

IM-OS

Improvised Music – Open Scores

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Proposals from readers are invited

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EDITORIAL

We are proud of presenting two new and original texts about the Scratch Orchestra by its former members Alan Brett and Stefan Szczelkun.

The Scratch Orchestra was a large group of people performing experimental music in London 1969-1974 and acting as a collective. It was an outgrowth of composer Cornelius Cardew's experimental music class at Morley College, but quickly it came to attract musicians and non-musicians as well from very diverse backgrounds, becoming a peculiar form of fusion of popular and avantgarde culture.

It is also known for cultivating its own genres of improvised music which often used scores. These genres were described in the "Draft Constitution", which was written by Cardew and published in The Musical Times, June 1969. It served effectively to make the endeavour widely known. Moreover, it became successful in establishing its special genres and their typical forms of scores. **Graphic scores**, including collage, were frequently used for *Scratch Music*, an accompaniment that could be a background for occasional solos. *Improvisation Rites* are usually **verbally notated** and, according to the Constitution, such one "does not attempt to influence the music that will be played; at most it may establish a community of feeling, or a comunal starting-point, through ritual". Historically seen, they differ markedly from the Fluxus scores, showing a strong identity of their own - less oriented towards surprising an audience, more towards collective exploration, participation and immersion. To make the list of playing genres more complete - *Compositions* were defined as a genre too which could include pieces by Cage, Wolff and Stockhausen being accessible to non-musicians too - and *Popular Classics* which could reduce well-known pieces by old classical masters to just a particle, again being open for the participation of all.

The articles by Brett and Szczelkun will lead you into the special artistic atmosphere of the Scratch Orchestra and its historic context, and they will present score examples for your inspiration. In between you may read, among other content, the amusing tale by John Voigt about how one thing leads to another inside our consciousness, jumping between the visual and the auditive.

CBN

MUSIC FROM DRAWING LINES AND A MAP OF HARLEM

by John Voigt.

On the genesis of the music video at "Harlem Jazz Clubs: Spoken word and string bass by John Voigt. Piano and found-sounds by Josh Rosen" <https://youtu.be/jXbgbyBWHbU>

What follows is the compositional genesis of the piece leading to its completion, as well as using creativity to bring someone back from the deadening imprisonment of artistic burnout as they are trapped in a hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic. I met New York/Boston artist George Haynes when I was teaching qigong (chi kung—Taoist soft gymnastics) in Boston, Massachusetts during the late 1990s. He was an older gentleman, an African-American from Harlem. I the musician-composer, he the visual artist, both loved the culture, the music and visual art of the Harlem Renaissance (circa 1920–1937). In time my qigong teaching came to a close, and we parted company.¹

He contacted me in August of 2018 asking if we could resume our work, and we began bi-weekly personal visits All went well, but he became hospitalized, then Covid-19 struck. We began to communicate only by email and phone.

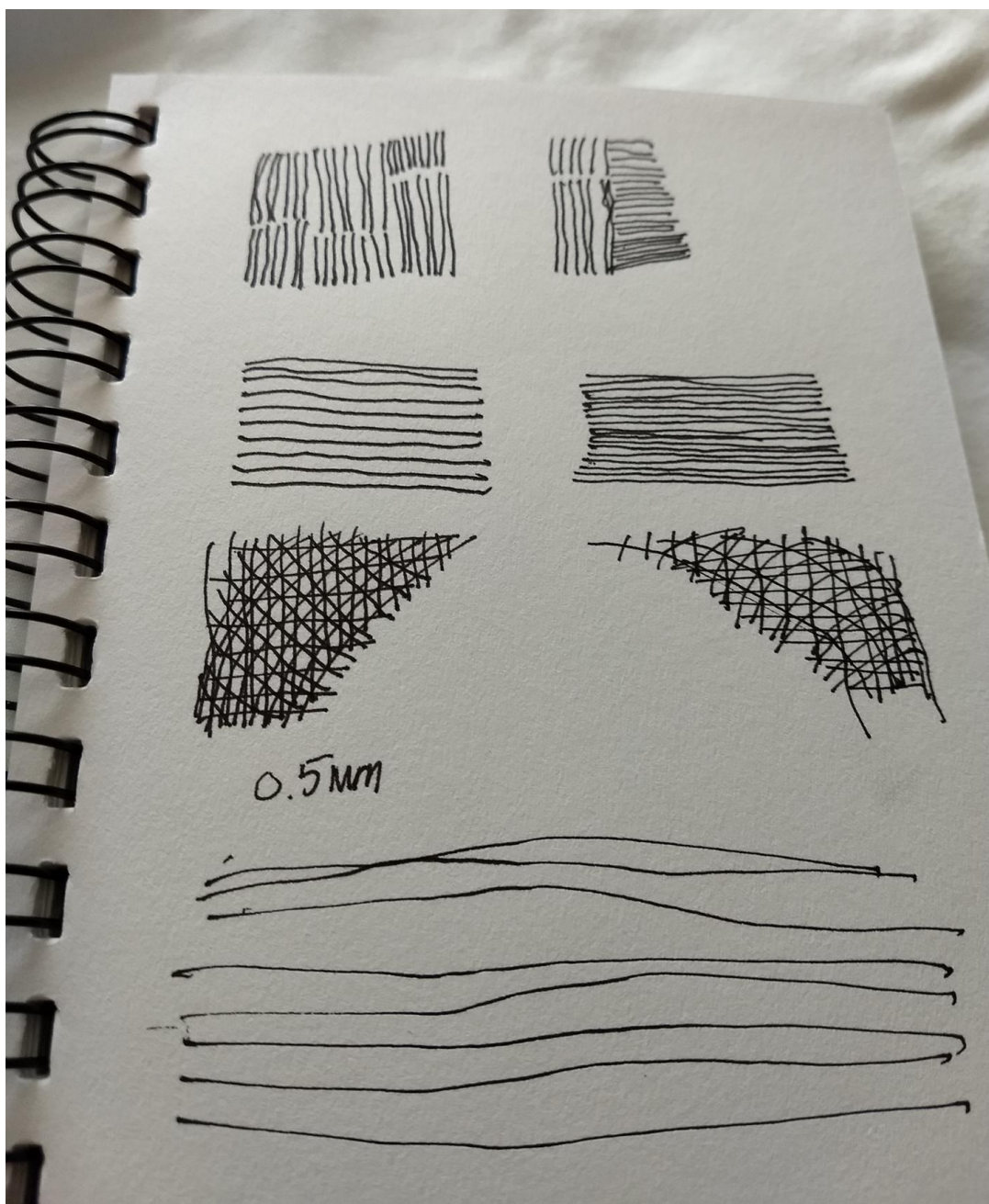
I knew how important creating visual art was for him, but sad to say, he had stopped doing that in the hospital. He had become creatively frozen—rather like the “writer’s block” that author’s and poets experience, but his was an “artist’s block.”

As a bass player, I continually return to the beginning pages of my Simandl Method book with its open string - long tone arco exercises. Using that concept I asked him to at least send me a drawing of a single line. And after some gentle email nudging he did. I used it as graphic notation and recorded what I found on my string bass along with my voice scatting, and sent him an MP-3 of it. He like it; and what I was hoping for happened: He opened and sent me more pencil drawings - even a mythical Valkyrie as shown below. For me his work, even a single line, always seemed so visually alive. It was a joy to turn his graphics into sounds, proportional

¹ More about George Haynes:

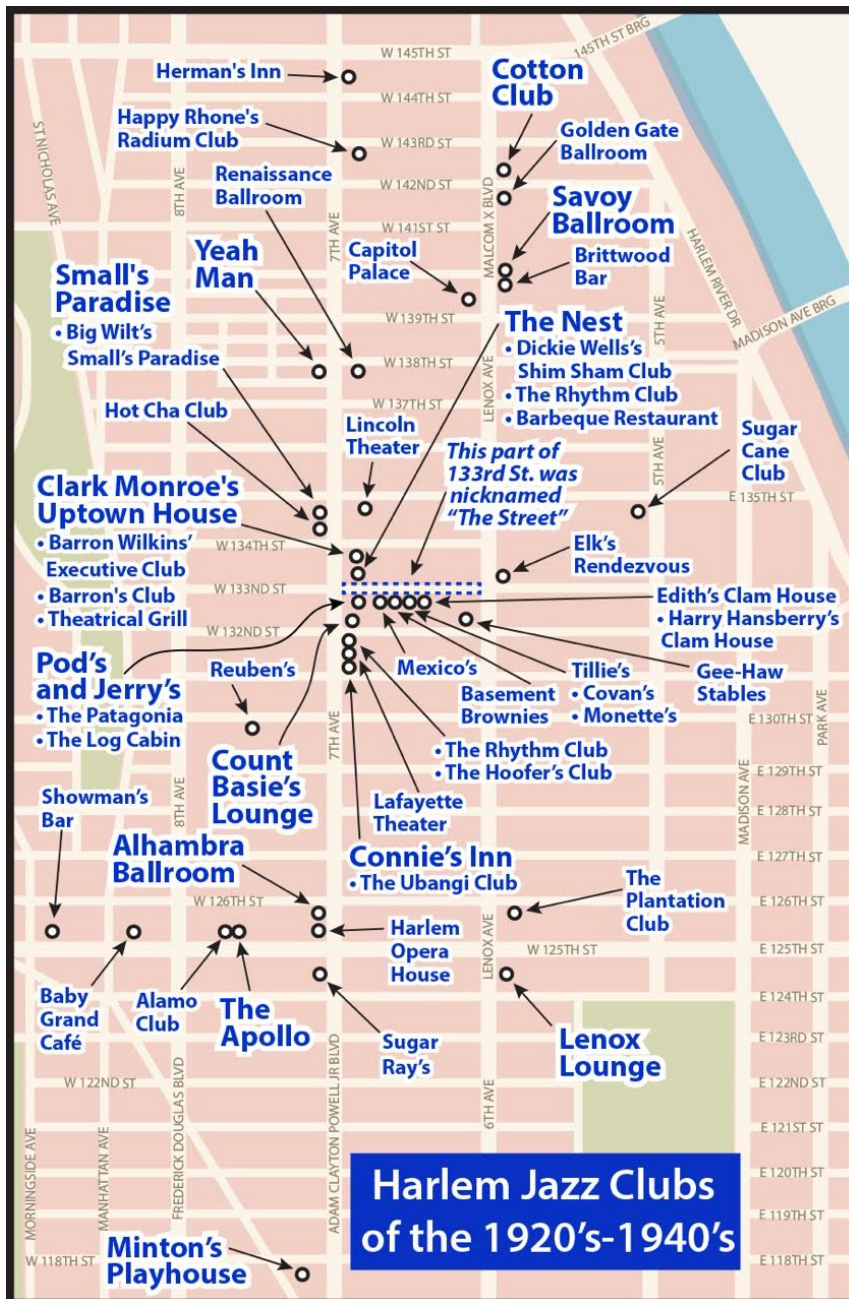
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/11/books/review/down-the-up-staircase-george-edmund-haynes-harlem-family-bruce-d-haynes-syma-solovitch.html>

notations and neo-bop sprechstimme.



Drawings by George Haynes

The upper two drawings reminded me of the streets and avenues of upper Manhattan as seen on a New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority map, which led me on a Google browser search where I serendipitously discovered:

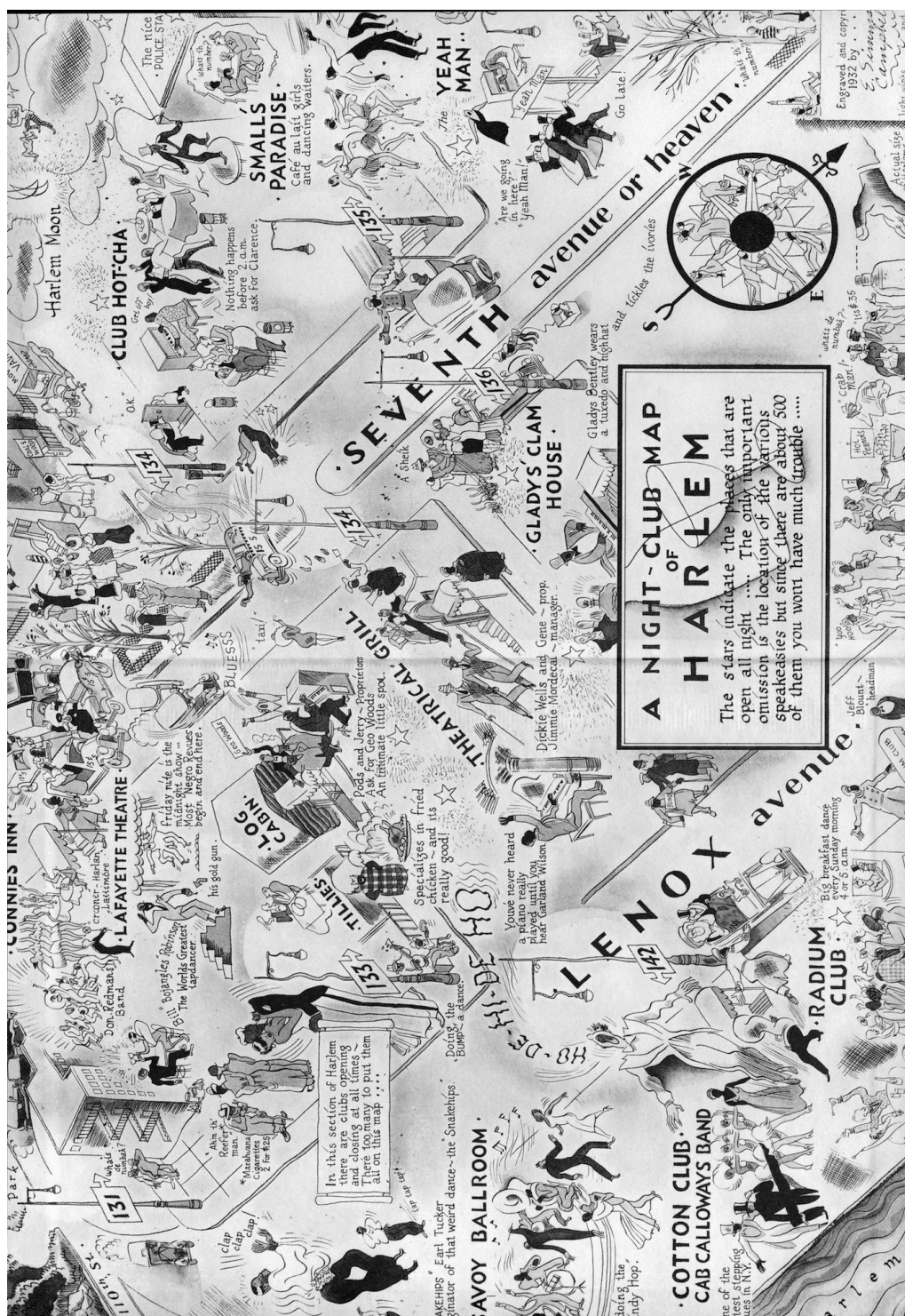


Source: Bob Egan: *PopSpots' Guide to Legendary Manhattan Jazz Club Locations from the Golden Era of NYC Jazz Clubs, 1930-1950* https://popspotsnyc.com/jazz_clubs/

That wonderful site also had short histories of notary jazz clubs, some with informative pictures, that I could use as parts of a non-traditional score for an improvised-composition.

I believe most “improvisation” in avant-garde jazz, and in “free-improvisation” is not creating anything new, but rather repeating ingrown habitual clichés. Jazz people

The site also had a hilarious, but sad to say occasional racist, cartoon of 1932.



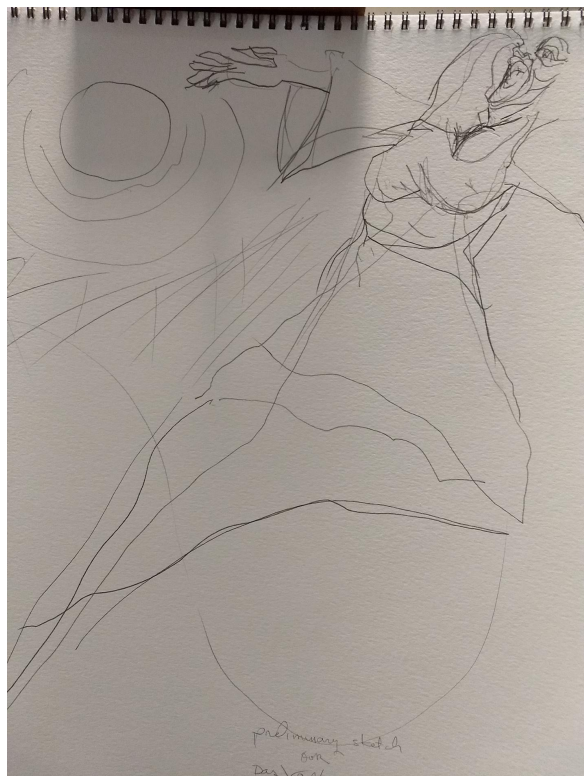
Nevertheless, the names of the night clubs and speakeasies²—even the streets and avenues— can function as a powerful free verse poem that reflects the zeitgeist of the Harlem Renaissance.

The Cotton Club, Herman's Inn, Happy Rhone's Radium Club, Yeah Man, The Rhythm Club, Gee-Haw Stables, SEVENTH avenue or heaven, Basement Brownies, The Patagonia, The Log Cabin, Count Basie's Lounge, The Plantation Club, Baby Grand Café, Small's Paradise, etc. And the Queen of them all (and still in operation) The Apollo.³ The club names gave me (and Josh) life blood to enhance our production of sounds and words. In my scatting I continually jam on the names of certain clubs.

From these basic ingredients, a musical composition was created. I sent my home-recorded bass and jazzy sprechstimme to my musical partner Josh Rosen. He added his piano and "found sounds"⁴ I asked and received the necessary clearance from various copyright holders, and then published the video with the name and URL stated at the top of this article.

CODA

By the end of May, 2020, George Haynes' "artist's block" was gone and he sent me this picture. He calls it, "Das [sic.] Valkyrie." I wonder what music might be made from it.



² A speakeasy was a place selling alcohol in times of prohibition

³ My reader, join in on this: with your imagination project yourself onto 125th Street and then into the Apollo, get on the stage and make some music. This may help your fantasy-journey:
<https://www.apollotheaters.org/>

⁴ According to the artist, these were created with analog musique concrete techniques as pioneered by Edgar Varèse using also some (hidden) jazz standards. More about Josh Rosen at
<https://zigglezagglemusic.com/>

REFLECTIONS ON THE SCRATCH ORCHESTRA

by Alan Brett

I first became aware of Cornelius Cardew and his music in 1968, when I was a first-year cello student at Trinity College of Music, London.

I think it was in autumn 1968, that I attended a piano recital by Cornelius's friend John Tilbury at London's Purcell Room, which included Cardew's Stockhausen-influenced 'February Pieces'. (Earlier that year, Tilbury had been a prizewinner at the Gaudeamus International Competition.) After meeting him backstage, he kindly wrote to me about Cornelius's music, and I remember him saying: "in my opinion, there are no finer scores".

In early 1969, I attended Cornelius's Experimental Music classes at Morley College; and on March 8th 1969, I went to the all-day presentation of his 'Schooltime Compositions' at the ICA in The Mall, London. One interpretation I remember – a page of 'STC' consisting of the outline of a double hand – entailed a large number of toy wind instruments connected, via tubing, to an old-fashioned cylindrical vacuum cleaner; like a huge bagpipe. The sound this produced when switched on reminded me of a badly tuned organ 'mixture stop'!

Subsequently, Cornelius sent me a kindly letter to see if I was interested in going to the first meeting of the Scratch Orchestra on July 1st 1969. This was held on the second floor of one of the disused warehouses in St Katherine's Dock (near The Tower of London). I still remember its dusty wooden floors, 19th century industrial windows, and 'historical' atmosphere.

There, I found a remarkably diverse group of people – several musicians (some quite well established, as well as amateurs), artists, writers, art students, 'hippies', college lecturers, 'unclassifiable eccentrics', etc. – who sympathized with Cornelius's artistically and socially freewheeling personality and outlook. (As I remember it, I had already seen one or two of those present earlier that year at an electronic music and 'musique concrète' course taught by Hugh Davies – one of Stockhausen's former assistants – at Goldsmiths College, University of London.)

In the two years following the initial meeting, a succession of events took place organized by each member in turn; including concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall,

Camden Town Hall, and Cecil Sharp House (home of the English Folk Song and Dance Society).

Because I was studying music full-time at Trinity College, I couldn't really get involved that much with the Scratch Orchestra's activities; although I did take part in, or attended several of their concerts/'happenings'.

A number of individual events stand out in my memory:

I remember entering the lobby of Chelsea Town Hall (for an event on the 15th November 1969), and staring at a 'filthy old tramp' sitting on a bench to the left. His get-up was inimitable: a dreadfully battered felt hat; a disgusting old raincoat tied round with string for a belt (from this there hung a charred old kettle); disintegrating shoes that couldn't hide his feet, etc. – but in his eyes there was a twinkle of recognition and amusement. As I was passing on into the main hall, I felt compelled to turn back for another look: and I realized it was 'Psi' Ellison – a member of The 'Slippery Merchants' (a sub-group of the Scratch Orchestra; see also the article by Stefan Szczelkun in this issue).

In winter 1970, I wrote 2 pieces for the Scratch Orchestra – 'Whoopee' and 'Breach of the Peace' – as contributions to 'Nature Study Notes'. As I remember them, 'Whoopee' involved the participants only making sounds while airborne (!) And 'Breach of the Peace' – rather short and sharp – involved the participants making as many different sounds as possible simultaneously on a given signal.

When the 'The Musical Times' reviewed the collection in April 1970, the writer commented: "it is legitimate to single out Alan Brett as a contributor of 'pure music' to the collection". I doubt this was actually the case; but what is or is not music has always been rather narrowly defined by most people, especially by many musicians.

In 1970, I sent some of my SO text compositions to Stockhausen, who was kind enough to reply. Unfortunately, I didn't keep his note, but he commented that the texts were "just games, without spiritual content".

One of the events I was able to play at was the 30th April 1970 concert in St. Pancras Town Hall (Prizewinners' Concert). A bit of a free-for-all, my contribution was playing the piano, performing what I announced as being Stockhausen's 'Piano Piece 12' (at that time he had still only written eleven). Although I was, in fact, improvising, one SO member came up to me afterwards and asked me where I'd acquired the score, and could he look at it . . .

At another, all-night event – 'Afternoon Teas', on October 11th 1970 – held at Zees

Arts (a small art gallery near Baker Street, London), I remember that Cornelius worked from around 10pm to 7am, making an enormous spider's web out of coloured cotton threads, that spanned the whole front of the gallery.

Psi Ellison also 'caught my attention' at the Queen Elizabeth Hall concert on November 10th 1970. I will never, never, forget the moment when this man, wearing a charcoal grey leather motorcycle suit, suddenly stood on his concert seat, bent over almost double, and began vigorously slapping his backside producing a sound that echoed round the hall. I was laughing so hard, I couldn't continue whatever it was I was doing; in fact, I remember being unable to stop, tears running down my cheeks. (It makes me laugh now as I write this.)

My own Scratch Orchestra event took place at dawn on November 11th 1970¹⁵ – the morning after the Queen Elizabeth Hall concert – on the Royal Festival Hall terrace overlooking the River Thames, and consisted of around a dozen people, including myself, simultaneously reading aloud extracts of their own choosing.

I also recall going down to Dorset for the February 2nd 1971 seaside event, and sitting on the cliff-top playing the cello: it must have been exceptionally mild. Cornelius was listening at a distance and later recorded that, although I was practising a Bach cello 'Sarabande', he was convinced that I was playing Adolphe Adam's 'O Holy Night'.

The 'Slippery Merchants' was one of the smaller groups that developed within the Scratch Orchestra. It seemed to consist of art students and 'unclassifiable eccentrics'. I took part in one of their manifestations at the old hall of Reading University. The student audience were sufficiently dismayed by the performance, so that during the interval they locked the entrance door to the stage in order to prevent us continuing. In spite of this, I remember us all climbing back in through the window and carrying on as before! (One member, Greg Bright, went on to become an authority on mazes.)

Another group, whose music-making was more traditional, was the 'Promenade Theatre Orchestra' (PTO) – founded by composer/pianist John White, a professor at the Royal College of Music in the 1960s. The ensemble of four players, including Chris Hobbs and Hugh Shrapnel, performed their own systems-based compositions on toy pianos, small organ keyboards, or percussion instruments. Some of their pieces were based on bell-ringing patterns – change ringing.

⁵ The Scratch Orchestra members were each in turn to be responsible for a concert.

On February 15th 1971, I took part (as one of the drummers), in the Deutsche Grammophon recording of Cardew's 'The Great Learning', Paragraph 2. It was this work that was bound up with the founding of the Scratch Orchestra. Probably, the most significant events to my mind were those that took place in August 1971, at the Scratch Orchestra cottage built inside the Great Hall of Alexandra Palace for the 'Art Spectrum' that celebrated the 20th anniversary of the 1951 Festival of Britain. It was here that I first encountered the changes in aim, ideology (and mood), that were affecting Cornelius and various other members of the Scratch Orchestra.

I remember clearly the meeting at a large 19th century house overlooking Primrose Hill in North London, when Cornelius and several others made it clear that the Scratch Orchestra was now a 'Marxist' organization, not a friendly and freewheeling creative, artistic cooperative. Several of the orchestra members were in tears; there were some verbal attacks on individuals, including myself – chiefly, I think, for being an aspiring professional musician with 'better things to do'; and one member bored people silly with his baselessly self-assumed role of 'ideological guide'.

Frustrated, in part, by the rather uncertain artistic results and audience responses (if any), produced by the Scratch Orchestra's apparently clear, but rather vague aesthetics and mode of operation, various members (or a faction of them), adopted the political/social views then current in Mao Zedong's China – at that time, in the midst of the ongoing, country-wide disorder and violence of the Cultural Revolution.

Aside from that movement's being the most publicized (but least understood), manifestation of 'socialism in action' at the time, I think it is significant that Cornelius – when I first met him in 1969, before the SO – was personally devoted to Chinese culture and philosophy, especially Confucianism; and his composition 'The Great Learning' reflects this. For example, Cornelius told me that, in the original score, the music for the swanee whistles' swooping up and down was constructed from the actual pen strokes made when writing the Chinese characters of the text.

Naturally, no one adopting 'Maoist' affiliations back then had any idea of the extent, violence, mindless cruelty, or destructive abusiveness of the Red Guards: robotically chanting the facile rhetoric of 'The Little Red Book' (Quotations from Chairman Mao). Its structure, by the way, bears a striking resemblance to Confucius's 'Analects'.

While I too 'jumped on the bandwagon' temporarily, and even wrote one or two articles myself – one of these was quoted by Cardew on a BBC radio programme, and in the magazine 'The Listener' – I was too busy trying to make a living as a

professional musician and teacher to become more actively interested.

Cornelius's uncharacteristically aggressive politicization, resulted in the rather brutal separation from his former family life and artistic career – including the Scratch Orchestra's establishment and activities – and the unlooked-for, widespread alienation this caused.

This included deserting his wife Stella Cardew and their two young sons; his handing an existential 'gun to the head' of those SO members who didn't care about political activism (and had the right not to), but who hoped to continue with a meaningful part of their lives at that time; and his being hijacked by 'Party people', who weren't necessarily his friends.

Cornelius Cardew's alienation extended to writing 'Stockhausen Serves Imperialism' in 1974: a cobbled-together, ad hominem attack against one of the 20th century's most innovative musical minds.

One encounter I had at a political meeting at Birkbeck College in late 1971, effectively buried any passing interest I may have had in 'Chinese-style socialism'. At the end of some talk, followed by a question and answer session (during which I had made some criticism or other), one dull ideologue came up to me and asked me rather aggressively if I thought that the speakers' "thoughts had been correct". Looking back, I think to myself: who was this 'aerosol' who, without knowing who I was, felt he could confront a complete stranger and seek to control their thinking? From that time, I lost all interest in participating in a fragmenting Scratch Orchestra which, in any case, ceased functioning around 1974. I did, however, meet and work with Cornelius on a few more occasions.

Around New Year 1972, at Cornelius's request, I went to Munich to speak to the organizer of the cultural events that were being planned for the 1972 Summer Olympics, in order to set up the Scratch Orchestra's participation in the 'Spielstrasse' (play street). This was a winding pedestrian street within Munich's Olympiapark with various exhibition and performance spaces for art, music and theatre.

In the event, because I was working as music director/composer for a summer drama course, I couldn't actually go to Munich. In any case, the Games were disrupted on September 5th 1972, by the terrorist attack of Palestinian group Black September. Although the Games were resumed after a day or so, the Spielstrasse was permanently closed down.

As Karlheinz Stockhausen stated (after Cardew had worked with him on Carré for 4 orchestras and choirs in 1958), Cornelius was an outstanding musician as both

pianist and composer. I worked with him as a cellist on two occasions in the early 1970s: at an event featuring new German composers held at the ICA in London; and in a concert/talk when we played movements from Messiaen's 'Quartet for the End of Time' at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. We then largely lost contact.

After Cornelius was killed in north London by an unknown hit-and-run driver on December 13th 1981, I played some Bach solo cello music at his funeral.

TRANSCRIPT OF A BBC INTERVIEW WITH CORNELIUS CARDEW ABOUT THE SCRATCH ORCHESTRA, 1972

By Alan Brett

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oksUcVauHXM>

Cardew: "The Scratch Orchestra came about in response to the demand of a lot of young people who weren't trained musicians to get together to make what we called experimental music on a large scale. It has nothing in common with a conventional orchestra."

BBC interviewer: "Nonetheless it is people who are capable of playing music in the ordinary way."

Cardew: "Well, not at all. These people may be visual artists, they may be people interested in theatre, they may be perfectly ordinary office workers or students or what have you. They're not necessarily trained in playing any instrument at all. Some of them would perform activities of one kind or another, not necessarily producing sound, because scratch music was really a composite of people making their own activities, so that some of these activities would involve people playing conventional instruments like saxophones or flutes or this, that and the other.

And other things would simply involve making motions with a hand or arranging a scarf, or all kinds of activities which would not necessarily make sound. The only limitation was that it should be fairly low-key, so as to allow somebody who wanted to express a solo to be able to do it on top of several people playing scratch music."

BBC interviewer: "So, allowing for the fact that we can't see what's going on, can we hear what goes on?"

Cardew: "Well, yes, let's listen to a bit of this tape . . ."

1'17": [Tape of the Scratch Orchestra, which continues in the background]

1'35": Cardew: "Yes, we don't actually mean it as though it was a fully-composed piece of music, because the essence of scratch music is that people are asked to write accompaniments, so each person writes accompaniments and plays these accompaniments, and everybody else plays their accompaniments together. So in

fact, this whole body of sound that makes up a lot of people playing scratch music could be used as a background for somebody playing a solo. And, in fact, we can go on talking . . .”

2’00”: My note: At this point, as the recording of scratch music was playing, a loud bang was heard.

BBC interviewer: “What on earth was that?!”

2’04”: Cardew: “Well . . . accidents will happen . . . that must have been somebody who was playing scratch music on a balloon, suddenly decided to play scratch music so hard that the balloon burst and [laughs] I think that’s what we must have just heard . . .”

BBC interviewer: “But that would count as a solo performance presumably?”

Cardew: “Well, yes, but I mean it was a solo performance that came about unintentionally . . .”

BBC interviewer: “Apart from that kind of thing, do the accompaniments come together and ‘gel’ as . . . jazz-wise, as it were, or what happens?”

Cardew: “Well, that was the theory, that in fact, if you do get a lot of people engaging in activity, in the same space, that these activities will accommodate themselves to each other; this represents some kind of social ideal.”

BBC interviewer: “You do include in the activities, any activities that can be part of scratch music, politics?”

2’52” Cardew: “Well, that’s not quite true, because, in fact, we took a very un-political line at that time; but in fact, what came out in the course of the Scratch Orchestra’s development was that, sooner or later, we did come up against . . . ‘conflicts’ with the establishment: and, we had a concert banned . . . and . . . as a result of that, various members of the Scratch Orchestra, who were politically much more conscious than I was, started to ask various fundamental questions like: ‘who is the Scratch music playing for?’ . . . ‘Who is the Scratch Orchestra playing for?’ . . . ‘What kind of people?’”

BBC interviewer: “So, what answer are you now giving to the question ‘who is Scratch music for?’”

3’30” Cardew: “Well, the music should say something; it should say something

definite; like it should say 'don't go off into a corner and make your own little sounds and hope to satisfy yourself that way'. But actually, resist the pressures of the society that are around, which we find bad. Let's say, resist the pressures of capitalism, and in fact, take steps to arouse the people to overthrow capitalism; so it's kind of revolutionary politics which has now come into the Scratch Orchestra. And it has a – in that sense it should develop a hopeful message; that it is, in fact, possible to overthrow the system in which the old type Scratch Orchestra was forced to exist as a kind of island of idyllic pleasure: you know."

BBC interviewer: "A last question, that I think a number of listeners would want me to ask: "You're not having us on?"

Cardew: "No [laughs], I'm not having you on; this is something that really happened."

*

EXCERPTS FROM MEDITATIONS (VII) FOR ANY ENSEMBLE

Andreja Andric, 2019

The inspiration for the cycle of music works with the common title "Meditations" comes from Japanese zen gardens. The gardens are stylized landscapes with rock formations, water features, moss, pruned trees and bushes, gravel and sand. Like the gardens, the music in the Meditations cycle is intended to evoke the intimate essence of nature and to serve as an aid to meditation for the listeners and performers alike. Each piece can last for any amount of time and consists of hundreds of short texts which describe the music in minute detail.

The sounds that constitute the works, their qualities and their relations to one another on scales of time and pitch are determined by chance, and only approximately. No determinate pitches or durations are given, but only a text describing their relationships, like in the following sentence: "Play one long and one short note in a slightly low register with a large interval between them". The performer plays the sounds off the cuff, depending on wherever their hands and fingers happen to fall, guided by the text. The sounds in these works and the overall flow of music appear at the intersection of chance and intuition, structure and improvisation. The act of performing, with focus on reading the text and interpreting it, creates a tense and attentive, exploratory state of mind. The music makes no reference to traditional notation or to cartesian time-pitch space, opening the possibility for musicians who are not classically trained to take part in a performance, and, in a way, starting from scratch with describing and experiencing music.

In contrast with fluxus-inspired text scores, the scores of Meditations tend to be long, describing the music in considerable detail, while still creating space for freedom at every step of the way. Likewise, they create a large space of possibilities to choose from, like landscapes offering many paths and points of contemplation.

...

The work consists of four hundred short pieces for any instrument. The pieces can be performed in any order or combination on any number and combination of music instruments. The musicians play without a common time. Intonation need not be agreed upon. Duration is free.

1.

1. Play one long and one short note in a somewhat low register with a small interval between them. Count to five.
2. Play a long note followed by three short ones in a somewhat low register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to seven.
3. Play one long note in a somewhat high register. Count to five.
4. Play one long and one short note in a slightly low register with a large interval between them. Count to seven.
5. Play two long unequal notes followed by a break in a somewhat high register with a large interval between them. Count to eight.
6. Play one long and one short note in a slightly low register with a large interval between them. Count to nine.
7. Play one short note in a middle register. Count to six.
8. Play two long unequal notes in the lowest register with a large interval between them. Count to nine.
9. Play four long unequal notes in a somewhat high register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to nine.
10. Play one long note in the lowest register. Count to six.
11. Play four long unequal notes in a slightly high register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to ten.
12. Play one long and one short note in a somewhat high register with a large interval between them. Count to nine.

2.

1. Play a long note followed by three short ones in a middle register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to six.
2. Play two long unequal notes in a somewhat high register with a small interval between them. Count to seven.
3. Play a long note followed by two short ones in a somewhat low register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to ten.
4. Play one long and one short note in a middle register with a small interval between them. Count to seven.
5. Play two long unequal notes followed by a break in a slightly low register with a small interval between them. Count to five.
6. Play two long notes and one short in a somewhat low register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to seven.
7. Play two long notes and two short ones in a slightly high register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to five.
8. Play three long unequal notes in a somewhat high register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to ten.
9. Play four long unequal notes in the lowest register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to nine.
10. Play a long note followed by three short ones in a slightly low register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to nine.

3.

1. Play one long and one short note in a somewhat low register with a small interval between them. Count to six.
2. Play one long note in the highest register. Count to six.
3. Play two long notes and two short ones in a slightly low register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to five.
4. Play a long note followed by three short ones in the lowest register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to eight.
5. Play one long and one short note in a slightly high register with a small interval between them. Count to five.
6. Play a long note followed by three short ones in a slightly low register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to seven.
7. Play two long notes and two short ones in a slightly high register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to nine.
8. Play one long note in a slightly low register. Count to six.
9. Play two long unequal notes in a somewhat high register with a small interval between them. Count to nine.
10. Play a long note followed by two short ones in the highest register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to six.

4.

1. Play two long unequal notes in the lowest register with a small interval between them. Count to seven.
2. Play one long and one short note in a somewhat low register with a large interval between them. Count to seven.
3. Play four long unequal notes in a slightly low register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to eight.
4. Play one long note in a somewhat high register. Count to six.
5. Play a long note followed by two short ones in a middle register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to seven.
6. Play four long unequal notes in a middle register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to seven.
7. Play a long note followed by three short ones in a somewhat high register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to seven.
8. Play one long note in a somewhat low register. Count to nine.
9. Play one long note in a somewhat high register. Count to seven.
10. Play three long unequal notes in a slightly low register with a small interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to ten.
11. Play one short note in a somewhat low register. Count to eight.
12. Play two long unequal notes in the highest register with a small interval between them. Count to ten.
13. Play two long notes and one short in the lowest register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to seven.
14. Play two long notes and two short ones in a somewhat low register with a large interval between the highest and the lowest. Count to nine.

(These were the first four out of a total of 400 sections in this work)

CORNELIUS CARDEW, THE SCRATCH ORCHESTRA AND ITS TEXT SCORES 1966 - 72.

by Stefan Szczelkun

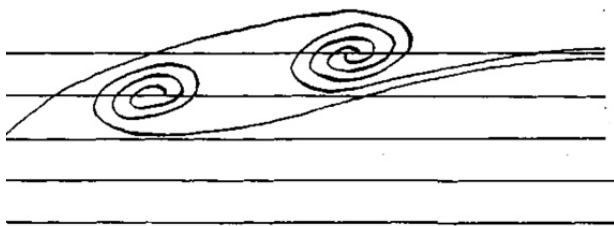
Preface: "Scratch Orchestra did appear to me as an important historical model for organising experimental music-making, with some important innovative traits not easily found elsewhere: pluralism (of the popular classics) and Scratch Music (in different forms) as differing from its forerunner Fluxus by being inclusive, for large groups and participants rather than a defined group of performers. And still taking graphic and text scores very seriously," Carl Bergstrøm-Nielsen, IM-OS Journal

Introduction

Cornelius Cardew finished his monumental graphic score 'Treatise' in 1967 after four years of painstaking work. It comprised 193 pages of lines, symbols, and various geometric or abstract shapes that flowed from page to page but largely eschewed conventional musical notation. He had been playing with AMM, a small group of five gifted free-improvising musicians, since 1965. This group improvisation with AMM continued right through the period discussed in this paper.

My first experience of what was possible with this kind of improvised music was attending a performance by AMM in a darkened room in The Dance Place near Euston in 1969. I was uplifted by a wall of exquisite sounds, and spoke to Cardew afterwards. He invited me to come along to the inaugural meeting of a 'Scratch Orchestra'. But let me go back a year, before I come to that.

By 1968 Cardew had composed a twelve page set of concise experimental music scores that he published in March 1968 as 'School Time Compositions'. These include poetic texts, geometric designs, use of the conventional music stave and graphic drawings.



Every noise has a note

Desire

Want to do something; Do it

Do something without wanting to

Do something wanting not to

Be done to

Be done

note 1: Perform all or none of the instructions
note 2: Instructions are to be followed only by
qualified person

Page opening from School Time Compositions

"In *School Time Compositions*. Cardew subtly defines the areas - emotional, physical, psychological, and historical - in which the performer operates, although there is no question of his controlling the interpretation, either directly or some backdoor ploy involving chance operations (1)." John Tilbury, p.361

In the middle of 1968 Cardew got a job teaching an Experimental Music class at a popular adult education college near Waterloo station in London. Morley College was well known for its progressive art teachers so it wasn't surprising that the experimental music class attracted many artists. Cornelius also invited his students from the Royal Academy of Music and other friends. One of the brightest of these students was Christopher Hobbs who had written a text composition called '*Voicepiece*' in 1966. It used telephone numbers picked out of a telephone directory at random. This score became a favourite of the class.

See Appendix 1: 'Voicepiece' by Chris Hobbs.

The Great Learning

As this class was proceeding Cardew was developing an idea for another ambitious composition based on his study of the Confucian classics. The score of the new work used Ezra Pound's 1928 translation of the Confucian book 'Ta Hio' as its source material and libretto.

The composition, which was made and performed in nine parts, came to be called *The Great Learning*. He had already composed Paragraph 1 by 1968 when it was premiered at The Cheltenham Festival as '*The Great Digest*'.



"The law of the Great Learning, or of practicable philosophy, lies in developing and making visible that luminous principle of reason which we have received from the sky, to renew mankind and to place its ultimate destination in perfection, the sovereign good." (2)

Morley College class members were involved in the trial playing of the next part of this composition. The 'second paragraph' of *The Great Learning* required co-ordinated drumming and singing - this turned out to be too difficult for most of the untrained musicians. This was an experience from which Cardew must have realised just what he could expect from an open collective involving both trained and untrained performers.

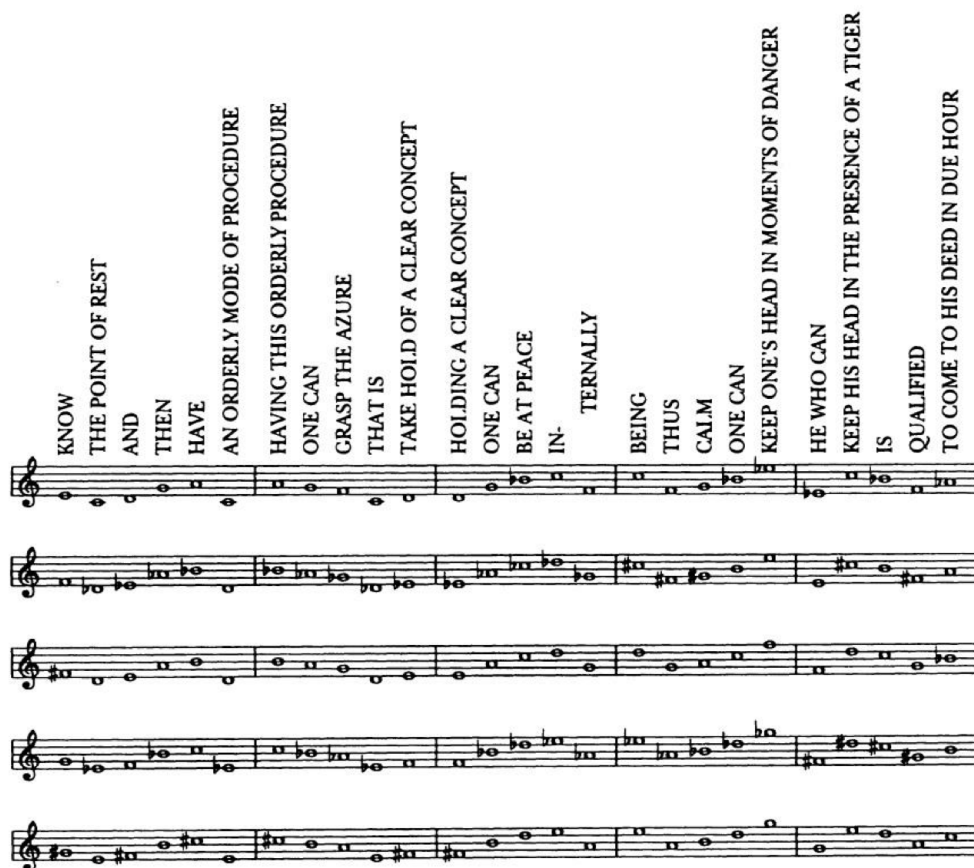


Figure 1.2: Cornelius Cardew, “Singing” from Paragraph 2 of *The Great Learning*

The Great Learning, from Paragraph 2

Improvisation Rites

There had been many examples of short verbal Haiku-like pieces coming out of the Fluxus movement. These were known and used in the Experimental music class at Morley and the students were invited to write their own. This one by Howard Skempton was very successful with the students. It was used by Cardew for the drum part in *Great Learning* Paragraph 2, before he wrote the final complex drum score.

Drum No 1
by Howard Skempton

Any number of drums.

Introduction of the pulse.

Continuation of the pulse.

Deviation through emphasis, decoration, contradiction.

Howard Skempton writes about 'Drum No1':

"It was written in January 1969 when many at Morley College had acquired drums in order to rehearse Paragraph 2 of 'The Great Learning'. At the pub, after the Morley College first playing of 'Drum No.1', Cornelius bought me a drink, saying how impressed he was that the piece was a piece that wasn't a piece. So what was it? Well ... he invented the Improvisation Rite, and 'Drum No.1' became (retrospectively) the first." HS email to author 6/3/21.

Students in the class were invited to write their own Improvisation Rites. And there were soon a profusion of short text scores, to the delight of Cardew.

The Scratch Orchestra Constitution

At the beginning of 1969 the idea of an experimental music orchestra was forming. This would be able to focus the energy of Experimental Music class and also provide voluntary performers for the Great Learning. By June 1969 Cardew had written a 'Constitution for a Scratch Orchestra' which was quickly published in *The Musical Times* of June 1969.

In the constitution a Scratch Orchestra was defined by Cardew as:

"A large number of enthusiasts pooling their resources (not primarily material resources) and assembling for action (music-making, performance, edification.)"

This was followed by an inaugural meeting in St Katharine Docks next to Tower Bridge in July 1969 in which about 80 people attended and about 60 enrolled. St Katherine's Dock was surrounded by disused warehouses; with dusty wooden floors,

19th century industrial steel windows, and a 'historical' atmosphere. There was a tremendous energy and sense of expectation. As an artist who had been to a school of architecture, with little or no musical skill, I had not expected to be able to take part in an 'orchestra'! I had known about such things as The Living Theatre and had a visceral sense of what large collectives working in concert could achieve. The orchestra was soon putting on vibrant 'concerts' on an almost weekly basis.

Improvisation Rites - continued

By the end of the spring term in 1969 the experimental music class had given rise to a collection of about 100 short verbal pieces. These, together with others collected by Cardew, were to be published in the autumn as '*Nature Study Notes*'.

The Constitution defined Improvisation Rites:

"Members should constantly bear in mind the possibility of contributing new rites. An improvisation rite is not a musical composition; it does not attempt to influence the music that will be played; at most it may establish a community of feeling, or a communal starting point, through ritual.... Free improvisation may be indulged in from time to time." (3)

Drum No1 was the first rite. One of the last rites, listed as CFIRT146 in '*Nature Study Notes*' and known as 'Improvisation Rite 3', was composed by Carole Finer.

Improvisation Rite 3 by Carole Finer

Page one of the Evening Standard current on the day of the performance. Each performer has a copy of which he will use as his score. Performers decide individually how they wish to interpret the score and perform accordingly for a given length of time.

This rite has a clarity and punch that is always relevant to the main events of the day on which it is performed. I have used it several times in recent workshops. e.g. ESAD Valence in 2019.

Perhaps because each of the fifty or more people that took an active part in the Scratch Orchestra were given a copy of the hand-written *Nature Study Notes* the 151 improvisation rites it contained were readily available to all and became a regular aspect of Scratch Orchestra concerts. Nearly every concert program included a few improvisation rites.

The Constitution incorporated other ideas that had come out of the experimental music class at Morley. A primary idea was 'Scratch Music'. This involved the different kinds of musical, graphic and text notation that Cardew had used in '*Schooltime Compositions*'.

Scratch Music

"Each member of the Orchestra provides himself with a notebook (or Scratchbook) in which he notates a number of accompaniments performable continuously for indefinite periods... an accompaniment is defined as music that allows a solo (in the event of one occurring) to be appreciated as such. The notation may be accomplished using any means - verbal, graphic, musical, collage, etc. and should be regarded as a period of training: never notate more than one accompaniment in a day." Cornelius Cardew, Constitution.

The idea of Scratch Music evolved over the next few years in relation to its use in the intense collective practice that took off with the inception of the Scratch Orchestra. This evolution is recorded in the introduction to the *Scratch Music* book that was published in 1972. What I thought I was playing at the time as Scratch Music, I learnt was later labelled as 'unnotated Scratch Music'. (23 March 1971)

"That it should be performable for indefinite periods of time is an important aspect of Scratch music". Cardew, p.22 *Scratch Music*.

"Bryn Harris succinctly defines the original Scratch music as an exercise in a compositional approach to music." (Tilbury, p.380) But conversely it also served to wean the classically trained musicians *off* their habitual reliance on notation. Scratch music was meant to be able to be sustained for hours. An equivalent perhaps to the murmuring of conversations at a party.

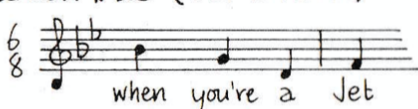
The other formats suggested in the constitution were 'Popular Classics', 'Compositions' and 'Research' (in which the universe is to be regarded from the viewpoint of travel...)

Popular Classics

This category of suggested repertoire was echoic of the time when compositions from what is now thought of as the classical music repertoire were played by musicians who were not necessarily all highly trained or disciplined. This was perhaps a minor genre in Scratch Orchestra concerts but was more fully reapplied as an idea, by Gavin Bryars and his students in the Portsmouth Sinfonia.

Presentation #20 (Psi Ellison)

TITLE(S)



Each member of the orchestra equips' themselves with a record player and one copy of the sound track to the film "West Side Story" together with one copy of the sound track to the film "The Sound of Music"

For one hour play the record of West Side Story. When not playing, listen.

Interval 20 mins.

For one hour play the record of The Sound of Music. When not playing, listen.

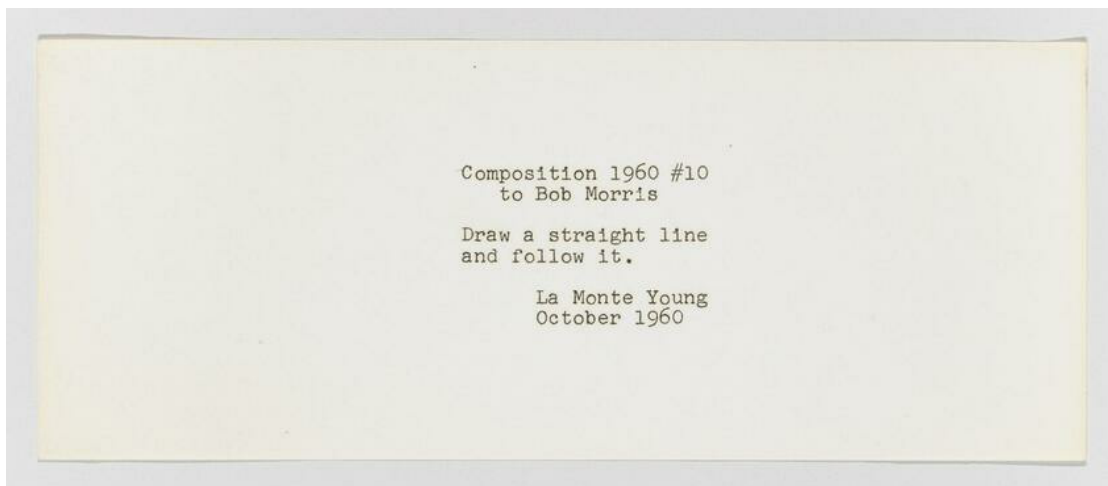
Playing may be accompanied by mimed words and actions.

To take place in Office Block

Psi Ellison: 'West Side Story'

Compositions

The examples of suitable compositions listed in an appendix to The Constitution is telling: La Monte Young's *Poem*, Von Biel's *World II*, Terry Riley *In C*, Christopher Hobb's aforementioned *Voicepiece*, Stockhausen's *Aus Den Sieben Tagen*, Wolff's *Play*, Cage's *Variations VI* etc. In a nutshell the most influential precursors. (we might add George Brecht and Morton Feldman.)



La Monte Young: Composition 1960 #10

"The status of composition in the Scratch Orchestra was no higher, or lower than any other category in the draft constitution; Cardew's experiments with composer performer relations brought him to their coalescence. For the first time, in an act of self-immolation, Cardew posits the extinction of the composer. Or, less cataclysmically, the hegemony of composition is overthrown; Composition is reduced to the ranks." John Tilbury, p.362

"For the idealists in the orchestra - Those of us who regarded the Scratch Orchestra as a magic carpet which transported us into other worlds - composition represented an outmoded aesthetic. Too closely associated with the idea of prestige and proprietorial kudos." *ibid* p.387

Somewhat counter to this view Michael Parson argues that composition was still important and I see now perhaps it was fenced off from the non-composers. A caricature of this was the 'serious' musicians avoiding the first, more confrontational, half-day of the 'Richmond Journey' concert and only meeting us in the early afternoon. (See below).

“You emphasise (rightly, from your point of view) improvisation, freedom from rules & notation, collectivity ... but it's important to acknowledge that the composers (Howard Skempton, myself, Hugh Shrapnel, Michael Chant, Alec Hill, Chris Hobbs, John White, Bryn Harris & others) also played a central role, and 'composition' (in an extended sense) was one of the orchestra's defining activities. It seems to me that Cor's achievement lay in bringing together trained and untrained musicians, composers and improvisers, discipline and anarchy in such a context that we all had the opportunity to question our assumptions, to work together and learn from each other ...that was certainly my experience!” Michael Parson in response to the draft of this article.

Research

This very particular definition of research as a journey was the driving force of a few memorable concerts. Research was also meant to be experiential. The invitation was to experience knowledge outside of the orchestra and to bring it back to the Scratch community. To resist becoming a hermetic community. But the idea of Research as a Journey was used as a structure for two or three concerts.

Activities

These evolved from the more performance-art orientated members, along with an impulse to bring Scratch performances closer to everyday life. These activities were not mentioned in the Constitution and were an influential break-out from Cardew's over-arching concept. They evolved out of the cauldron of the Scratch Orchestra community some time in 1970. In particular they came from the interaction of younger visual artists in the orchestra. These people took to being called The Slippery Merchants but that is really another story. An idea arose of making a list of elemental activities. An example of one such was: “Tan your arse”.

Concerts and events

Scratch orchestra concerts came thick and fast between 1969 and 1972. There were at least 47 concerts. Michael Chant made a draft list from his own records in 2019 (4). Concerts were initiated and planned by the youngest members first. This meant that Cardew (born 1936) and Carol Finer (born 1936) did not get to organize a

concert. Concert venues ranged from the prestigious Queen Elisabeth Hall in London's South Bank, to village halls in Cornwall.

When it was my turn to do a concert I decided to arrange a perambulatory concert.

The Scratch constitution stated that concerts should be directed by the youngest first, so I did not have to wait long to be able to put on my first concert. This was a perambulatory concert that took place in Richmond where I was living at the time.

The Richmond Journey concert, on Saturday the 16th May 1970, followed a route through the landscape designed to compose an allegorical uprising.^[7]

We began by attempting to break the 'claustrophobic spell of capitalist normalcy': Richmond High Street was to be disrupted! We would then pay respects to our ancestors before climbing up through the residential district - recruiting deadened office workers. Our growing ranks would proceed to the top of the hill, to Richmond Park, to celebrate our connection to nature and reclaim the heights. After a break to eat lunch we would descend through the steep Thames Meadow and follow the great river on to our destination - that benign archive of the earth's flora, Kew Gardens.

The allegory consisted of an image of growth, flowering, seeding and dispersal linked to ideas of political renewal. This was to be realised through a series of movements comparable to those in a symphony, which would explore a sequence of moods and emotions. Each stage of the journey was designed by a different individual to meet the overall plan.

The first stage, to start at 11am, was scored by Psi Ellison and Judith Euren. A study of Richmond high street had inspired 14 optional instructions including such apparently innocuous things as 'either shout or whisper in conversation' or 'as a group stand and stare in a shop window - hummm automatically'. But the final instructions were more radical: 'Produce imbalance in Dickens and Jones' and: 'Sever Marks and Spencer's with a quick march in chain formation holding hands'. The 'imbalance' was easily produced by such activity as rolling on the floor and came to a head when a balloon exploded just as the whole staff had reached a state of near hysteric disorientation. Quite harmless but unbelievably dramatic in its effect. Anyway we escaped this excitement to the next stage which was choreographed by Bergit Burckhardt.

Behind the magistrates court in Paradise Road was an old graveyard through which was a passage called the Vineyard. Bergit had drawn a sort of double helix spiral as a score with musicians in the inner spiral and 'dancers' in the outer spiral. As far as I

remember there were about 12 to 16 of us at this time.
The next node of the root map was my own: 'Awakening the residential area'.

'The graveyard of the living?
make enquiries. . .
door to door
knock/ring/tinkle/chime/footsteps/
quavers/faces/voices/slam shut/ road'

This was difficult to realise as it threatened to fragment the group, although it worked on a conceptual level. The next stage was a release from the tensions of confronting the city as we entered the old landscape of Richmond Park. 'Eating Rites' from the Scratch publication 'Nature Study Notes' and other pieces were directed by Daphne Simmonds. A complex score by Michael Chant, reflected the concentric rings of tree growth.

After our picnic lunch we descended through the terrace meadows towards the river Thames following instructions by Greg Bright, which demanded:

'No conversation. Remember 3 or 5 things from the journey and say them at any time. 3 or 5 hand-claps'

This became very magical as we encountered a large group of Orchestra members waiting for us silently in the steep meadow. We went on to play Greg Bright's light hearted but intense 'Field Spiral'. His score suggested:

'As each person joins the spiral they should play on flutes, whistles etc
Remembering nursery rhymes'

We then followed the towpath without any playing to Kew Gardens. The Kew score was a series of instructions from 'Nature Study Notes' along with the 'Piece for Sticks' by Christian Wolff. The journey ended with a formal group photograph by a local photographer (since lost).

Later Cardew wrote that: 'New elements accrued which extended the scope of the orchestra and pointed the way to the future development of social involvement' (Cardew, Stockhausen Serves Imperialism, 1974 p.17).

scratch orchestra

RICHMOND JOURNEY

a day long concert as a journey throughout Richmond

SATURDAY 16th MAY

P R O G R A M M E

MEET	RICHMOND STATION	11am
node 1	George Street and Green	11.15
node 2	Vineyard Passage	12.30
node 3	Onslow road area	1.00
node 4	Richmond Park (eat)	1.30
node 5	Richmond Hill view	2.30
node 6	Terrace Gardens	3.00
node 7	River Thames	3.30
foliage	Kew Gardens	5.00
dispersal		

GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. surreptitious playing
2. acute attention (listening should be a greater part)
3. give careful consideration to the position, meaning and status of audience. (acknowledgements or introductions?)
4. consider colordress appropriately
5. a trace should be left along the route by each player
this trace should have some quality of permanence.

NODE SCORE : each node has been scored and arranged by members of the scratch orchestra. this score is printed as a separate document and is distributed amongst the scratch orchestra. the arrangers of these scores will direct the pieces for which they are responsible. between scored pieces scratch music may be played.

NOTES : 1.the concert will continue in any weather.
2.'musical instruments' are 'not allowed' in Kew or Richmond Park.
3.please bring food and masks for use at node 4.

Stefan Szczelkun: plan for Richmond Journey, 1970

So, the elements of the orchestra were an untidy but energising melee. In practice you were never sure what might happen. There were no group rehearsals for concerts (Although as Micheal Parsons points out compositions were rehearsed). At first us free agents - artists intoxicated with our freedom and power - amazed and delighted Cornelius. But he still also hung on to a more formal idea - we should in time learn an instrument (grow up?). And even learn the art of reading music and learning how to write down our musical ideas. But the Scratch included a number of visual artists who didn't have this mindset. We were people with more of an oral/visual mindset and even graphic scores that demanded a strict adherence to formal interpretation, were too restrictive for our intuitive responses.

The publication of *'The Scratch Anthology of Compositions'* in 1971 contained more rites or verbal scores including the very popular 'Whoopee' and 'Breach of the Peace' by Alan Brett. (See appendix 2). Even after the Orchestra had ended, rites continued to be written but not collected. In my reprise of Improvisation Rites for two performances in London in 2014 & 2015 and then Athens in 2017, there were nine new composers of about 30 new rites. (Collected in Szczelkun et al, 2018) (5)

The experience of being in the Scratch Orchestra

The very varied starting places, skill sets and attitudes of the players gave the concerts a complex multilayered aesthetic which was almost constantly surprising and rarely dull. Sometimes everyone would fall in together and play 'Drum No 1' or something familiar. Then as the energy of that ebbed a lace like web of more personal soft improvised Scratch music would ensue before another programmed composition or 'solo' asserted aural dominance.

Some memories sent to me in the course of making this article from Alan Brett:

"I remember entering the lobby of Chelsea Town Hall (for the event on the 15th November 1969), and staring at a 'filthy old tramp' sitting on a bench to the left. His get-up was inimitable: a dreadfully battered felt hat; a disgusting old Mac tied round with string for a belt (from this there hung a charred old kettle); disintegrating shoes that couldn't hide his feet, etc. – but in his eyes there was a twinkle of recognition and amusement. As I was passing on into the main hall, I felt compelled to turn back for another look: and I realized it was 'Psi' (Ellison)!! Wonderful!

Psi also 'caught my attention' at the QE Hall concert. I will never, never, forget the moment when this man, wearing a charcoal grey leather motorcycle suit, suddenly stood on his concert seat, bent over almost double, and began vigorously slapping his backside producing a sound that echoed round the hall 'Tanning his arse', as I recall it in a list of

1001 activities, to which I think I contributed. I was laughing so hard, I couldn't continue whatever it was I was doing; in fact, I remember being unable to stop, tears running down my cheeks. (It makes me laugh now as I write this.)

One of the concerts I was able to play at was on the 30th April 1970 concert in St. Pancras Town Hall (Prizewinners' Concert). A bit of a free-for-all, my contribution was playing the piano, performing what I announced as being Stockhausen's 'Piano Piece 12' (at that time he had still only written eleven). Although I was, in fact, improvising, one SO member came up to me afterwards and asked me where I'd acquired the score, and could he look at it . . .

"At an all-night event held at Zees Arts, a small art gallery near Baker Street, London, I remember Cornelius working from around 10pm to 7am, making a huge spider's web from coloured cotton threads that spanned the whole front of the gallery. (This event was 'Afternoon Teas' on 11th November 1970)"

Alan Brett email 27 February 2021

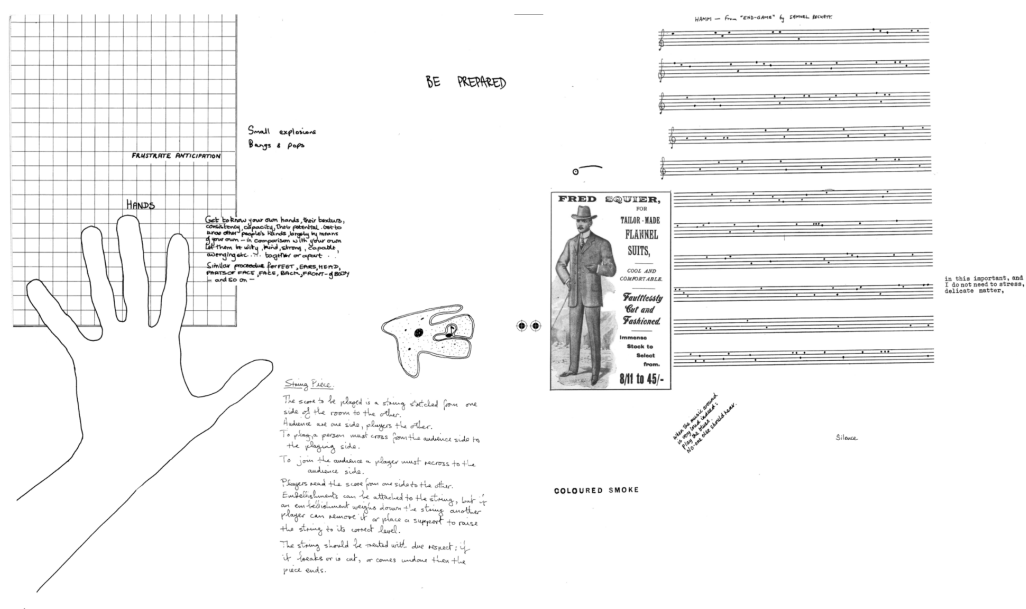
'Scratch Music' the book

As it became clear in 1972 that the Scratch orchestra was nearing the end of its life as a large open, dare I say anarchic, collective. Perhaps sensing the end of this period, Cardew designed a book made up from a number of elements. He selected scores from a number of Scratch Orchestra members' Scratchbooks that he borrowed and arranged with his customary graphic flair. The resulting book has come to define 'Scratch music'. At the time I assumed it was simply a collection of scores from these notebooks. In fact, looking back at it now with a more analytical eye the book *Scratch Music* stands as if it is Cornelius Cardew's 'first' but unrealised 'concert'. Remember concerts were arranged by the youngest first and he was one of the oldest! It is his final summation of what the orchestra was about in his own terms. The 26 double page spreads (from A to Z) locate the various composers' works on particular page co-ordinates, as if they were seated on a stage. What at first appeared as a nicely laid out compendium is also *a composition* on the scale and ambition of the earlier Great Learning. But this time the generating force is the collective assemblage of scores or 'communitas', rather than the historical eminence of Confucius (via Ezra Pound). (6)

Those of us who had not kept a Scratchbook were excluded from this literary rearview mirror. Because of the lack of much documentary material, it is, however, the most authoritative and graphic record that was published. However, the book

was not announced as a composition by Cornelius. Typically concerts, like ‘Richmond Journey’, were arranged of elements such as rites or compositions from several authors and may be seen as meta-scores or composite scores. This work of Cardew’s has slumbered and not been played and celebrated in the way that *The Great Learning* has been. In my view it is a much greater work.

Michael Parsons claims that it was ‘never intended to be performed as such’. It might have appeared pretentious if Cardew had announced this as an ‘intention’. However, to me it is mutely implied in the graphic construction and layout of the book. (7)



Page 'A' of *Scratch Music* (first item printed in the ‘Scratch Music’ section after p.18).

In Conclusion

The Improvisation Rites collected in the *Nature Study Notes* publication are truly a democratic endeavor, whereas the Scratchbooks, preceded as they were by *School Time Compositions*, and taken up by only a minority of the orchestra were less so. The Scratch Music compositions that were selected for posterity in the eponymous book are just that, a selection, with all the limitations that it implies. The book ‘Scratch Music’ seems to be a final Scratch Orchestra collective composition

designed by Cornelius Cardew. It clearly comes under his auspices and his authority rather than representing the potent collective spirit of the Scratch Orchestra at its best. This is not to imply I would not like to see it performed!

It is perhaps not fair to say that we were *excluded* as appended to the back of Scratch Music are 'our' '1001 Activities' which, as I have said, emanated from entirely outside of Cardew's Constitution and were initiated by the younger and more radical elements. In John Tilbury's biography about Cardew '*A Life Unfinished*' he controversially writes that the 'Activities' – "are, in a sense, the true essence of the Scratch Orchestra." Tilbury p.398. However, to my mind the list of 'activities' appended to *Scratch Music* the book, spoiled the original open idea *by completing it*. The actual number collected was 101. Facetiously, called '1001 activities' to give the idea of openness or endlessness and as a reference to a popular carpet cleaning product, with its catchy advertising jingle. In preparing the book Cardew seems to have brainstormed a further 900 'activities' thus completing something that was intended to be unfinished.

The draft constitution was too prescriptive for many of the Orchestra's members. In John Tilbury's view Scratch Music, as an emanation from individual's Scratchbooks, was a short-lived influence and was superseded by more free improvisational modes unencumbered with the notational. Although the idea of the selfless 'accompaniment' style of song making, over which a solo could be heard, continued to hold sway.

Performances of The Great Learning have continued to the present day and are much loved. However, for me the use of ancient Confucian teaching from a feudal era and the authority of an overall composer with only very circumscribed spaces for improvisation and collective leadership does not enamour me to this great work. A heretical view, I'm sure (8).

References

A draft lists of Scratch Orchestra concerts (the work of Michael Chant, 2019)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Scratch_Orchestra

Biserna, Elena. *Walking from Scores* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, forthcoming)

John Tilbury, Cornelius Cardew (1936–1981): *A Life Unfinished* (Essex: Copula, 2008)

Court, Benjamin. *The Politics of Musical Amateurism, 1968-1981*, UCLA Thesis 2017

Stefan Szczelkun et al, *Improvisation Rites: from John Cage's Song Books to The Scratch Orchestra's Nature Study Notes*. Collective practices 2011 - 2017, Routine Art Co, 2018

Appendices

1. 'Voicepiece' by Christopher Hobbs
2. 'Breach of the Peace' and 'Whoopee' by Alan Brett

Thanks

to Bryn Harris,
Michael Parsons,
Howard Skempton,
Chris Hobbs,
Alan Brett.

Notes

(1) 'Chance operations' refers to typical use by John Cage. See John Tilbury p.302

(2)

<http://thecantosproject.ed.ac.uk/index.php/canto-xiii/xiii-sources/228-ta-hio-translated-by-ezra-pound-1928>

(3) John Tilbury p.384

(4) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Scratch_Orchestra

(5) Mayday Rooms Archive, Fleet street, London, has a few rites and Scratch music compositions I composed on paper in 1970 but which weren't given to Cornelius. Other rites from people's notebooks were included in the 1972 compilation Scratch Music.

(6) Refer to my blog for a fuller argument:

<https://stefan-szczelkun.blogspot.com/2020/01/scratch-music-close-reading-of-book.html>

(7) Responding to this section Michael Parson wrote the following: Scratch Music was "the summing-up of how (in 1972) he (Cardew) thought the Scratch Orchestra had evolved and what it had achieved. In a way it could be seen as his 'farewell' to the original concept of the orchestra's existence, which he was in the process of repudiating, but to which he still evidently felt a kind of nostalgic attachment.

I think the idea that the book represents a utopian or conceptual Scratch performance, which under the circumstances could not actually happen, is evident as long as you put the word 'concert' in inverted commas."

(8) Michael Parsons objects that "there is ample scope for improvisation in Paragraph 5, the second part for example is completely improvised." email March 2021

Editors' notes

Stefan Szczelkun is also the author of this blog article :

<https://stefan-szczelkun.blogspot.com/2019/11/1001-activities-re-evaluation-and.html> (comments to 1001 activities, a score collection included in the book by Cardew)

This is 'Scratch Music the book' commented on in the article:

Scratch Music. Edited by Cornelius Cardew. London (Latimer New Dimensions), 1972, and various later reprints.

Nature Study Notes was not included in the book compiled by Cardew, but published separately. It is available here both in facsimile and with a link to a typewritten and searchable edition: <https://intuitivemusic.dk/iima/so.htm>

The following work, written by Virginia Anderson who edited Experimental Music Catalogue together with Christopher Hobbs, also offers detailed inside information, besides discussions of the status of the Scratch Orchestra within British music life. The Improvisation Rites Collection "Nature Study Notes" receives extensive performance-related comments and analysis. Membership lists from different years with statistics of musicians' backgrounds and gender distribution are also offered.

Virginia de Vere Anderson: Aspects of British Experimental Music as a Separate Art-Music Culture. Ph.D. in Musicology, University of London, 2004. (Facsimile distributed by Experimental Music Catalogue, Leicester, UK, 2014).

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bfb7/6f52f3ead46e58dc55804d2f3b77d5043422.pdf> Downloaded August 27, 2020.

Composition for the Scratch Orchestra No 1 1971

BREACH OF THE PEACE

Each player should produce as many different sounds as possible, simultaneously.

Start together at a given signal.

Then produce your maximum number of simultaneous sounds, not repeating those that have only been of very short duration, but continuing until your longest sustained sound has finished, as if like a resonance of the beginning

END of Piece

Composition for the Scratch Orchestra No 2 1971

WHOOPEE!

All performers jump up and down.

Only make sounds while you are airborne!

Make as many sounds as possible while off the ground (or not).

The higher the jump the higher and/or louder the sound?

The higher the jump the lower and/or softer the sound?

The higher the jump the greater the number of sounds?

The higher the jump the lesser the number of sounds?

No. Not necessarily.

If you should make any sounds when on the ground disqualify yourself from further participation in the piece.

(Be punctilious in your personal honesty.)

Make as little sound as possible when taking off and landing.

Alan Brett

VOICEPIECE

by Christopher Hobbs

Voicepiece is for any number of vocalists (not necessarily trained singers), and lasts for any length of time. Each performer makes his own part, following the instructions below. It may be found desirable to amplify the vocal noises, since it is difficult to vary the amplitude of these predominantly quiet sounds. Any of the other sounds may be amplified. Loudspeakers should be placed around and among the audience. The performers should sit in the auditorium, and may move around freely during the performance. The piece may take place in darkness, in which case each performer will need a small torch by which to read his part.

Determination of Events

Open a telephone directory at random, and begin reading at the top of the left-hand page. Read only the last four figures of each number. Each set of four figures constitutes one event. As many sets are read as will provide a programme of actions to fill the time available for the performance. Read down the page, omitting no numbers.

Interpretation of the Numbers

The first of the four figures in a set refers to various types of sound production, according to the following system:

Figure 1 indicates singing with words. The words may be in any language, and any dialect. Use any literature from which to obtain these texts, except these instructions. Do not invent your own text. The literature and thus the language, etc. may be changed any number of times during the course of a performance but such changes should be made between, not during, events.

Figure 2 indicates singing, without words. The note(s) may be sung to any sound provided that the mouth is open for their production.

Figure 3 indicates humming (mouth closed).

Figure 4 indicates whistling. If you cannot whistle, use instead any one vocal noise other than described in figures 6-8.

Figure 5 indicates speech. The remarks in figure 1 apply here also. Very quiet speech may be interpreted as whispering, very loud speech as shouting (see below)

Figures 6, 7 and 8 indicate vocal noises, produced with the lips, throat and tongue respectively.

Figure 9 indicates a vocal noise produced by any means other than those described above, eg. with the cheeks.

Figure 0 indicates any vocal sound not included in the above categories, e.g. screaming.

The second of the four figures in a set refers to the duration of the event. 0 is very short, 9 is very long. The other numbers represent roughly equal gradations between these extremes. Each event may contain any number of sounds of any duration, depending on the overall duration of the event. The sounds may be made at any point within the event, with or without silence preceding and/or succeeding any sound.

The third figure of the set refers to pitch and amplitude. 0 is very low/very quiet, 9 is very high/very loud. Both these characteristics apply only in a general way to the event. Not all the sounds in an event need be very high and very loud or whatever.

Pitch and amplitude will apply in different degrees to the various sounds. In categories 1-4, pitch is the primary consideration, and, in general, amplitude will follow on from it. It is, for example, very difficult for an untrained singer to produce extreme low sounds at anything other than a very low amplitude. In categories 5-9, amplitude is more easily varied, especially if amplification is available, and pitch should be left to take care of itself.

The fourth figure of the set refers to silence after an event. 0 is no silence, 1 is a very short pause and so on. 9 represents a very long silence.

October 1967

Source:

<http://experimentalmusic.co.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Hobbs-Word-Pieces.pdf>

SMALL NOTES

OPEN FORM COMPOSITION LABS

The association *nuovaconsonanza.it* works on in the spirit of composer Franco Evangelisti (1926-80) who founded the legendary Gruppo Nuova Consonanza. In the sixties and on, this group pioneered improvised music - in the form of its own pieces without notation. Now the association is behind festivals, workshops and publications.

A workshop held back in 2020 was introduced like this (transl. from Italian):

The acquisition of a 'performative' mentality, concretely developing improvisational skills and techniques that are at the same time "structuring" seems increasingly relevant, not only for contemporary music and jazz interpreters, but also for students of electronic music and musicologists, that is, of abilities which, despite their improvised nature, are however at the same time capable of letting form emerge in an emphatic sense.

And scores are given a central place in the workshop - as an "update" to the historical basis:

The workshop therefore places at its center the interpretation of important historical aleatoric scores...

At Huddersfield University in England, composer James Saunders runs an Open Scores Lab, with a number of PhD students affiliated:

<https://openscoreslab.james-saunders.com/>

Yes, higher music education needs updating. We hope similar courses are popping up everywhere, not only for free improvisation but also for open composition forms. European Intuitive Music Conference (<https://intuitivemusic.dk/eimc/>) is one informal place for workshops. You can also learn a good deal about performance practise of open works by downloading, reading and practising this manual: Open Form – An Expanded Performer’s Role. A Handbook. PhD, Bergen 2015 -

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/147680/160205>

SCORE - THE IDEAL FORMULA?

"His language has a poignant and potent character. The text is almost a score". Kristian Halken about Bertolt Brecht in the Danish newspaper Berlingske Tidende, 3. September 2015. p. 16.

It seems, good texts are fine, but scores are better and serve as the great ideal ;-)

SCORE - A MENTAL DISEASE?

Compare also, albeit with a somewhat different emphasis, the Swedish movie *The Sound of Noise* from 2010. A group of musicians are working to realize their visions according to a score using the city of Malmö as a background - in illegal ways. A police investigator is working very hard to catch them...

THE BANANA SCHOOL



The Scratch Orchestra was a social gathering of people, not just a performer group. The Danish musician known under the artists' name Goodiepal has in recent decades been emphasizing giving workshops. He specialises in

electronics but with a critical attitude to commercial standardisation, and he has encouraged the creation of graphic scores in these workshops. He and his fans and close collaborators gather regularly for other events in the so-called "Banana school". Here, lectures are given on various subjects, also outside music. - Yes, there is a social life to music-making, and why not nourish it...

<https://kunstkritikk.com/will-the-artists-of-the-future-come-from-the-banana-school/>

On the picture: "Bøjet Tid 01" - "Bent Time 01" by Goodiepal

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