

John Eagle
A Exam, Part 1
November 20-21, 2021

Section 1b: Composition following analysis of *first music for marcia hafif* by Antoine Beuger

Explanation:

Through the use of slow, focused actions in *first music for marcia hafif*, Antoine Beuger calls attention to the backdrops of environment and perception. The performance actions are so rare that they act like disruptions causing momentary fissures in the space.

In this piece I have similar aims while looking for growth within each disruption. My score is very similar in construction—movements on a grid with specific timings. The ratio of performed sound to silence and the method of sound production (friction) are also similar. But I wanted to add the sense of accumulation one has viewing Marcia Hafif's drawings while retaining Beuger's sparsity of sound. This is where the idea of plants came from as additional performers. Plants are virtuosi of the movement aspired to in Beuger's piece and work through the silences with an almost unperceivable level of subtlety. The labor of the performer(s) in the piece gain a different level of productivity thanks to the flora's partnership.

for antoine beuger

for 1 or more player

duration: weeks, months, years

-John Eagle, November 2021

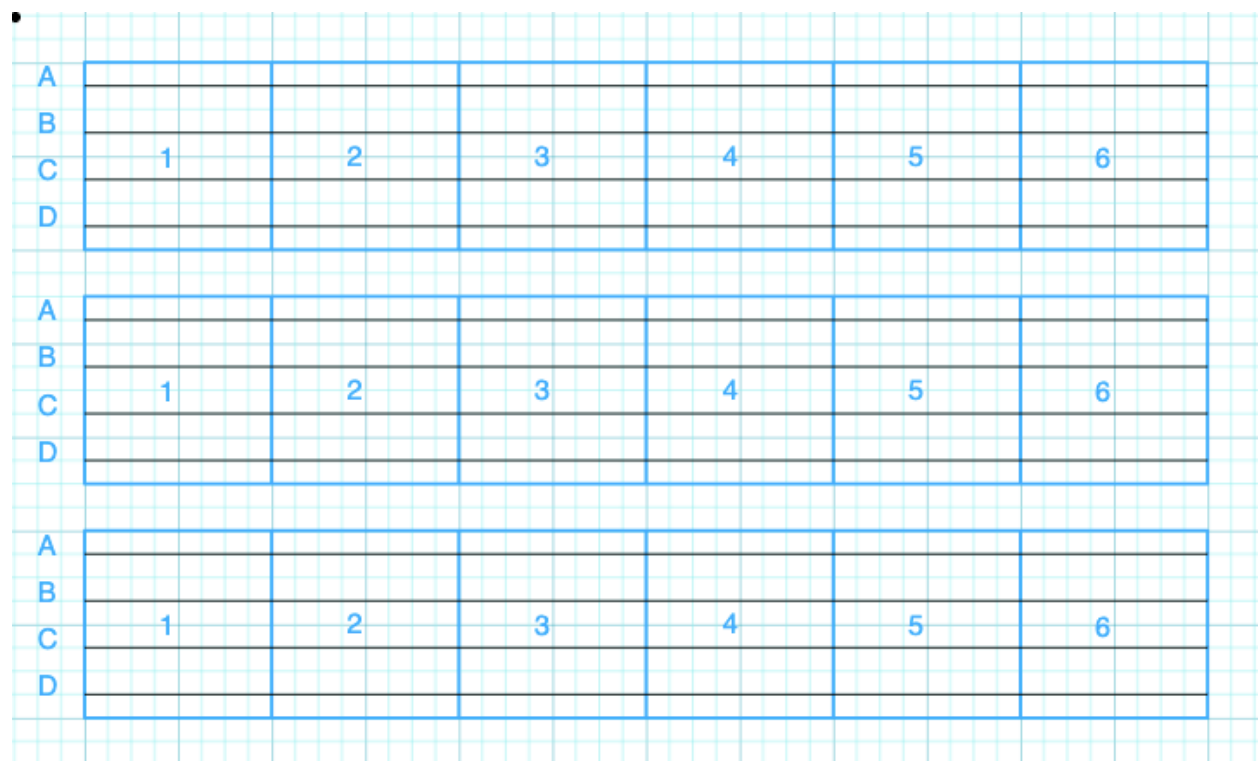
In a public area, construct a raised flower bed consisting of 3 4x8 foot sheets of plywood or other suitable material in a line (final shape is a long rectangle 4x24 feet). Drill holes to allow adequate drainage. Construct a wooden frame that elevates the bed a few inches above the ground and extends above the bed to allow a soil depth of a few inches or more. It should support the weight of a person walking atop the bed. Acquire seeds for two or more varieties of small perennial plants that grow in shallow soil in the climate and light conditions of the performance space (like periwinkle or pachysandra, potentially). Fill the bed with an appropriate soil. Place visible clocks (with seconds) at each end of the bed.

If performing with more than one player, each person executes the preparations listed above by themselves, though cooperation and mutual aid is encouraged. Position the beds in parallel next to each other with a foot (or other uniform distance) between each bed.

Each player has a long-handled garden cultivator with 3 or 4 tines and gardening gloves. Using contact microphones and speakers, amplify the cultivator tool and gloves and/or the beds themselves (attach to the underside of the plywood beds, taking care to avoid the water drainage, and space evenly). Additionally, each player has a small, lightweight stool in which to sit during the silent portions of each performance event (take care not to hurt any plants).

The bed is divided into 6 4-foot squares, labelled 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, intersected by 4 lines, labelled A, B, C, D.

This example shows the positioning of 4 beds for 4 players:



The performance includes two types of movement:

1. dragging the cultivator tool walking in a straight line across the bed ('drag')
2. planting seeds in the tilled line of soil ('plant')

When not performing either of those movements (start and end of each hour), the player sits on the stool (at the starting or ending point, respectively) silently and in stillness.

The dragging movement should be smooth and without force. Walk in a straight line, but let the tool find its own path through the soil. The planting movement should be smooth and deliberate. Space the seeds according to known guidance but try and achieve a consistent spacing of 6-12 inches between each seed (or group of seeds). Tilled lines of soil should not overlap. For each planting action, plant the same seed type, but alternate between each action so that different lines of plants emerge.

The score specifies exact timings for beginning and ending each movement (minutes:seconds) as well as the starting and ending location (i.e. A1 – A3).

The timing for each action is specified within an hour time window. The hour for each action may be chosen at any time, with gaps of any size between them. The size of each gap doesn't need to be the same each time, and gaps can be skipped (going directly into the next event). All players perform the same part, but each person may choose the hour for each action independently, but coordinate so that no one is every more than one action ahead of another. Make public each performance hour. When leaving large gaps between performance hours, come back to water and care for planted seeds. Trim and weed plants as needed. This may be amplified as well. Plants may be allowed to grow out from their original lines, but protect other lines of plants so that their space is not invaded. The performance hours may be recorded (video and sound) and played back during gaps, but no more than 1/3 of the total gap time.

Score:

Event #	Start Time	End Time	Duration	Action	Location
1	26:40	43:47	17:07	Till	C3 – C2
2	11:03	21:14	10:11	Plant	C3 – C2
3	35:48	53:13	17:25	Till	A6 – A4
4	40:31	48:14	7:43	Plant	A6 – A4
5	44:43	56:40	11:57	Till	D1 – D4
6	6:48	21:53	15:05	Plant	D1 – D4
7	30:37	50:24	19:47	Till	D6 – D5
8	24:00	31:23	7:23	Plant	D6 – D5
9	31:35	35:03	3:28	Till	C4 – C5
10	9:56	25:28	15:32	Plant	C4 – C5
11	25:50	38:07	12:17	Till	B1 – B5
12	22:00	36:11	14:11	Plant	B1 – B5
13	9:37	15:18	5:41	Till	A1 – A3
14	10:48	19:20	8:32	Plant	A1 – A3