

Four Meditations for Orchestra

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I

From Unknown Silences (1996)

II

The Tuning Meditation (1971)

III

Interdependence (1997)

IV

Approaches and Departures (1995)

Notes

Each of the Four Meditations for Orchestra has been performed in versions for voices or smaller instrumental ensembles. There is no conventional notation used. The score consists of recipe-like instructions which are the same for each player. Each performer is responsible for their own part within the guidelines given. Since there is no written part to watch, all the performers' attention can be given to sound and invention.

The shape of each meditation emerges from the nature of the score guidelines and the dynamic interplay of the orchestra members. There is no melody, no harmony and no metrical rhythm. The direction is sound-oriented.

Each meditation has a specific focus. *From Unknown Silences* is continuous variation on sounds. Each sound that each player makes is intended to be unique — different from all other sounds in the meditation.

In *The Tuning Meditation*, players are asked to tune exactly to another player or to contribute a pitch which no one else is sounding. In *Interdependence*, reaction time is the focus — responding as quickly as possible.

In *Approaches and Departures* each player carries a specific pitch which is expressed or implied. Each player invents musical approaches and departures to their specific pitch.

The boundary between composer and performer is greatly diminished in this work. The creative process is shared.

I

From Unknown Silences (1996)

This is an invitation to create and play single independent sounds — no melodies. One unique sound at a time.

Sound means any type of sound including pitched or non-pitched (noise) to make an inclusive and very wide variety of sounds.

Silence before — silence after each sound, listening for the beginning and ending of each sound. Each sound and silence as dissimilar as possible in every aspect .

Duration of sounds and silences are free — silences need as much variety in duration as sounds.

Articulations and dynamics include the full range that is possible.

The piece is over when there is no more sound.

An optional soft ensemble performs the same score at a very low dynamic level (*ppp*) moving slowly in and around the audience and adjoining spaces such as the foyer or other entry ways. Depending on the duration of the piece the performers gradually make their way to the stage to be with the other players for the final silence.

Commentary

From Unknown Silences (1996) is influenced by the following statement by John Cage:

“Sound has four characteristics: pitch, timbre, loudness, and duration. The opposite and necessary coexistent of sound is silence. Therefore, a structure based on durations (rhythmic: phrase and time lengths) is correct (corresponds with the nature of the material), whereas harmonic structure is incorrect (derived from pitch, which has no being in silence).” Cage 1961.

From Unknown Silences is continuous variation. Each sound framed by silence — each silence framed by sound. Each sound or silence stands alone — independent without attempted connection to other sounds or silences yet interconnected.

II

The Tuning Meditation (1971)

Begin by playing a pitch that you hear in your imagination. After contributing your pitch, listen for another player's pitch and tune in unison to the pitch as exactly as possible. Listen again and play a pitch that no one else is playing. The duration of pitches is determined by the duration of a comfortable breath or bow. The dynamic level is soft through out the piece. Brass players use mutes.

Continue by alternating between the three options described above:

- playing a new pitch of your own that no one else is playing
- just listening
- tuning in unison to the pitch of another player.

Introduce new pitches at will and tune to as many different players as are present. Although the dynamic level is soft make your tones available to others.

Play warmly with variations in tone quality.

Commentary

The Tuning Meditation is not difficult technically for the players since there is no metrical demand. However concentration is necessary and the ability to match pitch. If the instructions are followed carefully then a beautiful texture arises with common tones threading through the cloud of sound.

III

Interdependence (1997)

♪ — Super short staccato only.

⦿ — Breath or bow length in duration.

Dynamics are *pp* – *ff*.

Options

Either send or receive.

To send, play ♪ once at any time — any pitch any dynamic.

To receive, play ♪ once as a response to another ♪.

React as fast as possible as a receiver. Reaction time is more important than pitch selection.

Each performer decides independently whether to send or to receive.

Each performer may change from sender to receiver at will (any time).

The following variations are introduced in order:

Variation I

To send, play ♪

To receive, respond with ♪ or ⦿

Variation II

To send, play ♪

To receive, respond to ♪ or to the end of ⦿ either with ♪ or with ⦿

Variation III

To send, play ♪

To receive, respond to ♪ or to the end of ⦿ either with ♪ or ⦿ or with ⦿ (gliss up) or ⦿ (gliss down).

Commentary

The ♪ pitches that are sent must be super short in order to be instantaneously received, by another player. The correct player reactions can create an atmosphere of electricity that runs through the ensemble in a rippling effect. These ripples of pitches will be in random patterns depending on the decisions of the players. A ripple could be short (one sender with two or three receivers) or longer depending on the decisions and reaction times of the players. An effective reaction time means that the player is aware of their own response slightly after the reaction has already happened (milliseconds).

The variations introduce long tones which develop into chords and textures inside of the ripples.

The glissandi in Variation III should be very slow. Players remain autonomous in their decisions to send or receive throughout the meditation.

IV

Approaches and Departures (1995)

Each player selects independently one pitch (or sound) to be used for the entire piece.



Each player invents unique stylistic musical approaches and departures to and from their selected pitch (or sound) using the following options. Options may be selected in any order. All options are repeatable:

- Just play the pitch (or sound) with a clean attack and release. Duration, dynamics and articulations are free
- Approach the selected pitch (or sound)
- Depart from the selected pitch (or sound)
- Play an approach without sounding the selected pitch (or sound)
- Play a departure without sounding the selected pitch (or sound)
- Play or sing a quotation from some other piece of music at a very soft threshold dynamic level
- Just listen

Commentary

Whatever pitch (or sound) is selected by the player stays the same for all options for the duration of the piece. The duration of the pitch (or sound) is a value selected from a range of the shortest to the longest possible value — each time the pitch (or sound) is played or heard internally express a different value than before. The duration of the piece is arbitrary.

Each performer selects options and plays independently.

Each approach or departure should be unique — distinctly different in style and all elements (rhythm, timbre, articulation, dynamics etc.). For example an approach or a departure could be a single grace note, a melismatic group of notes, disjunct leaps etc. all using different styles.

For Keyboard players:

Each hand is independent. Chords may be substituted for the single pitch.

For vocalists

Use the following repeatable options in any order:

- Using a variety of vowel sounds sing long tones tuning to and merging with the instrumental sounds.

- Sing a quotation from some other piece of music at a very soft threshold dynamic level. The duration of the quotation is arbitrary.
- Just listen
- Choose from the following texts by Ione and chant using neighboring tones to emphasize selected words:

Who

Night and the owl's calling.
While sleeping
in the guest room
the guest arrives.

Dreaming I Am

Dreaming I am
inside the places that I am
Always knowing more
than after
or before.

Moon Swallow Sun Bee

Moon swallow	in my hair
Sun bee	buzzing
Moon buzzing	swallows
my hair	
Sun be	Sun be

Le Voyage

Faire un voyage
dans le rêve—
être le rêve—
rêver d'être—
être le voyage
voyager
être

Moon Chant

Be who you are
Be who You Are
I am who I am
I am who I am
I am who you Are

For actors or dancers (Optional):

Appear in the performance space and disappear without distracting the audience. If there is a stage approach it and depart from it in as many different ways as possible i.e. walk, crawl, glide, run etc. Try to be invisible until you are discovered. Merge with the music.