

NewMus MusicNet

a journal of new and experimental composition

Number 1

April 1995

Kunsu Shim

Secret Garden

Pauline Oliveros

The Roots of the Moment

Deep Listening Chorus

Michael Pisaro

The Voter Registration Act

the sounds were not sounds but shadows
they are obviously sounds that's why they are shadows
every an echo of something nothing

NewMus MusicNet

Published by the NewMusNet Conference of Arts Wire
Douglas Cohen, Editor

NewMus MusicNet is an on-line journal of new and experimental music published under the auspices of the NewMusNet conference of Arts Wire.

NewMus MusicNet strives to present the finest experimental works of our time. Modeled after Henry Cowell's Great Depression Era quarterly "New Music," our main purpose is to identify and distribute the most recent experimental music which by its very newness often remains unpublished by traditional means.

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© 1995 sternklang dogs

Sidney Hawkins Robertson Cowell

June 2, 1903 – February 23, 1995

Sidney Cowell was an ethnomusicologist. She and Henry Cowell, her husband, travelled extensively collecting music of different ethnic heritages. They were among the first to bring a variety of non Western music to the United States. The Cowells initiated a far reaching influence for our culture.

— Pauline Oliveros

Secret Garden for a cassette recorder

Equipment needed:

- Audio stereo cassette recorder
- Stereo amplifier
- Loudspeakers

This version of Secret Garden is to be realized on cassette tape in the manner described below. Performance of the piece consists of playing back the resulting tape with Dolby B noise reduction employed and the amplifier set to the loudest possible volume without tape hiss being heard. For each performance a new tape is to be realized. Whenever possible, the same stereo setup used to create the tape should also be used for the performance.

Realizing the Tape

Connect the amplifier, speakers and the cassette deck in the proper fashion, with no other components attached (if the amplifier has a radio tuner built in, then use of the tuner is to be avoided). Insert a blank tape into the cassette deck and turn the tape deck and amplifier on.

On many tape machines one finds various switches, such as EQ, MPX Filter, Noise Reduction, Bias, etc. Select six switch positions, or switch position combinations, and number them. Similarly, many amplifiers have a means for switching which component is connected to the record out jacks going into the tape deck (Phone, CD, Video, Tuner, etc.). Select four of these switch positions and number them.

The score consists of three columns with numbers in them. The left column (**cassette**) indicates which of the six switch combination on the cassette deck to use. The middle column (**amp**) gives the value (from 1 to 4) for the record out switch on the amplifier. The third column (**rec. vol**) is for the recording level on the cassette deck: 0 = full closed, 1 = full open.

Time flows from top to bottom and from left to right. The piece is divided into four sections (marked by dotted lines). Each section is to have the same duration. Time within each section is free. Decide on a total performance length and divide that by four to determine the length of each section. Divide the available vertical time within each section as desired. Record each section, one after the other, performing the switch and record volume changes as indicated.

Kunsu Shim

Secret Garden
for a cassette recorder

cassette

amp

rec. vol

6

4

5

4

2

1

4

1

4

4, 2

3

— — —

2

1

4

4

(.75)

1

2

3

4, 6

5

.75

3

1

— — —

6

4

6

2

2

3

4

6

(.75)

0

off/on

.5

3

2

1

1, off/on

— — —

↓

1

0

↓

.75

2

4, 3

3

2

1

5

1

4

The Roots of the Moment

Interactive Music

by Pauline Oliveros

This essay is intended to elucidate the strategies used in my compositions to direct the attention of the performers. Included is a score for "Deep Listening Chorus," a list of topics and questions for exploration, and a list of relevant scores from my catalog.

My way of composing is seen either as a substantial contribution to the field or it is dismissed as not real music because it is not written in the conventional way and cannot be judged conventionally. It is dismissed because of a lack of written notes, or because participants are asked to invent pitches and rhythms according to recipes or to respond to metaphors. Musicians accustomed to reading notes and rhythms often are shocked by the bareness of the notation compared to familiar conventional scores which direct their attention to specific pitches and rhythms which to them seem predictable and repeatable. What I value is the more unpredictable and unknowable possibilities that can be activated by not specifying pitches and rhythms. I prefer organic rhythms rather than exclusively metrical rhythms. I prefer full spectrum sound rather than a limited scalar system. I sometimes use meter and scales within this fuller context of sound oriented composition.

My music is interactive music. It is interactive in the sense that participants take a share in creating the work rather than being limited to expressively interpreting pitches and rhythms. I have composed the outside forms, the guidelines for ways of listening and ways of responding. These forms and guidelines with appropriate application give the participants a creative opportunity to compose and perform simultaneously in collaboration with me and to expand their musicianship.

The range of notational practices employed to present my work as a composer includes conventional staff notation, graphic notation, metaphors, prose, oral instruction and recorded media. *Sonic Meditations* for example are notated through prose instructions or recipes. The notations for *Sonic Meditations* were presented in written form only after many trials with

oral instructions given to many different people. Even though *Sonic Meditations* are in print, I often vary or revise the wording I use to transmit the instructions in new situations.

My instructions are intended to start an attentional process within a participant and among a group which can deepen gradually with repeated experience. Here is an example of a piece for voices or instruments: *Three Strategic Options* - Listen together. When you are ready to begin choose an option. Return to listening before choosing another option. Options are to be freely chosen throughout the duration of the piece. The piece ends when all return to listening together. 1) Sound before another performer 2) Sound after another performer 3) Sound with another performer. If performing as a soloist substitute sound from the environment for another performer.

In order to perform *Three Strategic Options* all players have to listen to one another. Attention shifts with each option. Sounding before another could have a competitive edge. One has to listen for a silence which is the opportunity. Sounding after another implies patience. One has to listen for the end of a sound. Sounding with another takes intuition - direct knowing of when to start and to end. A definitive performance is not expected as each performance can vary considerably even though the integrity of the guidelines will not be disturbed and the piece could be recognizable each time it is performed by the same group. Style would change according to the performers, instrumentation and environment.

The central concern in all my prose or oral instructions is to provide attentional strategies for the participants. Attentional strategies are nothing more than ways of listening and responding in consideration of oneself, others and the environment. The result of using these strategies is listening. If performers are listening then the audience is also likely to listen.

Even though judgment of the musical outcome in advance of performance seems impossible relative to conventional scores, composing guidelines and outside forms are crafts which take as much

careful consideration as any score. It is important that everyone understand the directions they are sharing. Making these directions clear to every one is a challenging task for the composer. One wrong word can bring up resistance or confusion. In this body of work called interactive music, I have redefined the responsibilities of the composer, the performer and listeners by asking that everyone share creatively in the listening process which is the gateway to creativity.

After trying one of my scores, many performers and audiences find that it stretches their ears in new ways and that they can contribute imaginatively to the music. Furthermore, it may help musicians in their performance of more conventional music.

The way one chooses to listen to music or daily living is a factor in the quality of one's experience. Listening is a process. It can be like a bolt of lightning all at once in the moment, or it consists of good intuitive guesses and thoughtful references to past experience. Raw listening has no past or future. It has the potential of instantaneously changing the listener forever. It is the roots of the moment.

None of us who compose and improvise music can claim credit for inventing music. Music is a gift from the universe. Those of us who can tune to this gift are fortunate indeed. We are interacting with a powerful resource and sharing with billions of musicians who have preceded us, who are simultaneous with us and who will succeed us. We can help others to learn to listen and participate by listening as a lifetime practice. As musicians we listen to make finer and finer distinctions in tone, sound and rhythm. It is the slightest nuances that accumulate and refine one's aesthetics. If we also listen to include more and more of what might seem to be background noise we perceive relationship to place. All sound, including so called background sound, brings information and connection. This is true for our daily lives as well.

Here is one of my practices:

Listen to everything until it all belongs together and you are part of it.

For many years I have led groups in interactive *sound* oriented music making. One of the simplest and most effective forms is *Deep Listening Chorus*. People everywhere seem to need to make nonverbal sounds. It is done mostly unconsciously every day, yet hardly ever consciously and in a group. Nonverbal sound making is a way to express emotions and to explore the unknown. Most everyone participating feels a sense of release which carries over to other activities and helps to activate the imagination or simply refresh the mind. Unrestricted vocal sound making is pleasurable. No musical training is necessary – yet a musical experience can and does happen.

The compositions listed below contain other of my strategies for listening and responding at a more or less advanced level of musicianship:

Angles and Demons

for unspecified voices

Earth Ears

for unspecified instruments

El Relicario de los Animales

8 paired instruments, 4 percussion and voice

The Grand Buddha Marching Band

for unspecified voices or instruments

The Klickitat Ride

for unspecified voices or instruments

The New Sound Meditation

for unspecified voices or instruments

The Tuning Meditation

for unspecified voices or instruments

Traveling Companions

for 3 percussion and 3 dancers

Rose Moon

for chorus, male and female soloists and runner

Sonic Meditations

unspecified voices or instruments

Tashi Gomang

for orchestra

The Wheel of Time

for string quartet

To Valerie Solanis and Marilyn Monroe in recognition of their desperation

for small ensemble or chamber orchestra

Deep Listening Chorus

A form to activate community creative sound making

Commentary:

This piece is not intended as concert music. It is for a group of people to perform together as combined composers/performers/listeners in an agreed upon group activity. It is appropriate for a retreat, workshop, class or a get together. This does not mean that an audience couldn't also enjoy the performance or hear it as art music. The present concert paradigm, though, restricts how such a piece could be presented and appreciated.

The score:

1) Lying on the floor, heads or feet toward center and touching, listen/sound. Listen while sounding – listen while silent.

2) Listen to the whole field of sound. Let any sound heard whether inwardly or outwardly be a cue for relaxing or energizing as needed. This implies a global form of listening which includes everything from the softest, loudest, nearest most distant sounds possible to hear. Keep expanding to include more sound without assigning importance to any particular sound, except to cue relaxation or energizing. This form of auto suggestion can also be used to accomplish goals. It can be done as a separate daily practice.

3) As a group, practice relaxation by scanning the body and releasing whatever tension is not needed. Send sound either mentally or vocally to the parts of the body that need releasing. Then bring consciousness to a pre-selected metaphor such as *ice breaking up in the Spring, the fullness of summer, the flow of electricity*, etc. Each person helps to state the metaphor together simultaneously in an overlapping sound web using words, phrases and sentences at first, and then leading to a primarily nonverbal sounding. Words may weave in and out of the sounding, or not.

4) Anything goes *if and only if* you are listening.

A period of silence after the sounding is beneficial to help absorb the sensations, feelings and to assimilate

the musical experience. After that, some people like to share their experiences, or not.

Deep Listening Chorus often lasts for over an hour and a half.

There are many interesting questions and topics concerning the listening process to be explored by a *Deep Listening Chorus*. Following is a list:

Super listening.
Normal listening.
Subliminal listening.
What is interactive music?
The composer/performer. One who makes and performs music.
With self – with other(s) with context/environment.
Who is composing?
Who is performing?
What happens in the music?
The ripening of technique.
Open and closed languages.
Limits, boundaries and borders.
Games and gamuts.
Scales and scales.
The concert hall as an instrument.
Sublime situations.
Cautions and excesses.
Leaving training/reprogramming for creativity.
The Politics of Excellence.
Demilitarization.
High level strategy: Ways of listening/ways of performing.
Strategy driven technique.
Low level responses.
Levels of awareness.
Breath rhythm: Song.
Heart rhythm: Dance.
Gaia consciousness.
Individual focus.
Floating sounds.
Musical territory.
Poems of Freedom.
Finding the still point: Silence, motion, interaction, relative, absolute.
Developing language – reorganizing syntax.
Sound Quest: sounding space – spacing sound.
World of the part – part of the world.
Role – function – part – whole.
Letting go of old patterns – letting go of new patterns.
Re-patterning.

The Voter Registration Act for a computer processed tape

Directions

In the event of a live performance, *The Voter Registration Act* involves a voting process. The entering members of the audience must vote on which piece they want to hear, and should thus be given a ballot as they enter the performance space. On the ballot there will be two listings for each piece: one is the title and the other is an unidentified statement which only indirectly relates to the piece, but has a somewhat polemical connotation. A ballot box should be created. After the ballots have been filled out by each member, they are tabulated. When the appropriate place on the program is reached an announcement should be made, giving the title, the quotation and the author of the quotation for the chosen piece. (See below.)

1. *A Known Devil*

“Governing a large country is like frying a small fish. You spoil it with too much poking.”

Lao-tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Fifth Century, B.C.

2. *The Floating Divan*

“... the whole must be prior to the parts. Separate hand or foot from the whole body and they will no longer be hand or foot. . .”

Aristotle, *The Politics*, Fourth Century, B.C.

3. *Chiliast Upbeat*

“... pure democracy can admit no cure for the mischiefs of fraction.”

James Madison, *The Federalist Number Ten*, 1787

4. *Spiral Scratch*

“In the midst of the continual movement which agitates a democratic community, the tie which unites one generation to another is relaxed or broken; every man therefore loses all trace of the ideas of his forefathers. . .”

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

Program Note

The Voter Registration Act was written during the summer and fall of 1993 in the Computer Music Studio at Northwestern University. The piece is a collage of various short excerpts of rock music, mainly British punk from 1977 to 1979. Nearly all of the excerpts have undergone significant transformation. There are four five-minute movements, only one of which may be given at any performance.

The names of the pieces: *A Known Devil*, *The Floating Divan*, *Chiliast Upbeat* and *Spiral Scratch*, are intended to be somewhat cryptic and impressionistic. The quotations on the ballot, each of which comes from some renowned document, refer to the procedures by which each piece was composed (while retaining their own, polemical meanings). My intention was to create four pieces, which, although composed from the same materials, were widely divergent in affect. They are distinct then, largely in terms of the formal principles used, which range from chance procedures to canon. This creates a musical equivalent to the polemical conversation of the quotations.

Choice always carries risks. Music without choice is propaganda.

Presenters may design their own ballot or use a copy of the one given below. *

Ballot

The Voter Registration Act, which will be given on the following concert, requires that the audience select by vote one of the four pieces listed below. Each piece is five minutes long and has been identified by title and by a quotation which has relevance to the structure of the work.

Please vote for only one of the following:

1. A Known Devil

“Governing a large country is like frying a small fish. You spoil it with too much poking.”

2. The Floating Divan

“... the whole must be prior to the parts. Separate hand or foot from the whole body and they will no longer be hand or foot. . .”

3. Chiliast Upbeat

“... pure democracy can admit no cure for the mischiefs of fraction.”

4. Spiral Scratch

“In the midst of the continual movement which agitates a democratic community, the tie which unites one generation to another is relaxed or broken; every man therefore loses all trace of the ideas of his forefathers. . .”

* (In this electronic version of the text, the color highlighted titles link to excerpts of their respective pieces in MPEG 2 audio format.)

Kunsu Shim (b. 1958, Pusan, South Korea)

Compositional studies with Inyong La at Yonsei University in Seoul. In 1987 he moved to Germany where he continued his studies with Helmut Lachenmann (Stuttgart) and Nicolaus A. Huber (Essen). His compositions are individual, some almost inaudible, exploring the shadow side of sound. A resident of Essen, Germany, he works as a free-lance composer.

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Michael Pisaro (b. 1961)

Composes works in a wide variety of media – nearly forty to date. He studied mainly in the Midwest where his teachers included George Flynn, Ben Johnston and Alan Stout. His music has increasingly dealt with the political implications of the performance situation, and with the use of acoustical data (including Just Intonation and Acoustic Phonetics) to generate musical material. He has received awards from Mishkenot Sha'ananim (Israel), Illinois Arts Council, the Aspen Music Festival and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and performances by Musikfabrik (Germany), Het Trio, Kathleen Supove, the Symphony of the Shores, His Majesties' Clerkes and others. He is presently on the faculty of Northwestern University, where he is Assistant Professor of Music Composition and Integrated Arts.

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Pauline Oliveros

Known internationally as a composer, accordionist and teacher, Oliveros' work in improvisation, electronic techniques, teaching methods, myth & ritual, and meditative & physical consciousness raising has changed the course of American music. Since leaving the University of California at San Diego in 1981 (at the rank of full professor) in order to support her ideas, creative projects and collaborations, she has directed the Deep Listening Program for The Oliveros Foundation. All of her work emphasizes attentional strategies, musicianship and improvisational skills. Oliveros' compositions have been performed worldwide, and in 1985 she was honored by a retrospective of her music at the J.F.K. Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Her written works are anthologized in "Roots of the Moment: Writings, Hörspiels and Poems 1981-1995" (Droque Press), and "Software for People" (Smith Publications), Her recorded works are available on 17 albums from various labels.

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Pauline Oliveros & American Voices

St. George and the Dragon,

In Memoriam Mr. Whitney

Recorded in Pomfret Chapel, Pomfret, Connecticut. Oliveros uses her just tuned accordion and plays off of the stone acoustics of the chapel. American Voices, Neely Bruce Director, joins Oliveros in *In Memoriam Mr. Whitney*.

Item number CD 1012; \$16.00

Richard Teitelbaum

Cyberband

The music on this CD was selected from three mornings of music making at the Cyberband Project of the 1993 Moers Festival. The remarkable musicians who played in this project hail from a broad range of backgrounds, styles and genres, and each possess a unique, virtuoso approach to extended performance techniques-acoustic/electronic/analog/digital/hi-tech/low-tech/human/machine. In combining acoustic and electronic instruments in performance, the musicians created complex sonic fabrics of multiple styles, logics, and media during the three days of the project.

Item number RT-CD-4; Compact Disc \$16.00

Stuart Dempster

Milanda Embracing (1993-94)

Composed with and dedicated to Seattle's New Performance Group. This latest composition by Dempster is an interactive piece that uses words to influence the performers/audience in creative musical decisions. It includes a supplementary document that describes the process of creating the score.

Item number SD-S-1; Score \$7.00

Ellen Fullman

The Long String Instrument & Water Drip Drum

The long string instrument consists of wooden box resonators with long strings extending from them at waist height. The strings are played with rosin covered hands. In the water drip drum, water drips into an amplified aluminum pan whose position is regulated by a foot pedal. The rhythm of the dripping is regulated by miniature valves.

Item number EF-R-1; LP \$13.00

Joseph Celli

No World (Trio) Improvisations

Featuring Alvin Curran, Malcolm Goldstein, Shelly Hirsch, Adam Plack, Mor Tham.

Item number JCE-CD-2; Compact disc \$15.00

Carl Stone

Four Pieces

Carl Stone builds his electronic music from natural sounds and acoustic instruments, sometimes using fragments of familiar musical pieces, electronically reproduced. He is a sonic purist who rarely introduces distortion or otherwise tampers with the sound, but relies on transformations to create what Mark Swed of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner calls "Stunning cathedrals of contrapuntal synthesized sounds," entirely new and never heard before, the aural equivalent of an Escher etching.

Item Number CS-CD-1; Compact disc \$16.00

John Luther Adams

Earth And The Great Weather:

A Sonic Geography of the Arctic

A journey through the physical, cultural and spiritual landscapes of the Arctic, in music, language and sound.

Item number JLA-CD-5; Compact disc \$16.00

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