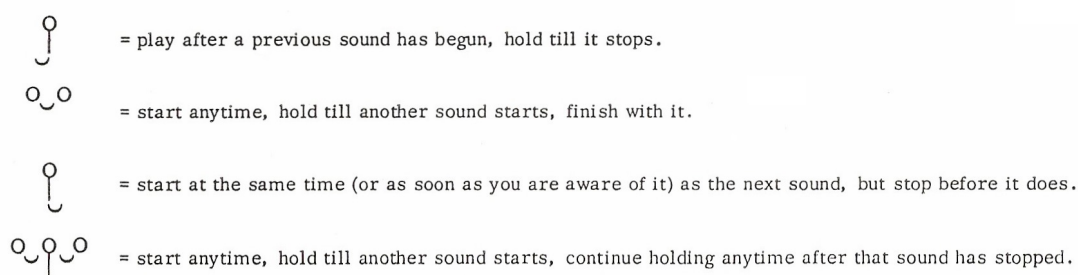

Fig. 02. Wolff: For 1, 2 or 3 people, detail from page 1 of Instructions. © 1964 by C.F. Peters Corporation. Reproduced by kind permission of Peters Edition Limited, London.

A few more signs can be seen from the excerpt in Fig.02, concerning coordination. One additional sign belonging to this kind can be mentioned, a line broken by a number followed by a colon and a zero - like in Fig.03. The number before the colon indicates the number of seconds of silence to be inserted before the required coordination (and the red number one indicates one change of timbre from the previous note).
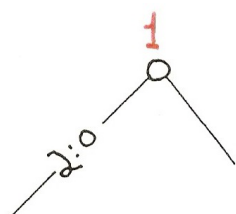

Fig.03. Wolff: For 1, 2 or 3 people, detail from page IV. © 1964 by C.F. Peters Corporation. Reproduced by kind permission of Peters Edition Limited, London.

RABR assessment: There is no unambiguous segmentation of contents from the side of the composer beyond dividing into pages, although the composer presupposes a RA procedure by allowing for playing the contents "in any convenient sequence". Seemingly there are groups of signs, judging from the visual impression, but it is not

clear exactly what belongs together. However, as some detailed reading reveals, there are sounds having to follow each other closely. These small groups of signs cannot be divided further - they can, consequently, be considered the smallest possible units. The extensive freedom to play the material in any sequence does not necessarily apply to performance but could well be taken to mean that creating a fixed version beforehand is allowed. "Any convenient sequence" within a page could, however, also mean that choice can be made during performance, and also that one could change page at will. But as this does not have to happen, we have to say that two possibilities are open: no performance RA at all, or RA ad libitum according to the performers' decisions. In the interest of mapping possibilities, I will choose a maximum RA rating here.

Two features seem to characterise the Broadness of elements to be played. On one hand, sounds are defined in a general and approximate way. Durations, when indicated, are either "short, up to about one second" or "any length". Pitches, where indicated, may be read in several clefs. "Anything" is not fixed at all - unless limited by possible demands to sustain it. These Broadnesses exist on the level of detail. But rules change fast, almost for every sound, the system is complicated and several instructions may have to be obeyed at the same time. Compared to works in traditional notation one may say this is in practice no less detailed. On the level of details choices are possible, but reading, obeying instructions and reacting to circumstances will probably dominate the players' attention, even being trained in playing the piece. This seems comparable to the way in which the musician traditionally has freedom concerning how to do some details of tempo, dynamics and phrasing. It does not seem to leave room for improvisation in the sense in which the improvisor develops his or her own inspiration with some continuity. Thus it is akin to the traditional sight-reading procedure, although producing a different kind of

music[15]. So I will rate the BR value to be "no or almost no degree", knowing it could be disputed - it could, among other things, also depend on how well you know the piece.

On this background, I rate the work as RABR [4,0] (Maximum Random Access, minimum Broadness).

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15) While written-down improvisations can "kill" the improvised aspect (like a dried plant!) by preserving the sounds only, this way of composition preserves the unpredictable situation, being based on communication, not of patterns of pitches and metrical values. It might be an excellent exercise for classical musicians to approach improvisation.

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN: CONNECTION

Connection from 1968 is one of the 15 pieces constituting the collection *From the Seven Days (Aus den Sieben Tagen)*. It belongs to a "family" of pieces taking metaphorical issue with the cosmic perspective and gamuts of units of very different order. The units are, however, arranged within a continuum, with direct inspiration from serial composition.[16] Fig.04 quotes the entire piece as it appears in the collection.

for ensemble

CONNECTION

play a vibration in the rhythm of your body
play a vibration in the rhythm of your heart
play a vibration in the rhythm of your breathing
play a vibration in the rhythm of your thinking
play a vibration in the rhythm of your intuition
play a vibration in the rhythm of your enlightenment
play a vibration in the rhythm of the universe

mix these vibrations freely

leave enough silence between them

may 8, 1968
©

Fig. 04. Karlheinz Stockhausen: "Connection" from "From the Seven Days". © Copyright 1968 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien/UE 14790. English version © Copyright 1970 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien.

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16) The other "family members" being Night Music, Downwards, Upwards and Communion from *From the Seven Days*, according to the present author. The serial design is discussed in Kohl (1981) and Blumröder (1993). There is one more text notated collection, *For Times to Come*. For an analysis of all 31 pieces in both collections, see Bergstrøm-Nielsen (1998) in Danish language or the translated and shortened versions, Bergstroem-Nielsen (1997) (German) and (2006) (English).

How the piece proceeds while playing it should be apparent from the score. Everyone starts together by playing the first line. They continue, probably at individual paces, in which case a spreading out must be expected. After this "exposition", there is a mixed situation the rest of the time.

We may consider the Broadness issue first: how can a musician render "the rhythm of your body" and all the others? Apart from "rhythm of your breathing" all elements seem to have almost unlimited interpretation possibilities. However, a "spelling out" of the contents must take place, in the sense of a differentiation process, because musicians have to make the elements different and also to remember their characters so that they can be picked up again. In fact, there is a substantial amount of concentrated work to be done to achieve this - very different from the situation in which "anything goes". And as a consequence for the sounding result, certain musical characters will occur and reoccur - in another word, there will be stylisation. Still, instructions do not dictate any details[17].

Regarding Random Access, the sentence "mix these elements in free sequence" clearly states just this very principle for the second part of the piece. The first part is, of course, sequence-bound even if heterophony can easily occur - that does not affect the fact that it is produced by adding strict sequences.

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17) Stockhausen reports of a discussion with the pianist Alois Kontarsky who played in his ensemble. "Rhythm of the universe" did not make sense to him, but discussing the matter together, thinking of star constellations and interval constellations in Webern's music turned out to be excellent inspirations. See Maconie (1976) and (1989) p. 254 and 118f. In Maconie (1989) p.117f a similar story from Stockhausen, talking about a 1968 composers' seminar in Darmstadt is mentioned. Participants did not know how to realise "play a vibration in the rhythm of your thinking" and Stockhausen then did an exercise: with closed eyes, tapping with a pencil each time their thinking changed direction. - Finally, Stockhausen's program notes for the published recording (1973) provides a general introduction to such work going into further details - see Stockhausen (1978) p.116f.

RABR assessment: RA prevails in pure form in the second part but not at all in the first, so value is set to medium. BR is rated, despite the individual work demanded, at a high value since the musicians themselves set the limits and have plenty of time to unfold their ideas as well as the liberty to modify them along the way. It is, however, not maximum, since characters must fit the self-imposed ideas. Therefore I will place the work at RABR [2,3]

CHRISTIAN WOLFF: STONES

<div style="border:1px solid black;padding:1em;">

Stones

Make sounds with stones, draw sounds out of stones, using a number of sizes and kinds (and colors); for the most part discretely; sometimes in rapid sequences. For the most part striking stones with stones, but also stones on other surfaces (inside the open head of a drum, for instance) or other than struck (bowed, for instance, or amplified). Do not break anything.
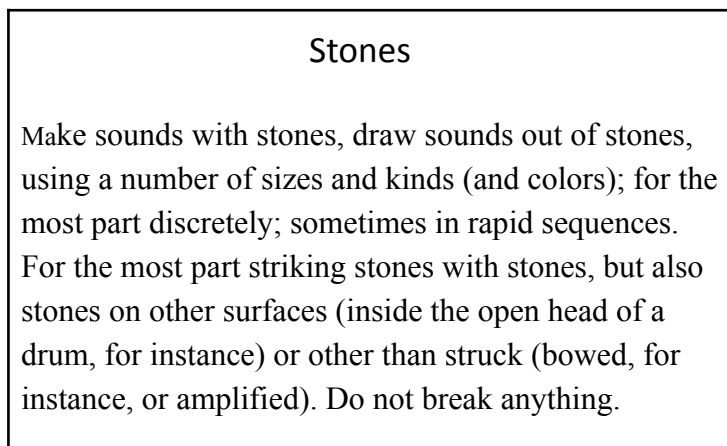
</div>

Fig.05. Wolff: Stones. Frog Peak Edition, shareware, 1969.

This is the total score. In the Frog Peak Edition it is stated on one A4 page, with the title and text underneath just like provided in Fig.05. It is composed in the year 1968 and a part of the series *Prose Pieces*, an anthology comprising 15 pieces in all, the last bearing the composition year 1997.[18] The collection was begun with British art students in mind[19].

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18) The 1997 piece is not included in the online Frog Peak edition but may be seen in Gronemeyer et al. (1998).
19) According to the program note in Gronemeyer et al. (1998)

The formulations "for the most part… sometimes" as well as "for the most part... but also" both specify proportions of quantity: "for the most part" is to appear most frequently whereas "sometimes" as well as "but also" is to happen in fewer cases. How, and when, the shifts are made is left to the individual performers.

The closest alternative I could think of concerning the first one would be quotas, like "90% of discrete sounds - 10% of rapid sequences", or an attempt at inventing symbols suggesting the same thing and arranging them graphically in proportional quantities. However, the verbal means employed appear much simpler, easy to instantly understand, less mechanical and undoubtedly at least as effective.

A simple use of verbal expressions thus appears as a formula capable of describing how different categories of sounds and soundmaking means relate to each other. There are two two-level hierarchies concerning both the texture of sound (discretely or in rapid sequences) and the use of stones on stones versus stones used in other ways. Verbal notation appears to be a more straightforward and simple means to do this than any other notation means.

As the dichotomy "discretely / in rapid sequences" suggests, there are to be distinct elements or sections. But the organisation of this in practice is entirely free, within the priority given of using more time for the discrete ones. The opposition of stones used alone or together with instruments might, or might not, become the basis for such elements or sections.

RABR assessment: broadly defined elements exist and a hierarchy is to be observed, but within this flexible framework musicians have total freedom to organise the temporal dimension, both how elements follow each other and their durations. Concerning the basic sound material, a certain constraint follows from the demand to use stones, both alone and in combination with instruments, but there are only the gentle further quantitative restrictions of how to use this in improvisation mentioned above. On this background, I will place the work at [4,3].

ROMAN HAUBENSTOCK-RAMATI: INTERPOLATION. MOBILE POUR FLUTE (1,2 ET 3).

This piece is copyrighted 1959 but was composed already in 1957, according to Universal Edition (2016). It is subtitled *"mobile"*. Haubenstock-Ramati himself coined this notion which has almost become a genre designation for his characteristic way of composing. The notion of *"mobile"* was inspired from those by the sculptor Calder but has a special intent with this composer. He wished to break away from strict linearity, however retaining a dimension of identity. He viewed this as an employment of the classic variation principle and as a "dynamically closed form"[20]. Individual segments could be combined and arranged differently each time such a piece was played, and his works exhibit a multitude of methods to make this possible. They were typically written out with approximate note-values without a metre, but in great detail.

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20) Haubenstock-Ramati (1965), p.54.

Fig.06. Haubenstock-Ramati: Interpolation (original size 44 x 30.5 cm). © Copyright 1959 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 13078.

Fig.06 shows the whole score without the explanations. They may be summarised like this: one must start and end with two of those elements nearest the left or right side having brackets at their end, followed or preceded by a thick vertical line. "Formants", as the small units are called, may be freely combined, going down- and upwards. Reading direction may be from left to right or "retrograde", backwards. - A version for 1 flute is to take 4-5 minutes. Versions for 2 or 3 flutes may last up to 12 minutes. When there is more than one flute, the procedure with starting and ending as described above must be completed 3 times. Second and especially third time the system of connections between elements is to be abandoned. Instead, formants should be chosen spontaneously and played, in "original" version or retrograded (=backwards), "separated by shorter or longer pauses". Recorded version(s) may be used together with live playing. With several flutes, layers of smaller density ("repetitions" 2 and 3 as described above) must sound simultaneously with a layer of greater density.

Thus we have a labyrinth offering ample choices for the interpreter to choose her own way through. Elements themselves are notated in a fixed way. However: if several flutes are employed and after the first round is completed, the playing procedure changes into a completely free choice of elements.

While these appear as basic facts, some details remain ambiguous. This one seems purely a creative challenge: layers of smaller and greater density are to be juxtaposed - but how? It could sound reasonable when Straebel (1997) describes how it could begin as a solo, then become a duo and finally a trio[21]. But this is maybe not the only option - also taking the possible use of recording into account.

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21) Maggi Payne (1999) also follows this principle when she makes two consecutive and accumulating recordings of her live playing.

In fact, this work is published with unusually few explanations, compared with later works - other challenges exist on the level of details where one would expect some information. How are fermatas to be different? A cue can be taken from jeux 6 (1960) for percussionists that features similar types. Some note bars have numbers that are not explained - see Fig.06. Blum in Straebel (1997) proposes that the numbers designate different tempi. Additionally, he raises several other issues concerning these different bars: when one number is played, what about the other and what about the grace-notes? Further, he asserts that "I know that Haubenstock-Ramati has installed these things on purpose, in order that the mobile character really comes about..."[22]

Several things, however, may warn against the assumption that the lack of explanations was intended by the composer, as long as we do not possess a proof of that. First, a number of subsequent works had ample explanations, also concerning minute details of signs[23]. It could be that a number of details here were left to verbal explanation. This is an early work of his of the mobile type. It is imaginable that with more experience (including the employment as a music editor at Universal Edition starting the year he composed this piece) came a growing realisation that misunderstandings of details in non-traditional works easily arise and a wish to prevent these as much as possible. Second, although consciously introducing some confusion as a provocative compositional device is a known strategy - it would, however, be exceptional to see it in a European context so early, even before Cage's visit to Darmstadt 1958.

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22) Straebel (1997), approx. 20% from the beginning of the article: "Ich weiss, daß Haubenstock-Ramati diese Dinge mit Absicht eingebaut hat, damit der mobile Charakter wirklich entsteht..."

23) For instance, explanations to "jeux 6" (1960) for percussionists detailed out 6 different kinds of fermatas as well as possible combinations thereof. In "multiple 5" (1965) for woodwind and strings ad lib. two large pages were consumed by explanations of string sounds, and another one dealt with woodwind sounds.

Pragmatically, as in other cases, the interpreter must do her best and decide on the background available.

Fig.07. Haubenstock-Ramati: Interpolation, detail. © Copyright 1959 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 13078.

The occasional polyphonically notated passages, such as 5:4 to the extreme left in Fig. 07, is a curiosity for this piece and clearly reminiscent of early serialism's practise of going into minute details of durations - thereby, among other things, even expanding the demands placed on the interpreter's reading, in this case of rhythm.

The BR "freedoms" within occasional acc. and dim. and when playing grace-notes do not go beyond those of traditional notation. One detail does, however: in the upper left corner there are two tempo indications, each a double one, with oblique arrows separating the two halves of the double. This can be read as offering an ad libitum choice between several tempos, such as "presque lent" and "lent" in the first case.

RABR assessment: both for the first and possible subsequent rounds of playing, BR value remains extremely small, but different for the first and possible subsequent rounds. For the first, RA options appear frequently and varied, however bound to the overall sequence providing alternatives along the way. For subsequent ones, RA is absolute. In the first case I consider the RA value to be more than just a little - 2, and as the maximum to be employed in the second case is 4, the average is 3. For the BR value, I set it to zero because the tempo options given in two cases are rather near each other, and this detail appears unimportant seen from the totality, which furthermore contains exact tempo details beyond the traditional and even the necessity of reading backwards. So I place this work at RABR [3,0][24]

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24) This is a high RA value for Haubenstock-Ramati, especially within mobiles. 14 works written from 1959 to 1989 were investigated as a preliminary study. RA range varied between 0 and 3, BR between 0 and 2. He is truly a specialist of RA, and in this field he has invented many new kinds of systematic permutations and "roads" through the different graphics.

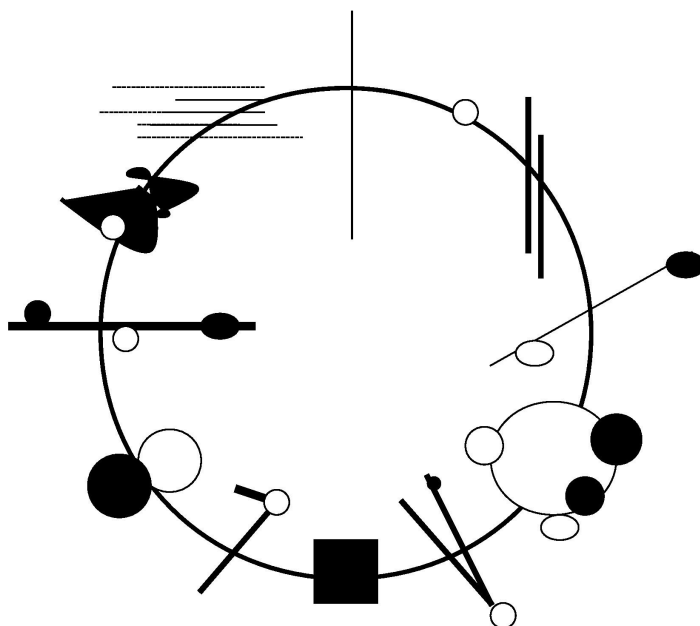**PETER SCHUBACK: L'HEURE DU PANURGE FOR ENSEMBLE AD LIB.**

Fig.08. Schuback: L'Heure du Panurge. International Improvised Music Archive, shareware.

The piece consists of 12 different graphic symbols arranged in a circle in a clock-like manner - see Fig. 8. The entire explanation reads:

> *"The twelve symbols are to be played as short fragments with pauses in between. Musicians choose individually where to start (which "hour" within the clock dial). The order is given, but musicians, 3 or more, do not need to synchronise. Choice of instruments is entirely free. All 12 statements are to be played after another, clockwise.*

> *After the first cycle, that is, starting with the second cycle, one freely chosen fragment is left out for each cycle until there is only one left. Then one fragment is added for each new cycle. When all fragments are played again, that is, after the twenty-fourth cycle, musicians play their last fragment over and over again until all have arrived at the same stage in the process. Then the piece is over."*

According to the explanation above, musicians first play cycles consisting of lesser and lesser elements, and having reached only one element, cycles increase until the maximum. Thus the overall impression can be expected to be a subtly decreasing diversity of elements and increasing again. Subtly, because parts are both different and not synchronised, so a variety of elements will be at play anyway. The end will then be marked by a more clearly decreasing diversity when several players repeat one single element.

RABR assessment: one main aspect of RA is the free choice of the first element to play. The leaving out and later adding of elements to the cycle is on a "freely chosen" basis. The easiest way would be to let the leaving out and latter adding take place when starting or ending the cycle, so as to keep track of one's choices by simply counting or remembering the place in the sequence. However, one may opt for complicating it, making more individualised choices each time and taking the effort (and maybe risk) to remember it. Taking this into account, a certain amount of random access is present most of the time. But even if forcing a maximum of RA out of the system one will much of the time be limited by sequential playing. So RA is, all in all, fairly modest. As to BR: as there is no direction on how to interpret the elements, there is maximum freedom, regardless whether the relatively short duration they are supposed to have may suit or not suit the musician. One might ask whether it is not a limitation of the interpretative openness to demand that elements are repeated later. There is, however, no indication that this must take place within limits, for instance, that the results be recognisable. I place this work at RABR [1,4].

SHIBA TETSU: HAND PIECE (WITH MEMORY FUNCTION) FOR ENSEMBLE AD LIB

HAND PIECE (WITH MEMORY FUNCTION)

A. Cues:

1. Hand down --> change music

2. Show 1-3 then indicate head --> memorize music (no change in the music which is played)

3. Show 1-3 then hand down --> recall and play memorized music

4. Show 5 then hand down --> End

B. Rules:

- all (non) instruments are OK

- all members can show cue whenever

- on every cue, at the moment when hand down, next music section starts

Notes. Cues start by showing 1, 2 3 or 4 fingers. After the other players have noticed this, in cue number 2, 3 and 4 one more number is given. "Show 1-3" etc. means: show one of the numbers 1, 2 or 3 with the corresponding number of fingers. The piece lasts until someone gives the "end" cue.

Fig.9. Tetsu: Hand Piece. International Improvised Music Archive, shareware.

This piece was directly inspired by the game pieces of John Zorn and his activity in Japan in the first half of the nineties. But whereas Zorn could seem to take delight in complicating the rules to a maximum, they are here reduced to a simple minimum.

As can be inferred from the rules stated in their entirety above, one can consider the music to consist of a number of sections, each started by a cue and determined by which kind of cue. Cues may result in simply an unspecified change, in a silent memorising of what is played, in a change into a recalled character having been memorised before, or in the piece ending.

RABR assessment: since every player is free to change the music played at every moment into a new section, RA is at a maximum and what happens is immediately hearable. BR is either nearly maximum in the event of unspecific change, or it is ideally zero in the event of one having to make an attempted reproduction of a memorised character. Because versions may imply very different degrees of BR, an average is stated here. On these backgrounds, I rate the piece at RABR [4,2].

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Second part of this article to follow which includes also the literature list.

SMALL NOTES

ALTERNATIVE USE OF TRADITIONAL NOTATION - INTRO:

When discussing notation, one hears frequently from classical musicians that traditional notation is not absolutely fixed. True enough, it is often bound to practices that seem to require a strongly empathical relation to the work for which "co-creative" may be too strong a word, but on the other hand the need for something to happen in this direction is difficult to deny. In general jazz practice, notated melodies are not so strictly authoritative as in classical music, they are arranged according to musicians' own ideas and juxtaposed to, sometimes directly mixed with, improvised parts. But composers may change these habitual ways! Hübsch below, in yet a different way, combines an extensive use of detailed, traditional notation with outspoken co-creativeness on the musicians' side. And Fell replaces some traditionally notated parts of orchestral scores with broad sound descriptions that both relieve the number of details and extend what the traditional notation is able to do.

ALTERNATIVE USE OF TRADITIONAL NOTATION - CARL LUDWIG HÜBSCH:

Carl-Ludwig Hübsch works with combining traditional notation and other kinds of instruction[1]. On his homepage section with scores, one finds this remark in the introduction:

> *"These compositions are designed for players that take full creative responsibility no matter how determined the notation might seem"*[2]

In an email correspondence he states:

> *I like the clarity which is required to change a fully-notated idea.*
>
> *… A good part of my work rehearsing such pieces consists in taking away the musicians` respect for the notation and - at the same time - working seriously with the notes. (Here I find an analogy to "jazzifying" classical or popular tunes. Rules seem to lead improvisers to creatively modify them into their own rules. I attempt to stimulate that.)*

See the entire email correspondence with him on such matters here:

http://intuitivemusic.dk/intuitive/intuitive/CLH_samlet.htm

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[1] IM-OS published a piece of his: Floating Fragments - Groups in Issue 8, p.10 as well as a text on Onemindedness and thinking orchestrally.
[2] https://www.huebsch.me/index.php/en/scores

ALTERNATIVE USE OF TRADITIONAL NOTATION - SIMON H. FELL (1959-2020):

Excerpt from Simon H. Fell: Composition No.77: Pantonality. For medium ensemble open instrumentation]. Duration: variable [25-45 minutes approx.], 2009. It is for sale here: https://simonfellscores.bandcamp.com/

Simon H. Fell writes traditional scores, but a large part of the sounding material may be described with words in ways as those that can be seen in the example above. The yellow colour in the example above was inserted by the composer to mark out the category of sound - other categories have different colours and are: very high, loud sustained sound - very low, loud sustained sound - unvoiced sounds.

There is one more special feature here: the two upper staves are *alternatives* - players may choose the easier or the more advanced one.

ALTERNATIVE USE OF TRADITIONAL NOTATION - REDUCTION:

See also the compositions by Gene Pritsker in IM-OS 6, p.12 which takes the strategy to reduce the traditionally defined material - and the same strategy is employed, in a different way, by Henrik Ehland Rasmussen in Cycle, this issue p.5.

ALTERNATIVE USE OF TRADITIONAL NOTATION - CONCLUSION:

There appears to be a number of creative ways to deal with the traditional notation.

CBN

KEYS - INTRO

KEYS is a composition from "Songbook. Texts, Lyrics and notations of Tidens Strøm & Drapery" by Laura Toxværd, published on paper by ilkmusic.com 2019.

Toxværd was quoted earlier in IM-OS[1] for noticing an interest from the audience in her graphic notations and commenting it with these words: *"I believe that a more clearly articulated sense of the germinating and progressively emerging time in the music could very well serve to enrich their experience"*, on the background of an understanding that providing visual material may enrich their experience and also provide an opportunity for the artist to share a larger part of the *"subtler and more deeply detailed aspects of the music's content and expression"*. And consequently, in the Songbook she also, according to the preface, wished to make the visual materials *"accessible to everyone and not just to the musicians"*. This is so even if the pieces were written with specific musicians in mind (- but who knows what people might like to do after publishing…)

In KEYS, the graphic notations (except one) are samples of those employed in all the other pieces/songs of Drapery. Thus the piece may become a kind of patchwork or collage and at the same time it can relate to the playing processes of all the others.

A recording of this piece was released on ILK293LP, "Drapery" - see Toxværd's homepage under "Contributors" in this issue - also available through the streaming services).

See also this research report, which provides a full presentation of all the pieces of the book mentioned above, with their graphic notations and Youtube links:
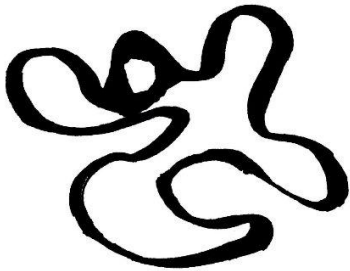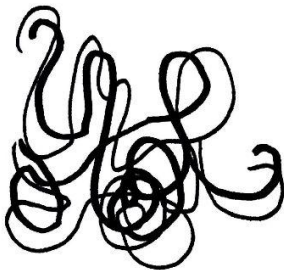https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1021743

CBN

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[1] IM-OS 6, p.5, from her book "Compositions. 18 Graphic Scores" Gylling, Denmark (Spring publisher), 2016,

KEYS

Laura Toxværd 2019

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