

3 x 10 Musical Actions for Three Socially Distanced Performers

General Instructions

- The piece can be performed on any three pitched, chromatic instruments. The three parts are different but similar in nature and can be allocated to the three performers according to preference or chance. They can be transposed or otherwise adapted to suit the instrument(s) in question. The music is kept to a simple level in terms of range, tempo, note duration etc. that should be playable on most instruments, but any necessary adaptations are allowed. Likewise, performers are free to apply any playing specific playing technique of their instrument – such as pizzicato, sul ponticello or tremolo for strings, or fluttertongue for wind instruments – but there is no need for virtuosity or unheard-of extended techniques. On the contrary, simplicity is a virtue!
- The score consists of three Powerpoint presentations, numbered 1-3, with ten slides each (the actions of the title), titled A-J, with automated slide changes. Each performer should have a tablet or similar device. Each slide is displayed for 30 seconds or 1 min (B and H sections). All musical actions are calculated to last roughly as long as indicated. If a performer is still in the course of playing when the slide changes, they should unobtrusively but promptly conclude the action and start with the new one. If they finish early, they should simply wait for the slide to change before recommencing (some actions should fall a couple of seconds short of the full duration). General pauses should not be seen as a problem. Status bars are included to help performers orient themselves.
- The presentations can also be converted to videos. These are available on request.
- The start of the piece and the slide changes should be synchronised. This can happen manually, although, if there is a way to synchronise them technologically, that would be preferred.
- As can be inferred, the three parts are independent of one another, so rhythmic synchronisation and dynamic balance are coincidental rather than intended and should be regarded as serendipitous.
- The order of the actions in all three parts can be changed according to preference or at random. Ensembles are free to decide on an order of all parts in rehearsal or change them at short notice. In any case, they are encouraged to experiment with different combinations of orders. A game-like performance and atmosphere is intended and this need not be hidden from the audience. An excel sheet to coordinate the three parts is available.
- The three performers should be at a comfortable and safe distance from one another, in a semi-circle. Performance over a videoconferencing system such as Zoom should be possible. As outlined, synchronisation is secondary, so latency should not be a problem.

Instructions for Individual Actions

- A sections: these are the most conventional compositions, so should not present particular difficulties. As in the other cases, transposition, unusual playing techniques and other modifications are welcome.
- B sections: this too should be straightforward.
- C sections: the rulers represents seconds (but the status bar may be more useful); the dotted lines represent the bottom, middle and top register of your instrument and the ruler a grid in seconds. The remaining symbols should be self-explanatory but non-restrictive: dots may represent short and lines sustained notes; thickness may indicate dynamics and colour timbre, playing technique or mode of attack, but other interpretations are possible. The

values (such as pitch and duration) need not be mathematically precise, but the interpretation should be as consistent as possible. If your instrument cannot play glissandi or sustained notes, for instance, you should try to emulate the effect as far as possible (e.g. chromatic runs or 'dirty portamento' for glissando and tremolando/note repetitions for sustained notes).

- D sections: try to act natural. In other words, don't act.
- E sections: again, the idea is naturalism – with a surreal twist
- F sections: As outlined, you don't need to have studied conducting to execute this, but you should make a serious attempt. Any comic effect should be the result of the audience's interpretation of the situation, not yours. Learning basic conducting technique (e.g. how to beat certain time signatures) may be a advisable.
- G sections: these sections use three slightly different types of approximate notation. The principle should be simple: the y axis represents pitch and the x axis rhythm/duration, although there are also indications of relative durations. How precise you want to try to treat the notation is up to you. There is no need to be absolutely precise (otherwise I could have used conventional notation), but, as in the C sections, you should try to be consistent. There are some unusual noteheads or other symbols: these may refer to playing techniques.
- H sections: again, this should be straightforward. There are different ways of interpreting the texts. All are equally valid, provided they are sincere.
- I sections: whether you want to talk loudly, directly addressing the audience, or mumble as if to yourself is up to you (as long as it is audible) and may depend on the circumstances, i.e. what the other musicians are playing. The use of languages other than English is allowed.
- J sections: the speed and regularity of the grace notes and duration of sustained notes and rests between notes are flexible. Accidentals are valid for one section consisting of grace notes and sustained note.

- Generally, all modifications are permissible. The only requirement is that the intention is to give 'the best performance' (whatever that is) in the circumstances. So a serious attempt needs to be made. That doesn't mean it can't be fun and funny: that is the intention, but as in games, fun can require a serious effort.
- Enjoy and good luck!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized first name followed by a surname, written in a cursive style.

Arrochar, 6 July 2021