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EXPLORING EMPTINESS

AN INVESTIGATION OF *MA* AND *MU* IN MY SONIC COMPOSITION PRACTICE

Ryoko Akama

A commentary accompanying the publication portfolio submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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School of Music, Humanities and Media

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ABSTRACT

The commentary investigates Japanese aesthetics of space, silence and emptiness - *ma* and *mu* - that informed my compositional practice during the research period 2012 - 2015. The portfolio comprises text compositions and sound installations in which forms of micro events and sustained events are employed. Throughout, the emphasis is on my personal engagement with, and manifestation of emptiness that concerns a particular model of listening and perception.

Chapter 1 discusses six primary research areas: *ma* and *mu*, material, text, form, listening and perception. Firstly, I introduce *ma* and *mu* by examining *noh* culture and Zeami's teaching of *senu hima* (where there is no-action) in the context of my personal approaches to music. The following subjects are then used to contextualise my PhD practice by means of examples from various composers and visual artists. Here, these particular and enigmatic concepts are explored through Japanese art as well as Western contemporary works by Alvin Lucier, Eliane Radigue and those of the Wandelweiser collective.

Part 2 provides contextual commentaries on selected compositions from the portfolio that mostly articulate my aesthetics in relation to the topics covered in Chapter 1. *koso koso* addresses my methodologies to investigate the essence of *senu hima*, followed by *treow* that discusses my approach to materials and the importance of space. I move on to *grade two* and *grade two extended* in order to examine text scores, and then, look into *Espèces d'espaces 03* and *04* as examples of musical forms that I employ. Finally, listening and perception are investigated through the compositions *gnome* and *con.de.structuring*. Throughout, I describe how my works explore *emptiness* as a result of my particular emphasis on listening over composing.

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LIST OF WORKS SUBMITTED

(Italic number refers to appendix and digital submissions)

2012

text composition

01. transmigration	4' (for piano, alto flute and violin)	
02. The Tortoise And The Crane	variable duration (variable instrumentation and performers)	

2013

text composition

03. presque rien	2' (for viola and sine tone)
04. Pulse	variable duration (for koto and electronics)
05. Two Lions	12-15' (for voice and electronics)
06. koso koso	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)
07. ka/ga/ku	6' (for two pianos)
08. eight stones for Pyhajoki	variable duration (for eight stones and variable instruments)
09. ichion jyobutsu	variable duration (for psalmodikon and shamisen)

installation

10. RadiAT	sound installation with sine waves, electronics, gainer counter and water

2014

text composition

11. gnome	variable duration (for sine tone and piano)
12. an dt wo	5' (for sine tone and two pianos)
13. object performance	variable duration (for objects, more than three numbers of performers)
14. PPM book	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)
15. Stringently Flexible 12	20-25' (for electronics and glasses)
16. Stringently Flexible Sketch	15' (for electronics, cello and church organ)
17. Espèces d'espaces 03	10' (variable instrumentations and performers)
18. Espèces d'espaces 04	10' (variable instrumentations and performers)
19. grade two	8-10' (variable instrumentations and performers)
20. grade two extended	10' (variable Instrumentations and performers)
21. tada no score (18 works)	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)
22. jiwa jiwa	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)
23. sotto	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)
24. zowa zowa	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)
25. jili jili	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)
26. gussuri	variable duration (variable instrumentations and performers)

installation

27. ajar	sound installation with glass, electronics and sine waves

28. 1→5	sound installation with objects, electronics and magnets
29. treow	sound installation with wire, electronics and transducers

2015

text composition

30. con.de.structuring	5' (variable instrumentations and performers)
31. e.a.c.d.	20' (variable instrumentations and performers)
32. fade in and out procedure	25' (for sine tones and percussions)
33. line.ar.me.	11' (for sine tones and solo guitar)
34. gen	variable duration (for psalmodikon and shamisen)
35. acorn	15' (variable instrumentations and performers)

Publications

2012

transmigration	An online release by Hibari Project[1], Japan

2013

presque rien	A compilation album on Rhizome.s, France

2014

36. PPM book	An article and text score on Reductive Journal ONE, Huddersfield / Guadalajara
next to nothing	A trio album with Bruno Duplant and Dominic Lash on Another Timbre, Sheffield
Espèces d'espaces	A duo album with Bruno Duplant on Rhizome.s, Waziers
code of silence	A solo album on Melange Edition, Huddersfield
Architectural Model Making	An online release of Sarah Hughes' score on Another Timbre[2], Sheffield

2015

こそこそ	A collection of my text scores on Bore Publishing, Essex
quatre pièces pour guitare et ondes sinusoïdales	a composition for Cristián Alvear Montecino on Rhizome.s, France
kotoba koukan	A duo album with Greg Stuart on Crisis Records and Lengua de Lava label, France / Mexico
Hai Art & Various: Sonic Island	A compilation album on Hai Art Institute, Finland

Related Realisations of Works by Other Composers

2013 - 2014

37. OCCAM XX	by Eliane Radigue	(2013)
38. Music on Long Thin Wire	by Alvin Lucier	(1977)
39. Architectural Model Making	by Sarah Hughes	(2014)

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[1] Available online from http://hibari-charity.com/pastweek.php?n=49, September 2012.

[2] Available online from http://www.anothertimbre.com/sarahhughesamm.html, March 2014.

Acknowledgements

INTRODUCTION

0.1 Pre-digital Period

I became interested in music technology and sound composition in the late 1990s whilst I was studying sound engineering at the SAE Institute in London, followed by employment as an assistant sound engineer in commercial recording studios. The studios where I was employed still focused on analogue reel-to-reel tapes, mixing desks and rack-mounted electronics. In response to the rapid development and increasing affordability of computer technology, the creative world shifted from the analogue to the digital in a short span of time. Gradually, analogue equipment was replaced with much more 'compact' computer-based devices. The transfer to the virtual and digital from the pre-digital (and pre-internet) has greatly influenced the composer's working environment and engagement with materials. Following my period as a laptop musician, I started to re-investigate analogue instruments and objects. During the PhD, I constructed music with analogue devices and objects, and found the relationship between myself and my tools more physical, intimate, slow and tactile. This personal relation to tools prompted me to explore the creative constraints of my instruments rather than always expanding to new software tools and possibilities affected by these.

0.2 Eliane Radigue

The Lappetites consists of Kaffe Matthews, Antye Greie-Ripatti and myself. In 2004, Matthews introduced the composer Eliane Radigue to the Lappetites whilst we were in residence at the CCMIX studios in Paris in order to begin our work on *Elemental II* (2002). Radigue's music seemed to eschew any imposition of the composer's authorship which had an immediate impact on my creative thinking. Radigue advised me when we were working on *OCCAM XX* in the following way, 'you drive sounds, but then, they sing together without you' (E. Radigue, personal communication, March

12th, 2014). Radigue's impeccable approach to *Elemental II* helped me to listen to the sonic events and their slow and temporal evolution. In this work, sound was the matter and composition itself. Subsequently, I began to perceive micro sounds and silence as something very concrete and critical in music. This made my work gradually become free from the narrative, traditional musical arrangement or formal dialectic.

Elemental II possesses immanent silence within the composition. The piece clearly indicates that performers are also listeners within the homogeneous field, recognising micro-macro and temporal-spatial sonic movements through a gradual transformation of sounds. The aesthetic eschewal of dialectic and teleological structures, and the musical employment of sound and silence as the experiential matter strongly helped to answer the musical dilemma I was then facing. This music explores time, space and emptiness, which has become my central tenets in my compositional practice.

0.3 Silence to Listen

Around the same time as working with Radigue, I envisaged 'silent hours' that would extricate me from structuring my music in a linear teleological manner. I sought a silent place in which to contemplate whether music still mattered to me. The abstract painter Agnes Martin, who moved to rural New Mexico and lived in solitude until her death, comments that,

> … it is more important to figure out where you want to be than it is what you want to do. First you find where you need to be, and then you can do what you need to do. (Rifkin, 2002, p.14)

Following my time in Southeast Asia, I moved to Japan and found a small derelict cottage in the woodland of Kouya village in Miyagi prefecture. The circular enamel bath and wood-burning cooker were heated by fire. I collected wood and took care of vegetable gardens, constantly worrying about the weather. Summer heat would make

the cottage mercilessly hot with temperatures reaching over forty Celsius. In winter, large snow falls would make even going outside problematic. In this silent and solitary existence, my mind was often clear, alert and tuned into the sonic details of my surroundings. It was whilst living there that I became interested in the emptiness of time and space.

In the basin landscape of the enclosed environment, the land was free from urban noise pollution. However, the soundscape was forever changing with sounds of cicadas, frogs, crickets, twig-falls, bamboo leaves, wind, birds or other mysterious sounds. Every phenomenon was a result of construction and deconstruction. There was no dichotomy between sound, noise and silence in nature. Those aural phenomena created a sense of homogeneity of all living things. Later on, I discovered Henry David Thoreau, the author of many books including *Walden: or, Life in the Woods* (1995) firstly published in 1854, and Cage's *Empty Words* (1973) based on Thoreau's work, which gave an additional dimension to my experience of that time.

0.4 *Nagauta*

I started the study of *nagauta*[3] music in 2006 with the master, Mrs. Yatotaka Kineie, to whom I immediately became a *deshi*[4]. *Nagauta* expanded my knowledge and interest in the trajectory of Japanese music from *noh, jōruri*[5], *gagaku*[6] to *kabuki*[7]. These explorations gave me an impetus to apply microtonality, sustained tones and vertical

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[3] Japanese traditional music that uses voice, percussion and shamisen. The narrative form emphasises the lyrics more than the music.

[4] A student dedicated to learn techniques and philosophies from a master.

[5] Japanese traditional music of story and shamisen. The narrative form emphasises more the lyrics than the music.

[6] Japanese classical music and dance performed for the imperial court.

[7] Japanese traditional theatre of dance and music at which *nagauta* is performed.

perception to my music. I became conscious of a slower pace and motion that could significantly affect relations and relativities between and within materials.

In Japanese music, silence plays a very important part of compositions. Experiencing *nagauta* and *noh* convinces me that time exists empirically in relation to space, and here, silence heightens the awareness of time and space. The composer Jürg Frey writes:

> Silence, in its comprehensive, monolithic presence always stands as one against an infinite number of sounds or sound forms. Both stamp time and space, in that they come into appearance, in an existential sense. Together they comprise the entire complexity of life. (Frey, 2004)

Music is merely perceivable as a continual set of experiences in space. The commentary approaches time and space by reflecting upon my cultural and ethnic interest in silence.

0.5 Overview of the Commentary

Sound, silence and space together compose our experience of listening. This is explored on a personal scale within the portfolio in relation to two critical Japanese concepts - *ma* (silence and space) and *mu* (emptiness). These terms have fascinated discerning Westerners and there have been a number of significant publications including Dr. Richard B. Pilgrim's *Intervals* (*Ma*) *In Space and Time* (1986) and the architect Norman F. Carver's *Form and Space of Japanese Architecture* (1955). These writings have inspired me to continue this particular research. However, the aim of this commentary is not to define the thinking around *ma* and *mu* philosophically. Rather, the commentary demonstrates my personal engagement with these ideas that are reflected in my compositional practice.

Chapter 1 briefly introduces *ma* and *mu* followed by related research areas: material, text, form, listening and perception. *Noh* culture and the *noh* actor / playwright Kanze Zeami's[8] notion of *senu hima* (where there is no-action) are investigated in order to illuminate Japanese aesthetics of silence and space. Though the Eastern consciousness is primarily examined in the discourse, I also mention works of Western composers such as Radigue, Lucier and those associated with the Wandelweiser collective who expand and develop an awareness of time and space in music. I also include works of literature and visual art in order to illustrate further insights into the concept of emptiness. Throughout, I explore listening as the most important activity in comprehending empty events, which leads to the notion of the nonhierarchical experience between a composer-performer-listener. The selected works from the portfolio demonstrate the diverse approaches and methodologies employed throughout the PhD.

Chapter 2 is a commentary on the portfolio consisting of text scores and sound installations. Research areas from Chapter 1 are respectively analysed with examples of works that demonstrate how I manifest *ma* and *mu* with particular techniques, strategies and processes. The commentaries contextualise my creative development, issues and solutions. The commentary articulates my approaches to material, form and content, and the refinement of these ideas throughout the PhD period.

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[8] Kanze Zeami is also referred as Zeami Motokiyo (c.1363-c.1443).

CHAPTER 1

1.1 間 (*Ma*) and 無 (*Mu*)

As a composer, performer and listener, I have a predilection for emptiness, space and silence. The abstract painter Marcia Hafif writes:

> A surface apparently without incident reveals to the artist the impossibility of eliminating it altogether and gives to the viewer the experience of seeming emptiness and the option of dealing with her/himself in that emptiness. What is there when we have taken everything away? What happens when there is very little to see? … The removal of known subject matter opened the way for other content to enter in. A painting without interior relationships of color and shape is not empty. (Hafif, 1978)

Having been exposed to the Japanese value of emptiness, I started to apply micro events and sustained tones to explore *absent* space or *silent* music in my compositional practice. This section introduces the concept of *ma* and *mu* in detail through *noh* culture and Zeami's notion of *senu hima.* Where appropriate, references to specific works in the portfolio are used to illustrate how I use these notions in my approaches to composition.

1.1.1 能 (*Noh*) Culture

能 (*noh*) was originally developed by the Japanese Royal family in the 8th century. Gradually, its culture permeated all areas of society and became accessible to the masses. Evolved from 散楽 (*sangaku*)[9], *noh* is a form of theatre deemed to be the world's oldest living performance art preserved for more than six hundred years. The *noh* player Shōroku Sekine describes *noh* as involving 'the least movement of all the world theatre arts' (Hoshida, 2000, p.58), which he claims is the reason why *noh* has survived until today undisturbed by the overriding trends of the time. *Noh*'s inimitable

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[9] A form of theatre that arrived in Japan from the Asian continent.

simplicity and starkness inhabit a particular realm for how one *hears* silence and *sees* stasis, resulting in 'the ideology of movement expanding away from only describing the form' (Takemitsu, 1975, p.109). By approaching such stillness, actors and spectators experience pregnant emptiness that proves that the field is not empty at all but swelling with possibilities (Figure 1.1). This pregnant emptiness is the critical notion of *ma* (space and silence) and *mu* (emptiness), which I continuously investigate in the portfolio.

Figure 1.1: an example of pregnant emptiness - a *noh* actor preparing in front of a mirror before his stage appearance to observe the emptiness of his mind and space (Hoshida, 2000, p.57)

During the 15th century, Zeami elevated *noh* teachings to the high aesthetics of art and culture[10] in Japan, where *noh* is regarded as the art of 間 (*ma*). *Noh* compositions were traditionally practiced to offer divine ceremonies to purify *ma* fields. A central tenet of

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[10] No certain evidence was available for centuries as Zeami's writings were secretly protected by his family and accessible only to selected disciples until the 20th century. This kind of family protection of the teaching of art and culture is still seen as a Japanese tradition.

Buddhism and Shinto states that sacred spirits are in-between all existing things, which differs from one omniscient God. This multi-presence of spirits enables audiences to perceive the multidimensionality of *noh* performances. Zeami was the first theorist who explicitly affirmed the aesthetics of せぬ隙が面白き (*senu hima ga omoshiroki* - where there is space / no-action is the most entertaining) in his book, 花鏡 (*Kakyō*)[11]. Zeami's discourse is one that I consider central to my practice, shaping my compositional form and content in its approach to emptiness.

1.1.2 間 (*Ma*) - Space and Silence

間 (*ma)* is a convoluted term that describes the perception of time and space as well as the characteristics of emptiness. However, there are more perspectives to a real understanding of *ma*. It is the *in-betweenness* or *relativity* that is perceived in between differing entities. David Toop writes:

> One section of Ōoka Makoto's[12] *What is Poetry*, written in 1985 begins as a questionnaire: 'Among many richly useful Japanese words is the word "*ma*" which signifies "interval" in time and space. What does "*ma*" mean in your work?'. Ōoka gives eight responses. Among them he writes: 'If you would see the stars clearly, look hard at the surrounding darkness' and: 'If you think of "*ma*" as something between one thing and another, you are wrong.' (Toop, 2006, p.41)

Ma considers space and time as one inseparable or totally permeable entity, and it 'determines the characteristics of art forms' (Konparu,1980, p.81). *Ma* is *between things* but also it describes the relativity - *in-betweenness* of these *things*. In Japanese culture, this relativity perceived as *ma* defines the quality of every form of existing matters. *Noh* culture is regarded as 'the art of time and space that transcends or even perfects time and space' (Konparu, 1984, p.xvii), implying that *ma* is essentially the homogeneity of two phenomena. The Japanese architect Arata Isozaki writes that:

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[11] 花鏡 (*Kakyō*) is an artistic treatise by Zeami completed in 1424.
[12] The Japanese poet and critic.

> Space could not be perceived independently of the element of time, and time was not abstracted as a regulated, homogeneous flow, but rather was believed to exist only in relation to movements or space ... Thus, space was perceived as identical with the events or phenomena occurring in it; that is, space was recognised only in its relation to time-flow. (Isozaki, 2006, p. 256)

Carver explores *ma* in architectural forms in *Form and Space of Japanese Architecture.* He describes the relative quality of time and space as,

> … space was felt to be only true essential for only in space was movement possible. Space was the universal medium through which life moved in constant transformation, in which place and time were only relative states. (Carver, 1955, p.130)

Several techniques were employed in the attempt to deal with *ma* in different forms of my sonic practice, which I see as a platform where a composer, performer (or performing object), performance (time) and space become transformative and interconnected. The composer Sarah Hughes writes:

> There is also a wider interest in how a visual schema translates to a form of musical composition in terms of material, time and space, and what alterations might need to be made in order to carry what is in the sketchbook into another medium. I find this process useful as a way to interrogate initial images, ideas or research … I find the compositions and the process of composing quite sculptural, and the translation of an image or text (etc.) into another medium quite physical, not in a sense of exertion, but very material … (Hughes, 2014)

Translating materials into various mediums is sculptural and physical. These transformations frame relations and relativities between and within materials in which the concept of *ma* becomes fascinatingly apparent. *code of silence* is my third solo album comprised of five compositions. Each piece has an identical score that contains different Japanese onomatopoeia (Figure 1.5). The scores contemplate *space*, which navigates silence between the composer, score and performer, and interrogates a process of inner-reading and listening. The relations between these foreground and background elements construct a critical investigation into *ma.*

Isozaki produced the *ma* exhibition at The Louvre, Paris in 1978, where he tried to introduce the concept of *ma* to European art. This exhibition resulted in Isozaki's frustration with his inability to demonstrate *ma* to other cultures where the unmediated concepts of time and space had been deeply dissimilated. Isozaki writes about the different translation of *ma*:

> *Ma* originally means the space in between things that exist next to each other; then comes to mean an interstice between things – chasm; later, a room as a space physically defined by columns and *byōbu*[13] screens; in a temporal context, the time of rest or pause in phenomena occurring one after another ... those that came into being after the introduction and translation of Western concepts of time and space. Extensions of meaning such as in-between space and pause must have attained common usage only after the importation of Western ideas. It seems to *me* that ma ought to best be thought of as gap, an original difference immanent in things. (Isozaki, 2006, p.94)

00:15-01:30   space   filter

01:30-07:30   a fairly strictly

                              h
                                o
                                  r
                                   i
                                     z
                                       o
                                         n
                                           t
                                             a
                                               l

07:30-10:00   space   opera
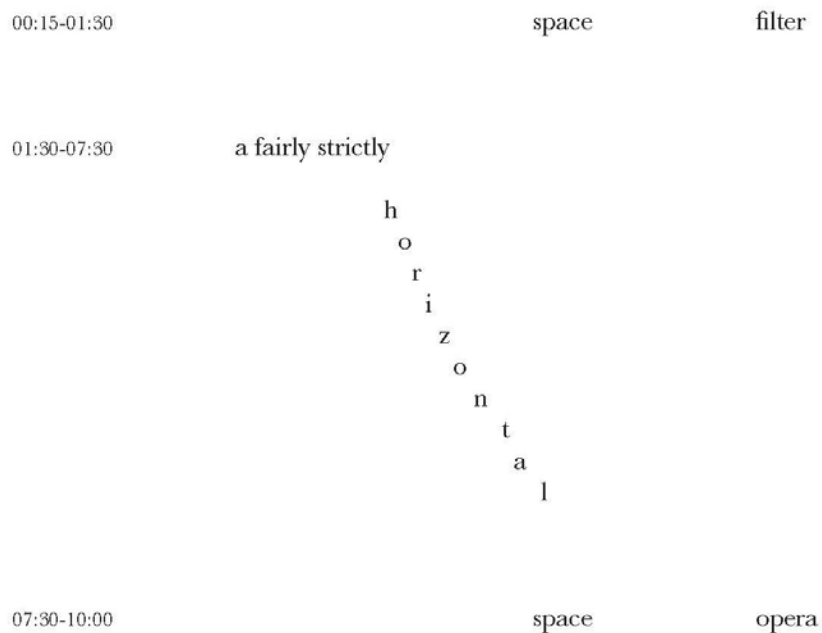
Figure 1.2: a physical employment of *ma* in *Espèces d'espaces 04*

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[13] A folding screen. A common piece of Japanese furniture in the past.

The gap as an original difference immanent in things is illustrated on the surface level in *Espèces d'espaces 04* (Figure 1.2). A particular typography in the score describes diverse ideas of space (*ma*) in-between objects. This *ma* implies space, context and time all at the same time, indicating a relation and relativity (*ma*) between two or more properties, which determines both the local and global quality. *Ma* also exists within a thing. In *Espèces d'espaces 04*, *ma* is found not only between objects but also within a space, word or even within an alphabet.

Ma is drawn as a logographic *Kanji* character[14] 間 that has two separate parts; 門 (*mon* - gate) and 日 (*hi* - crescent)[15], suggesting the escaping moonlight through a half-closed gate, i.e. a gap or aperture in space. The original Chinese definition of the term was taken a step further in Japan and this became 'the conscience of the single word' (Konparu, 1984, p.71) that observes a multitude of *ma* significations.
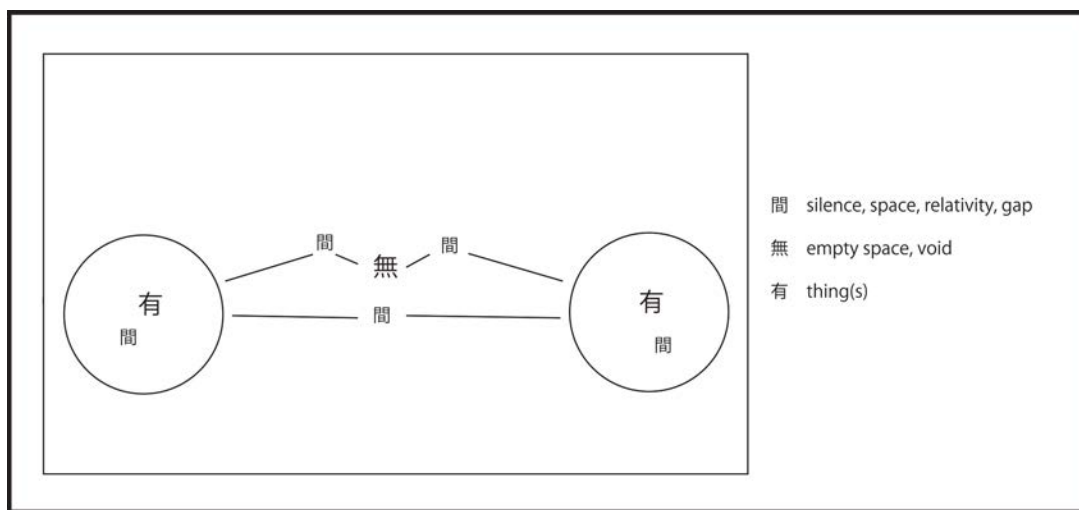
Figure 1.3: a view of the inter-relationship between *ma* and *mu*

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[14] *Kanji* is the logographic writing system of China, used in Japanese together with the *hiragana* and *katakana* syllable writing systems.

[15] This symbol is also interpreted as the sun instead of the moon.

Ma exists between and within elements, in another words, it exists in-between us and within a self, or in-between sounds and within a sound (Figure 1.3). In conversation with the composer Tōru Takemitsu, the psychiatrist Bin Kimura analyses this enigmatic in-betweenness of *ma*:

> 「実は間（ま）というといささか具体的で空間的に広がった感じになってしまうが、本当はその間というものは自分の中にあって、「自己と自己の間」とでもいうような内在的、内面的な間というのが非常に重要なことだろう。それを考えなきゃ、自己というものは考えられない。それを普段は、他人との間に転化して感じているだけなんだろうと思うんです。間（あいだ）を（ま）と読み変えても同じことになるんじゃないでしょうか？間（ま）ということも、そういう構造を持っているんじゃないか。音と音との間（あいだ）に間（ま）を考えた場合、音自身が間（ま）を持っていると。」

> As a matter of fact, *ma* (relativity) can be mis-read as something concrete and materialistic filling a space, whereas in truth, *ma* is something within oneself. Here, the intrinsic-ness and internal-ness of 'between the self and the self' becomes extremely important to consider. Without it, one can not perceive the self, but normally, we recognise the self in a reflection on *ma* between the self and another. Even when *ma* (aida - space) and *ma* (ma - relativity) are interchanged, the meaning remains the same. *Ma* (relativity) possesses such kind of structure. Even when *ma* between a sound and another is concerned, it implies that an individual sound possesses its own *ma* within. (Kimura,1981a, p.229)

Takemitsu contemplates *ma* in the conversation with Kimura in *Ma: the Point of Human Existence*:

> 「音楽は決して個人のものではなく、複数の人のものでもない。それは、むしろ人々の間の関係性の中にこそある。音楽は個人によっては所有されえないものなのだ。」

> Music is not something that exists for an individual nor people, instead it exists in the space of inherent connections between people. It can never be owned by a single being. (Rands, 1981, p. 125)

A similar sentiment is also employed in the construction of logographic *kanji* characters that describes a person:

> 「日本語の「人間」という言葉がすでに「間」という字を含んでおります。… 日本人特有の非常にユニークな表現だろうと思うのですね。… 一人の人間を考える場合に、そこに「間」という字を入れて、「間」とか「間」とかいう意味を込めて個人を捉えた、そして「人間」という言葉で表した、そこに日本古来の人間観が見事に示されていると思うのです。」

The Japanese word, 人間 (*ningen* - person/people), includes a *kanji* of 間 (*ma*)[16]. … This is the particular quintessential of Japanese expressions. ... Even in the case of a single person "*ningen*", by embedding '*ma*' in it, it manifests an individual person with a notion of in-betweenenss or within-ness. The '*ningen*' expressed by the coupled characters of 'human' and 'ma' describes the ancient view of the essential Japanese mind towards the idea of 'human being'. (Kimura, 1981b, p.206)

The portfolio attempts to investigate various senses of relativities between and within space, objects, composers, performers and listeners. Compared with earlier works such as *transmigration*, it is obvious that silence and space are further magnified towards the later works including *line.ar.me.*. Emptiness, though it may appear inconspicuous, is explored as a concrete idea in the PhD, and listening is examined as the most important behaviour in dealing with such a subject.

1.1.3 無 (*Mu*) - Emptiness

If *ma* is the relativity that describes relations, 無 (*mu* - emptiness) and 有 (*yū* - something) are the containers that this relativity inhabits. Thus, these three concepts - *ma*, *mu* and *yū* - are interdependent, and cannot be discussed as separate entities. *Mu* is one of the fundamental elements of Zen, Buddhism and Vedic practice. All of these practices teach multiple interpretations or understandings of *mu*. Although this is not the place to discuss these philosophical understandings in detail, I am concerned with the Asian embrace of emptiness to open up particular techniques and methodologies that potentially reveal various levels of musical nuances within *mu*. Zawa explains silence as an active moment:

I often feel that silence is not a dead moment, but a breathing matrix full of possibilities for anything to be born or to exist and is more valuable and eternal than any particular sound or music. (Zawa, 2010)

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[16] 人(nin) is a person/people. 間 (gen) is *ma*.

Silence is pregnant with possibilities and potentialities waiting to be acted upon. It is a space inviting conscious and creative interpretation. Symbols and descriptions are used in an attempt to comprehend silence, however, the basic question remains - what is silence? Toop discusses silence and quietness noting that:

> Silent and quiet are not the same condition. Quiet can be quieter than a silence, even though silence has pretensions towards the absolute. (Toop, 2005, p.44)

Toop writes that silence can 'pretend' to be the absolute. The sound artist Sun Kim similarly suggests that complete silence is never possible. This is described in her pianissimo branching score, *Pianoiss…issmo (Worse Finish)* (2012) (Figure 1.4):

> If you are reading sheet music and see a 'p' on the staff, that means to tone it down and play more quietly … As the number of 'ps' increase, it gets exponentially more quiet, but there is never a complete silence, ever. Here is the drawing entitled 'p-tree'. You can see a visual representation of all of the 'ps' continuously dividing and multiplying. This is the closest that I have ever come to defining the meaning of silence. But there is still noise in that definition. (Sun Kim, 2014)
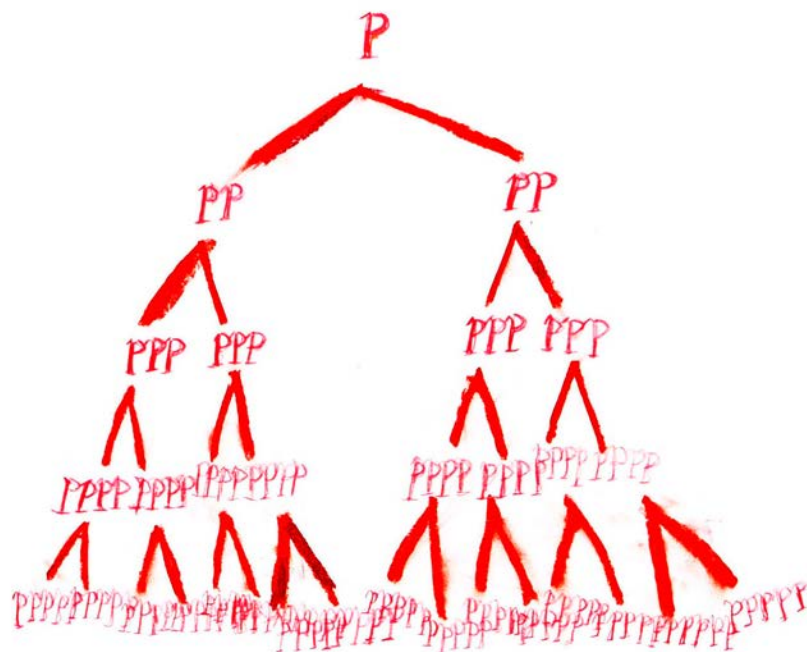
Figure 1.4: Christine Sun Kim *Pianoiss . . . issmo (Worse Finish)* (2012) (image reproduced with permission of the artist)

Silence is verbally described in varied methods in my text scores such as, 'unnoticeably as possible, discreet sound' (*koso koso),* 'sound can be described as soundless.' (*con.de.structuring),* 'silent letter is a letter that is not pronounced yet without it the word makes no sense.' (*e.a.c.d.*). I am interested in informing a volume of silence in order to work with performer's perceptions and aesthetics. This communication between the composer and performer, or the score's intention to communicate with the performer generates a perceptive gap. This perceptive gap is where we act upon our own aesthetics and is the main focus of exploration in my motivation to create abstract text scores.

Radigue is a great example of a composer who engages with de-structured time and space, and conjures a sense of infinite emptiness in her drone compositions. She is a long-term practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism and often uses the term void when she explains the experience of nothingness in music. Frey also uses the term void in his void volume concept. He argues that void exists both in space and within certain materials, which returns to the elemental comprehension of *ma* and *mu*. Frey writes:

> I use sounds to limit temporal voids, but the musical material also has the property that it itself can be space. For this feature to emerge, the material itself must be empty … It is always a challenge to find an empty material to discover material that carries the possibility of the empty one in itself, or to work empty material, indeed the near empty material … To get some kind of time, it takes a minimal presence of material. This results in the void volume. (Frey, 2008a)

そっと   gently;lightly;slip quietly;

sotto   for
                                                         to handle something with care
                                                         ex. he held the wine glass gently in his fingertips;
                                                         to make a swift, and unnoticed exit.

Figure 1.5: an employment of space and silence in *sotto*

Though *ma* and *mu* are observed in the in-between and within, for me, there is a significant difference in perceiving these within the drone of Radigue's *Adnos I-III* (1975-1983) and in-between micro sound and silence in Frey's *Un champ de tendresse parsemé d'adieux (4)* (2012). Radigue's drones are perceived by both the conscious and subconscious mind. Her continual drone carries emptiness in itself. To borrow Frey's word, it is 'the near empty material'. This is especially explored in some of my portfolio pieces such as *zowa zowa, gen* and *fade in and out procedure.* On the contrary, Frey's amalgamation of presence and absence seems to give more emphasis to space. Here, listeners discover *void* in listening to situations between the self, materials (*yū*) and space/silence (*mu*). I have created such situations within works including *gussuri* and *line.arm.e..* Most of my scores encompass Frey's concept of void volume, specifically the visual and aural emptiness that it suggests. For example, The

score for *sotto* (Figure 1.5) is utterly bereft of familiar musical information. A reader is left with a lack of communication and language. The only keywords identified are the word '*sotto*' and its description. Here, the score (two-dimensional) being absent of performance indicators offers an active sense of the empty field awaiting to be expanded into sound events (multi-dimensional).

In installation, *mu* and *yū* are much more evidently discussed. Figure 1.6 shows my sound installation piece *treow*. Micro sound activities illuminate a strong sense of absent-ness and present-ness to which visitors must actively attempt to listen. Most of my installations deal with wave forms that create visual and aural phenomena but there is often a strong sense of inaudibility and invisibility. Nothing is uncreative in our space though some of them are difficult (or impossible) to be perceived. This applies when we observe the negative of space and silence. Konparu writes:

> Nowadays, space is often described as positive or negative. Negative space is enclosed and fixed, and positive space is the space taken up by people or things that define a negative space by their presence. Both kinds of space exists in *noh*: negative space (*ma*) is the stumbles and emptiness just before or after performance; positive space is produced by stage properties and by the dramatic activities of performers - it even includes the audience. The two kinds of space are connected by time … While there may be empty, or 'negative' time, there will never be unsubstantial, uncreative, or uncreated time. (Konparu, 1984, p.xx)

This is also cited in Pilgrim's essay, where he discusses 'pregnant nothingness',

> … negative space/time is therefore anything but a mere nothing awaiting the positive space/time; it is a pregnant nothingness that is 'never unsubstantial or uncreative … Others have called this (negative space) an imaginary space (*yohaku*, *kūhaku*) and related it particularly to painting, tea ceremony, gardens, and calligraphy. In this sense it is negative space / time 'filled' by the imagination more than by some thing. (Pilgrim, 1986, p.259)

Figure 1.6: an example of visitor's listening participation in *treow*

Konparu and Pilgrim perceive negative space and time as the 'unsubstantial and creative' with an implication that the negative property can be the most interesting:

> Zeami is suggesting implicitly the existence of *ma*. He is saying that *noh* acting is a matter of doing just enough to create the *ma* that is a blank space-time where nothing is done, and that *ma* is the core of the expression, where the true interest lies. (Konparu, 1984, p.73)

Toop also writes in an important passage on this negative space:

> Ooka also describes *ma* as shapeless: 'Because it is shapeless, it becomes the source of all shapes, which is a force.' Perhaps this is one of the most important lessons to learn in improvisation. Sound grows out of silence, but not as significant events enlightening nothingness. (Toop, 2004, p.42)

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Toop then responds by writing that 'silence is woven with memory' (Ibid.). To support Konparu's statement that '*ma* is the core of the expression, where the true interest lies', I move on to discuss how Japanese culture respects a field of nothingness as 'the most entertaining' which shapes the critical tenet in my sonic practice.

1.1.4 せぬ隙が面白き (*Senu Hima Ga Omoshiroki*) - Where There Is No-action Is The Most Entertaining

せぬ隙が面白き (*senu hima ga omoshiroki)*, translated as 'where there is no-action is the most entertaining' is, to me, the most direct and inspiring guidance to space and silence expounded upon by Zeami. Pilgrim analyses *senu* and *hima*:

> The moments of 'no-action' (*senu hima*) occur in 'between' (*hima*). When we examine why such moments without action are enjoyable, we find that it is due to the underlying spiritual (*kokoro*) strength of the actor which unremittingly holds the attention. He does not relax the tension when the dancing or singing come to an end or at intervals between (*hima*) the dialogue and the different types of miming … He maintains an unwavering inner strength (*naishin*). This feeling of inner strength will faintly reveal itself and bring enjoyment. (Pilgrim, 1986, p.258)

The technique of 'holding the attention', though, must not be confused with the radical gestures of embodying silence. In Zeami's theory, the action of no-action arises from the consciousness that is not obviously exposed. It is the *non-obvious intention* that delivers successful *senu hima ga omoshiroki* theory. Considering such an aesthetic, sound and silence are sculpted into one non-hierarchical organisation where each element continually grows and vanishes. Here, an intention must be manifested in the least obvious manner. Zeami continues to define the importance of non-obvious intention:

> It is undesirable for the actor to permit this inner strength to become obvious to the audience. If it is obvious, it becomes an act and is no longer 'no-action'. The actions before and after an

interval (*hima*) of 'no-action' must be linked by entering the state of mindlessness (*mushin*) in which one conceals even from oneself one's intent. (Pilgrim, 1986, p.258)[17]

The importance of mindless 'no-action' supports the critical thinking of other Japanese aesthetics such as *wabi-sabi* which represents the beauty of the incomplete or process of withering (see 1.6.2) that interferes with the usual sensibility of perfection. *Wabi-sabi* informs the framework of the Japanese tea ceremony and flower arrangement. It intentionally subverts the perfection of flawlessness by inserting a sense of *fault* or *damage* that allows perfection to be transcended. However, the intention of such an action must never be obvious. When such an input is apparent, a work only fails to be elegant.

Senu hima ga omoshiroki has remained with me as an important part of my practice as is illustrated in my compositions from the early *presque rien* to the later *koso koso*, in my installations including *ajar* and *1→5*, and the concept features heavily in the rest of the portfolio. Though my practice examines this particular quality of *senu hima,* thoughts are not always imposed nor displayed explicitly. Sometimes, its embodiment is involuntary, less purposeful and merely intuitive. This is often the case when I perform in live situations. Pursuing *senu hima*, music becomes quite abstract, distant, or absent. Yet at the same time, such periods of silence create empty moments whose cumulative effect is one of organic potential and activity within the larger whole.

1.2 Approaches to Materials

1.2.1 Tools

During the PhD period, I performed with analogue synthesizers, mainly made by EMS, specifically the AKS and VCS series, and test tone generators. I have also explored DIY

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[17] This is a quotation from Zeami used in Pilgrim's book - Nose Asaji, ed., *Zeami jurokubu shu hyishaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1949), 1:375ff; as translated in W. T. DeBary, ed., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1964)

electronics and found objects in realising works such as the installation *1→5* or the composition *con.de.structuring*. When laptops were used as my main tool, the limitless possibility and technical potential overwhelmed my creative process, and as a result, my compositions often lacked definition and even suffered from incompleteness. Whether it is the *post-laptop* movement or not that has led a new cultural engagement with more physical components to create music, I have deliberately chosen my current instrumentation as one that limits my technical capability but expands my engagement with *what I have* - this moment and this sound.

My emphasis is on the exploration of the authentic qualities of materials I use. Virtuosic performance skills and extended instrumental techniques are not a central concern of this commentary. What is important for me is the sound that naturally resonates in each particular environment or tool. In conversation with Richard Kostelanetz in 1984, Cage states that: 'I found the sounds interesting as they were' (Kostelanetz, 2013, p.290). Likewise, my works blend pure aural elements into empirical experiences without being concerned with an instrument's history or traditional performance practice. It is the employment of *authentic* sound and silence that distinguishes my recent works from other musical practices in particular.

Throughout the PhD, I have worked in various collaborations with practitioners who share my artistic aesthetic and approach. In many of these environments, I rarely make corrections after-the-fact, edit or employ effects and treat the recorded material as *something that has taken place*. I am also interested in the inherently unstable and inconsistent nature of tools and performers. This illuminates my continual interest in accidents and incidents in forms, where the final result corresponds to the initial principle and process. Hafif writes:

> From process art such work took its tendency to set up a procedure and to accept the results of carrying that out. Conceptual drawing also works this way: rules are given, and the work carried out. The product is the result of that action. (Hafif, 1978)

My work aims to manifest the experience of time and space. Therefore, my music is a result of the temporal-spatial reflection of the composer, performer and performance (including tools and environment).

1.2.2 Sound

Radigue's methodology and approach to music have been a great influence on me since our first collaboration in 2004. Of particular inspiration to me is that Radigue's music is often born out of a spiritual concept or idea. As such, listeners are set free from traditional narrative. In *Adnos I-III*, I experience the sounds in her music in purely sonic entities. This has helped me to establish a significant framework for my compositional thinking that reevaluates the 'expressiveness' of sounds. Lucier states:

> I'm not interested in self-expression. I'm interested in discovery of sound phenomena and *expressivity*. If I'm not interested in self-expression, I'm still interested in *expressivity*, the expressiveness of natural characteristics of the sound waves. There is nothing more beautiful than a river or a stream and yet it's not expressing itself … (Harder & Rusche, 2014)

For me, listening is not to understand music but to experience the expressiveness of sounds. Historically, there have been attempts by composers to abandon the purposefulness or teleology in their compositional practice. What Lucier's favourite quotations by the poet William Carlos Williams (1883-1963) 'Don't think, but look!' (Dworkin, 2013, p.120) and 'No ideas but in things' (Harder & Rusche, 2014) attempt to mediate is the moment-to-moment involvement instead of aiming to understand the music that prevent sound and silence being experienced purely *as it is*. My practice adopts this approach *e*ven though performance and listening activities cannot avoid a perfect erasure of interpretation or narrative concern.

Sound is a malleable and transformative wave event, and is only perceivable through materials that vibrate. Thus, sound is a multidimensional phenomenon that exists both in time and space. The critic Boris Groys, when discussing the sound sculptor Bernhard Leitner, writes of the holistic and integral aspect of sound:

> In the unified, holistic space of installation by contrast, it is the viewer himself who becomes the object of reflection and self-reflection in that he is co-exhibited within the installation space … for a space to be perceived as a holistic, integral space, it must first be indexed as such. The viewer of an installation must be given a convincing indication of being within an integral space, he must be guided or, indeed, compelled to experiencing this holistic unity. To this end, there can be no superior medium of art other than sound. Thus, the use of sound within the installation space is in no way external to it. Quite to the contrary: the wonder of sound consists in the fact that it fills space. For this reason, sound can best serve as an indicator of holistic space insofar as it is capable of inducing in the viewer the sense of becoming part of the entire space. (Groys, 2008, p.8)

From Groys' perspective, the holistic nature of sound is what describes the attributes of space. Lucier's *Music on a Long Thin Wire* (1977) is an example of this. The piece deploys a continual sine tone fed via a powerful amplifier to both ends of a piano wire. The resultant current flowing through the wire interacts with a powerful fixed magnet located at one end of the wire and placed so that the end of the wire is positioned between the two poles of the magnet. As a result, the wire reacts to the oscillator and the varying current induced by movements in the magnetic field resulting in shifting and modulated drone frequencies. Different acoustic factors alter the sound outcome of the piece. What one hears is the activities of the wire interacting with the system and the space. Lucier's interest in science and space has introduced to me how the spatial aspect of sound extends to thinking about temporality. Lucier's experiments with sound as frequencies and as waves have also influenced my sonic practice in spatial ways. The composer Takehisa Kosugi writes that:

> After all, sound is heard in any part of one's life and space exists wherever sound exists. We have to be aware of that. So far, music and fine art has been mono-dimensional such as sound or painting. But it is crucial for them to display how things are and its compound disposition … (Kosugi, 2002, p.80)

Thinking towards 'compound disposition' is illustrated in various stages of my portfolio from earlier works such as *Pulse* and *ka/ga/ku* to later pieces such as *treow*. Kosugi continues:

> Wave has been my fundamental concept and a big theme. In any case, ocean waves, sky lights, electronic sounds and electric lights are all waves. the electronic frequency is invisible but it becomes sound or light by different energy that has different frequency producing phenomena when other elements interact … (Ibid., p.79)

Sound, light and the electromagnetic field are all wave phenomena that reflect, refract or diffract. I am interested in their travel competence and compliant abilities that cause patterns and dynamics. These ideas are exemplified in my works such as *1→5* and *RadiAT*. The sound artist Minoru Satō explores such phenomena in his sound installations. He puts an emphasis on the ontological matter of sound rather than the causal relationship, which is illustrated in his works such as *Thermal Acoustics* (2010) that investigates the change in sonic wave propagation (speed of sound frequencies) in relation to heat energy. For Satō, a process is more crucial than the final outcome and his intention is not to solve the phenomenological issue but to experience the event:

> We (WrK)[18] are more interested in natural characteristics that react as locally under certain conditions such as waves, vibrations or electromagnetic field than the phenomena that can be directly observed such as object movements. (Satō, 1996, p.76)

The dyad of the predicted and unpredicted, and the regular and irregular results in sound works that are conditioned by natural phenomena. For example, the sonic content of *treow* depends on the wind and other environmental facts. I anticipate, however, what makes it viable is the site, its particular environment and the interference in wave propagation. In my compositions, I often employ beating patterns caused by more than two different sound waves, examined notably in *grade two extended* and

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[18] Sound art collective (1994 - 2006, Japan) with the members of Minoru Satō, Toshiya Tsunoda, Jiō Shimizu.

gnome. I also play with these beating frequencies in live performances. The concern of space (where sound lives) and phenomena (how sound lives) is of great importance when I deal with sound in my practice.

1.2.3 Space

Leitner creates sound sculptures in which space is an important aspect of their presentation. *Tuba Architecture* (1999)[19] comprises sixty suspended metal panels whose surfaces resonate by means of magnetically attached speakers performing tuba overtones which project layers of sounds into space. As a result, the space and panels vibrate as one acoustic chamber. Though the tuba composition is the stimulus, what one hears is the acoustic result of the space. Therefore, this space is no longer the auxiliary to exterior objects but is the means to the realisation of the work. Groys argues the significance of space in Leitner's works:

> The installation is a spatial fragment, a spatial volume, which is to be read as a unified object. The central characteristic of this spatial fragment is that it is a space understood as being empty, abstract and purely geometric. And yet, it is precisely this chief characteristic of the installation that poses such a challenge to perception and interpretation. Since the space of installation represents an empty space, it can be all too easily overlooked … the space of installation would appear as being "immaterial", indeed, nonexistent and thus incapable of assuming the role of a medium of art. It is for this reason that our attention is almost involuntarily drawn away from the empty space itself and rather towards the objects within it. As a consequence, the installation is misunderstood as a specific arrangement of objects within space – and not as the space itself. (Groys, 2008)

Recalling Groys' observation of sound as holistic and integral, he now identifies space as the integral to artworks. Leitner's employment of exterior objects to amplify the characteristics of space is similar to the sculptor Fred Sandbank's aesthetics of space. To me, Sandbank's articulation of space is one of the most powerful and distinctive in the field of abstract visual art. Figure 1.7 shows how his geometric lines of yarns

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[19] Leitner, B. Klangkunstforum Berlin, Potsdamerplatz.

(sometimes wires) amplify the experience of space. In this non-hierarchical state of objects, the work is not made to cause *a result* but an *opportunity* to establish an interactive environment for individual perception.
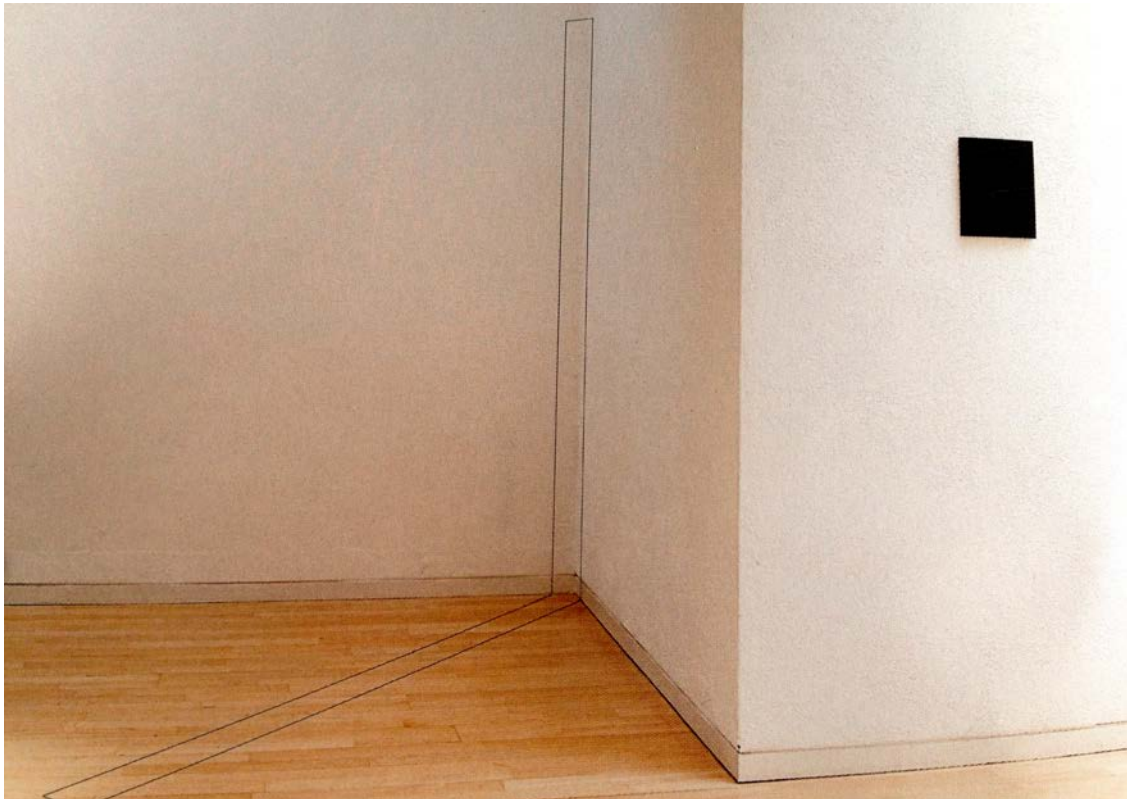
Figure 1.7: Fred Sandback *Untitled (Triangle)* (1996) (Cooke, 2005)

Sandback confirms an 'equivalent' relationship between illusion and fact that remains in his works. He continues that 'trying to weed one out in favour of the other is dealing with an incomplete situation' (Cooke, 2005, p.10). He writes:

> My work is not illusionistic in the normal sense of the word. It doesn't refer away from itself to something that isn't present. Its illusions are simply present aspects of it. Illusions are just as real as facts, and facts just as ephemeral as illusions … I'd rather be in the middle of a situation than over on one side either looking in or looking out. Surfaces seem to imply that what's interesting is either in front of them or behind them. (Ibid., p.23)

Sandback's sculptures integrate his objects, space and audiences in the most minimal presentation. They produce beautiful *ma*, a very quiet and equal experience of time

and space. Sandback writes that his works 'diffuse interface between myself, my environment and others peopling that environment' (Ibid., p.27). His approach informs my nonhierarchical thinking and the re-evaluation of space.

I have applied a sense of emptiness to various sound installations and compositions in order to explore what is behind the silence. When I think of composing emptiness, both sound installation and score activities are not hugely different from each other. Nothing expresses this perspective of *composition* more precisely than Sarah Hughes' viewpoint:

> The etymology of composition is 'to place together' which is probably how I see the two relating most clearly. The written composition places sound events / actions together into a situation where they are able to work with and against other sounds / events. The score is a framework that enables such inter-relationships to be made manifest. With installation a very similar scenario is in play; I work with objects in space and place them together in a situation whereby they are able to correspond with one another, react with and against one another, and generally form a similar set of interrelationships to those set up in a score. The material quality of the two practices is obviously quite different but, particularly with a score, the ability to form a contour around a temporal action enables me to consider it in the same way I would an object … (S. Hughes, personal communication, November 27th, 2014)

Silence and space are emergent and salient in most of my PhD pieces. I am interested in the emptiness between and within materials, which conveys an important passage of *ma*. I employ materials (*yū*) not to fill in but to work upon an empty gap (*mu*). This enables my works to create a musical situation, which to me, is different from creating music per se.

1.3 Approaches to Text

1.3.1 Gap and Distance

I have worked with varieties of text scores where written texts act as musical notation. I am interested in written texts as they offer the potential for inner-reading and -listening

that explores our relation to silence. The text here is intermediary and explores a distance between the composer and performer. Hughes writes:

> I'm interested in the distance / difference between a composer and performer, and how the scores mediate the two possible interpretations of the score. When people play my compositions I tend to enjoy the ones where the presence of the performer is equally as present as the composer … (S. Hughes, Personal Communication, November 25th, 2014)

My scores work with the interaction resulting from the distance between the writer (composer) and reader (performer) being to a certain extent democratic and nonhierarchical.
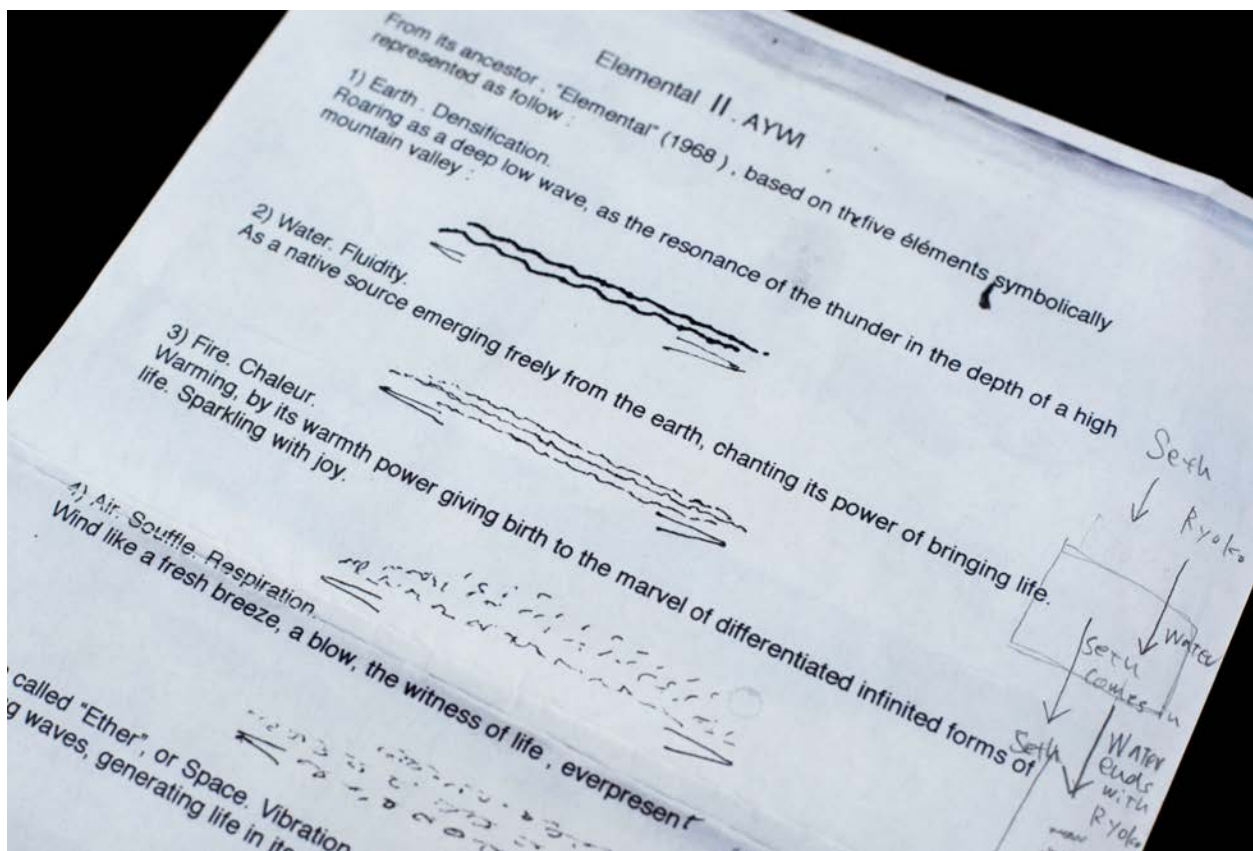
Figure 1.8: Eliane Radigue *Elemental II* (2002) (image reproduced with permission of the artist)

My initial enthusiasm for text scores started when the Lappetites worked on Radigue's *Elemental II*. The work consists of five movements; Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether

(Figure 1.8). Each movement contained a drawing and concise description that may connote performance textures. The co-existence of the absent and present, and the liberation and constraint struck me. I was suddenly expected to be the performer, composer and listener simultaneously. This multi-faceted role resulting from the minimal presentation of the score strongly influenced *acorn*, *koso koso* and the *tada no score* project in my PhD portfolio. My second exposure to such work came through the Edges Ensemble led by Prof. Phillip Thomas at the University of Huddersfield. Between 2012 and 2014, I attended the ensemble's sessions and concerts through which I was introduced to various experimental score systems. The Edges Ensemble has expanded my knowledge of Western composers and performers who approach the extreme notion of silence, absence and emptiness.

Those experiences triggered me to reactivate my own music publication label, Melange Edition (2013-). I had run the Melange Records label, which published electronic audio and visual works, between 2000 and 2005. Alternatively, Melange Edition seeks music that explores emptiness. I also co-edit the online Reductive Journal which examines a particular perception towards text-sound. The journal invites contributions for each issue ranging from forms of text-sound practice from writings, scores to audio pieces that relates to reading, listening and perceiving sound.
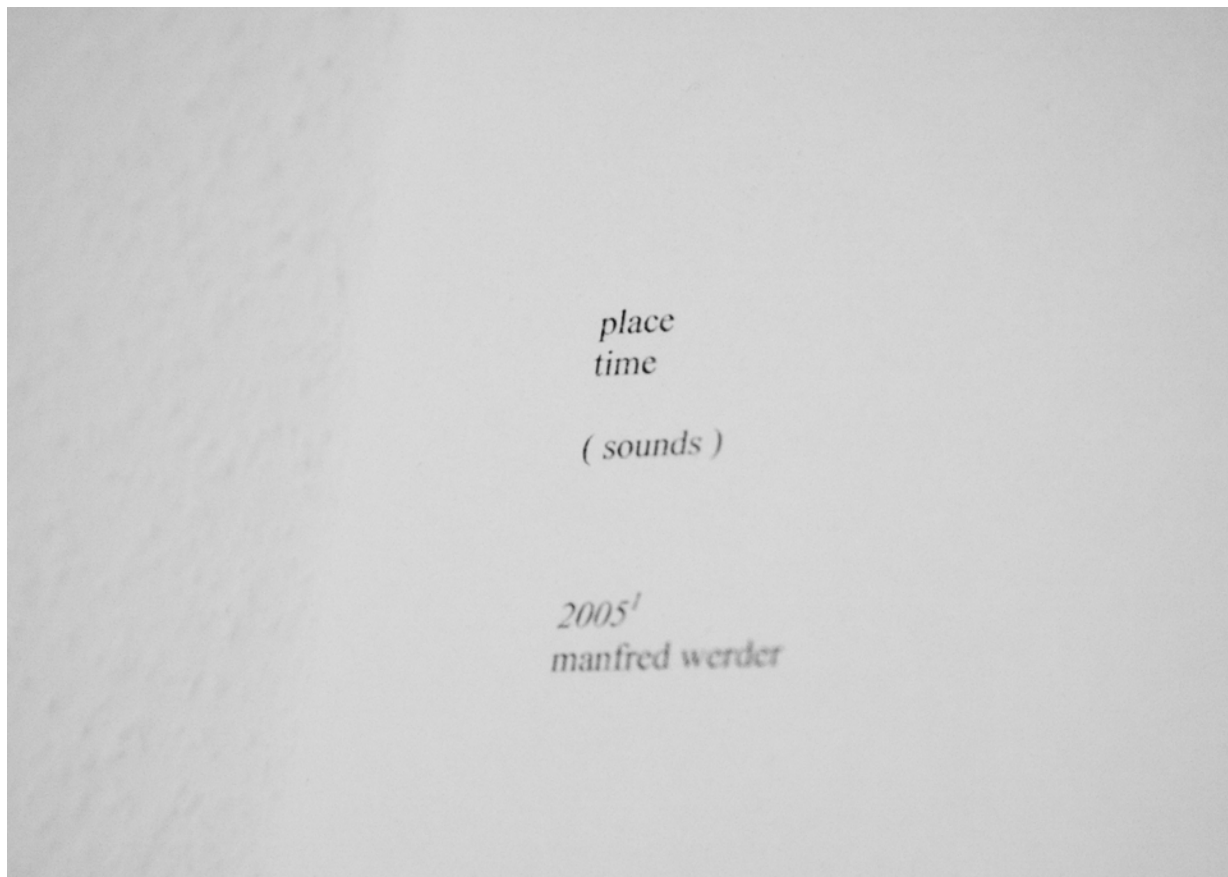
Figure 1.9: Manfred Werder *2005/1* (2005) (image reproduced with permission of the artist)

My scores concern emptiness within both a visual and musical context. Hughes poses the questions:

> what is the minimum amount of information necessary to compose a situation? How does the act of placing things together change between different modes of working? How much information is necessary to retain the character of the composer? (Ibid.)

Are we obliged to retain *trace* as the composer? If so, how and to what extent? If not, then what is the function of the score and composer? My compositions became more abstract and minimal in their scoring during the PhD, and my embodiment of emptiness continually poses a series of concerns which demand alternative linguistic

models. Manfred Werder's *2005/1* (2005)[20] confronts issues following the use of minimal text (Figure 1.9):

> We're so stiff in terms of language, in which ideas are expressed, that we only see functions and objectives. Music seems to be more immediate, it is something like pure reality, or pure condition (including humans interacting as a part of this) … (Werder, 2012, 2013)

In his practice, he attempts to overcome the constraint of language by simplifying the usage of texts. However, his simplification could instead produce complexities. Werder's words appear to be *clueless* and yet they are the clues to performers. Provided that *2005/1* explores place, time and sound, his absent space and text display a considerable level of uncertainty or *gap* between the composer and performer. But this *gap* can be most interesting. Adrian Frutiger asserts, 'art does not lie in the materials, but in the gaps'[21] (Theorie Design Graphique, 2009). The same article contains a quotation by the typographer Emil Ruder:

> Exposing silence is to give it a value hitherto inconceivable. Emil Ruder said that 'For the Italian Renaissance, the vacuum plays only a secondary role, there is only surrounds the subject. [...] Modern Art, on the contrary [...] gives the empty area the same value as other elements. The empty area not leaking, it is essential in a voltage ratio. White comes to the edge of the surface.'[22] (Theorie Design Graphique, 2009)

The *mu* property of 'white' or 'vacuum' (where nothing is / gap) bears as much content as *yū* property (where something is). Visual arts, of course, differ from scores which involve performers who experiment with the language within. With scores, performance somehow takes place, being evolved from the gap. Yet of course, there is a tendency for the score to be mis-read:

> Language is not a function of frontal and explicit communication and has far more to do with locating oneself in an environment than with communicating whatever contents to others. Thus, as I reject a frontal or explicit communication, the entire complex of a score's potentiality arises

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[20] Score realisations are available online from http://www.anothertimbre.com/werder2005(1).html
[21] Frutiger, A. (2004). *the man and his signs,* Workshop Perrousseaux. p. 148.
[22] Ruder, E. (1967). *Typography,* Verlag Niggli.

differently. So, I can't relate either to what you've called 'mis-readings'. I would say that the score keeps being the referential instance, even if I personally realise the score now and then, or propose a certain reading. This reading is my way of dealing with the score; however, there are certainly others. (Werder, 2012, 2013)

I agree with Werder's standpoint for defining scores as 'being the referential instance', however, there is often a certain degree of personal trust in distributing works to particular people. Hughes points out in our conversation:

My scores tend to get performed by people I know, or that are familiar with this type of music – so there is a reassurance there. I don't make my pieces freely available online as I think some form of dialogue (even if it is a tacit understanding) is important. This can be subverted, but the subversion comes from a common point of view/approach … (S. Hughes, Personal Communication, November 25th, 2014)

She continues:

The openness of the work enables the score to activate enough of the performer's own character, whilst retaining the voice of the composer. Often the most challenging realisations are those that retain the aesthetic of the composer - which might be interpreted as a certain sensitivity towards something - but subvert many of that aesthetic's formal qualities to create an unexpected and collaborative action … (Ibid.)

The composer Bruno Duplant says that his piece 'escapes' him when it is released from his hand. He is concerned that English as a foreign language may prevent his ideas from being transmitted. He says, '[…] with some musicians things naturally work, on the contrary with others, you must accept that the piece escapes you […]' (B. Duplant, Personal Communication, November 24th, 2014).

The observance of these composers' viewpoints suggests that my music is perhaps a way to *share* a particular interest amongst friends who share a similar sensibility to *ma* and *mu*. I see scores as letters to a particular circle of people. However, as Hughes points out, these pieces can end up in unknown hands, subverted or even abused in unprecedented and surprising ways.

1.3.2 Serial Principle

The composer James Saunders discusses a 'multipart' system that describes 'multiple articulations of a central formative principle or group of principles scores' (Saunders, 2012, p.498). This appears commonly in the area of sonic practice that I am interested in, such as Lucier's beating frequencies, Radigue's microtonal drones and Frey's silent music. Saunders writes of the Wandelweiser composers' multipart perception of multipart form,

> … for Carlo Inderhees, it is born of a concern with connecting change and continuity … for Eva-Maria Houben, it relates to a fascination with infinite things, multipart series affect our perception of time both within and outside of our direct experience of the work … for both Michael Pisaro and Antoine Beuger, multipart series offer the opportunity to explore the inherent possibilities of a piece in a more thorough way. (Saunders, 2012, p.522)

My portfolio concerns a central principle of *senu hima* in relation to *ma* and *mu* that result in multipart series; *PPM book*, *koso koso* and *code of silence.* 'Multipart' allows my formal interest to be explored and articulated refined through repetition.

1.3.3 Text as Objects

Once texts are dematerialised from intellectual semantics or contexts, each word becomes an object seen as a raw (or rawer) material. Words are then objectified and composed under certain constraints that I implicitly produce. They are suggestive of musical events because they have been introduced as musical scores to readers. Without the pre-introduction, my score may not appear as a score but something else.

Importantly, I see my score already as the work itself. This demonstrates my particular attempt to construct *ma* and *mu* in both time and space, and my use of text in various senses as material. Pisaro recalls the time he discovered the score of Cage's *Winter Music* (1957),

… oddly formal and hard to decipher, as if it was inventing a new kind of formality based on a different kind of logic than what I had encountered. Everything, it seemed, was designed for the particular pieces and was there to indicate a definite style of performance … The score was on paper, but it was also a reading of the paper. In a significant way, it *was* paper. It was the first music I had seen that had confronted the writing of a score as *material*, as a part of the composition itself. The score, while being instructions for making sound, was also an image, and, in the way one had to read it, a poem. Like a poem, it didn't have to be read linearly (one could begin anywhere) and like a poem it seemed to demand multiple readings to be grasped. (Pisaro, 2009, p.27)

I occasionally create line and arrow marks in scores to signify time and direction. The score for *object performance* has an arrow that suggests a start and end point of the performance. Though the straight arrow announces time and direction, the overall sense is rather omnidirectional and non-linear. Words that indicate gestures are irregularly dispersed across the score so as to de-centralise the performers' linearity. The gap between words suggests silence and implies no action, however, it may contain musical potentiality and imagination. Performers will make an attempt to parse relations to my proposition of events and non-events. But what if the score contains *all that is* but still makes no sense to others? Cage discusses his book *Empty Words* in which he aims to 'make English less understandable' (Figure 1.10),

… because when it's understandable, well, people control one another, and poetry disappears and as I was talking with my friend Norman O. Brown, and he said, 'Syntax [which is what makes things understandable] is the army, is the arrangement of the army.' So what we're doing when we make language un-understandable is we're demilitarizing it, so that we can do our living. It's a transition from language to music certainly. It's bewildering at first, but it's extremely pleasurable as time goes on. And that's what I'm up to. 'Empty Words' begins by omitting sentences, has only phrases, words, syllables and letters. The second part omits the phrases, has only words, syllables and letters. The third part omits the words, has only syllables and letters. And the last part has nothing but letters and sounds. (Cage, a radio interview, August 8, 1974)[23]

Cage distributes *Empty Words* to be read as music[24], which is different from my text implementation that is acted upon to create various interpretations. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Christine Sun Kim's drawing scores such as *noise without*

[23] Retrieved from http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88v/cage-radio.html
[24] His reading at Mills College, Oakland (1978) is available on http://johncage.org/mini/emptyWords.html

character (2013) and *eighth note's worst nightmare* (2014) contextualise music in visual art. Her works are mostly political and social statements rather than considered as musical scores to be performed. However, it is possible to perceive Cage's and Sun Kim's works as performative texts as, to me, their text aesthetics reflect music within them.
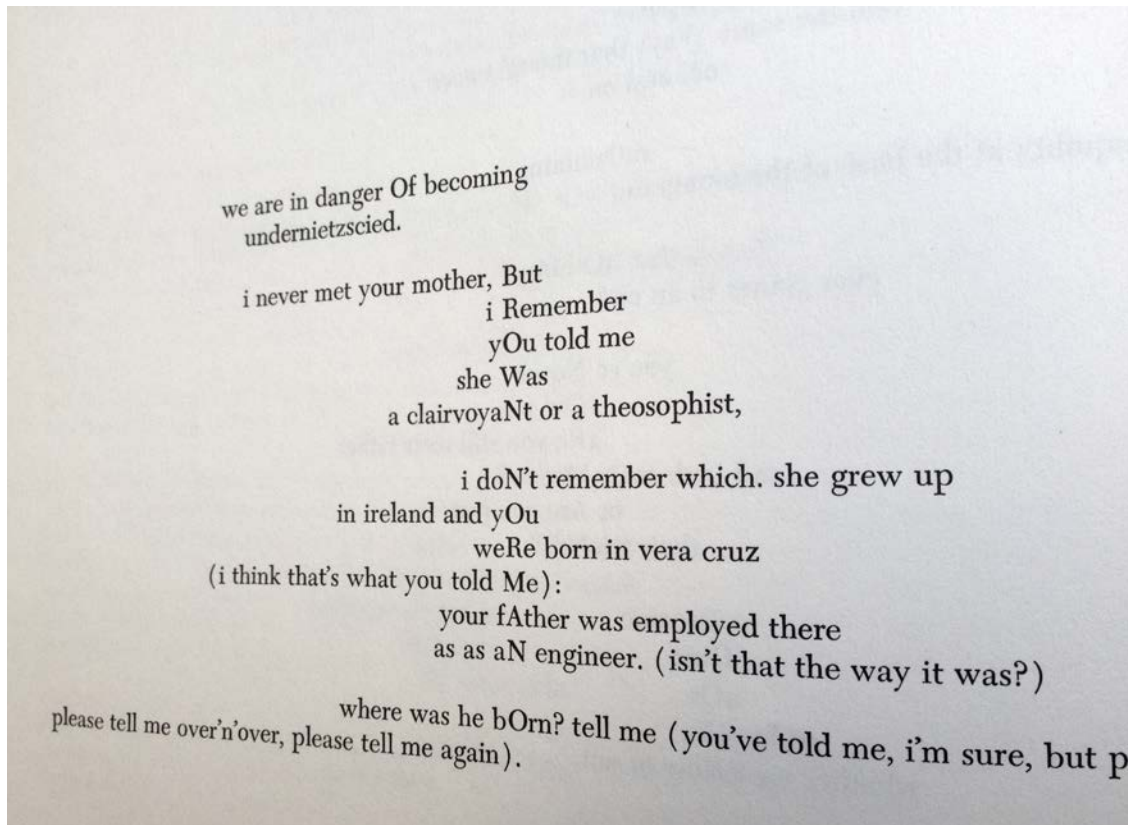
Figure 1.10: John Cage *Empty Words* (1973) (Cage, 1980, p132)

Text fascinates me in terms of typography, functionality, materiality as well as its musicality. I have been inspired by various uses of text in literature such as Stephen Mallarmé's *Un Coup De Dés Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard* (A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance) (1914)[25] and Georges Perec's *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* (2008a). こそこそ (*koso koso*) is my collection of text scores between 2013 and 2014 published by Bore Publishing (Figure 2.5). Compiling my works as a collection

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[25] A poem published in 1914 in The New French Review.

makes it clear how my scores are concerned with both visual and aural aesthetics. Included in the publication are the card scores for the *tada no score* project. The use of text in this project recalls George Brecht's card events *Water Yam* (1963) and Yoko Ono's *haiku*-like *Grapefruit* (1964). I am interested in structuring words and symbols in the least complicated form that may evoke actions and thoughts not only in the temporal but also in the spatial domain.

1.3.4 Remoteness

During my PhD research, I was involved with a number of composers and performers all over the world. Our working environments were often remote. In this *remote interaction*, we shared materials and thoughts via email exchanges, resulting in more *distance* or *gap* between the composer and performer. Duplant comments:

> I always compose and made interpret my scores remotely [sic]. The choice not being me to give, I always compose with this absence, which is today for me familiar. (B. Duplant, Personal Communication, November 24th, 2014)

I am currently interested in the meaning of remoteness. Immediacy, promptness and intuition are more emphasised in live performances where we physically share, think and act together. These characteristics are less prominent when we are remotely working towards a piece. However, there is a particular feeling of sharing that still exists despite the distances involved. In a manner similar to observing paintings in solitude, I see and hear a score alone in space and still feel closely connected to the familiar aesthetic of collaborative creation. Can *distance* carry and share *aesthetics?* Werder writes:

> In my works this coming together and sharing already is the music, it's all about making a real coming together possible … I'm realising remote live situations in order to meet and share with a few people that are important to me, and I would go as far as saying that these live situations are not actually 'remote' as it is all about the layered quality of coming together regardless of the physical distance. (M. Werder, personal communication, February 11th, 2015)

The word *remote* is correct as far as a physical distance is concerned, yet as Werder states, it may not be appropriate once the level of *togetherness* is articulated.

1.4 Approaches to Form

The portfolio comprises two distinct approaches to form - micro events and sustained events. This section investigates how I approach the two primary forms in my practice.

1.4.1 Micro Events

Micro relates to absence (form) as well as quietness (volume). My works often employ *almost inaudible* sound occurrences in order to indicate *micro-ness* in music. Pisaro writes:

> Why would a schooled musician like myself … decide that music with very little sound was the most exciting thing in the world? (Pisaro, 2009)

A little event is often misconstrued as *nothing occurring*. Fyfe Robertson criticises the painter Bob Law's painting of nothingness as 'symptoms of a modern sickness':

> The man who seems to me to have travelled furthest down the avant-garde road to nothing and nowhere is Bob Law … what [the viewers] getting from empty white canvases on a white wall? For me, these things are not art. They're symptoms of a modern sickness that repudiates standard in almost everything, not just - Bob Law-wise - in art. (Saltoun & Schubert, 1999, p.10)

The erasure of image and the absence of form and content can by no means be fairly repudiated as a purely modern concern. Minimal and abstract aesthetics focus more on raw materials and nature than on exterior elements. This has been explored considerably in Japanese traditional art as one of the most important techniques. Thus, Law's approach is not a nihilistic one, instead, it investigates *what has already been there* - the material and nature. In order to understand how micro events merge into our perceptions, I briefly introduce a traditional Japanese art form that provides a

critical consciousness of margin and absence. The composer Rō Ogura discusses the Japanese consciousness of *ma* in *Ma and Rhythm,*

> ... 日本の絵や音楽はというと、これはいうまでもありませんが、地をそのままに残している絵、一斉に音が消えて無くなるのを自然とする歌。いやむしろ絵には地を「間」として残すとでもいうくふうが感じられ、歌は無音のところをに芸を見出すというふうです。僕はそういう典型として能を考えています。

> ... in [Japanese] painting, the [white] background is left as it is, and in [Japanese] music, the complete absence of sound becomes the nature itself. Better to say, their painting keeps the background as a device for experiencing *ma*. In their music, the artistic style is revealed where there is no sound. I think *noh* is the model of this particular aesthetic. (Ogura, 1981, p.171)

Japanese art strives for the ultimate nothingness and in achieving this it contains more. Ogura claims that Japanese ears search for *more* silence beyond silence, and their ears remain with silence even after sound begins, waiting for the sound's resonance to end so that more silence will be available. On the contrary, Western ears stay with silence only until sound begins. Once sound starts, their ears then look for the contrast and structure; dynamics, speed and modulation/settlement (Ogura, 1981, p.171). The perception of *more silence* within and after silence has become one of the primary concerns in my micro event sound installations such as *treow*, *1→5* and *ajar*. Though these works contain continual sound, the sounds employed are very quiet and subtle. As a result, the threshold of hearing and not hearing becomes equivocal. Hearing something can be achieved when nothing is produced and silence remains when sound is present. Our ears listen out for more silence and begin to perceive illusional as well as actual sonic occurrences. For example, *ajar* (Figure 1.11) continuously outputs a barely audible sinetone. Some audiences can notice a high frequency quite loudly whereas others hear nothing. Installation works are aural and visual simultaneously and this helps to create a pseudo aural perception. Here, what and how one hears and does not hear seems to rely on one's listening perceptions.
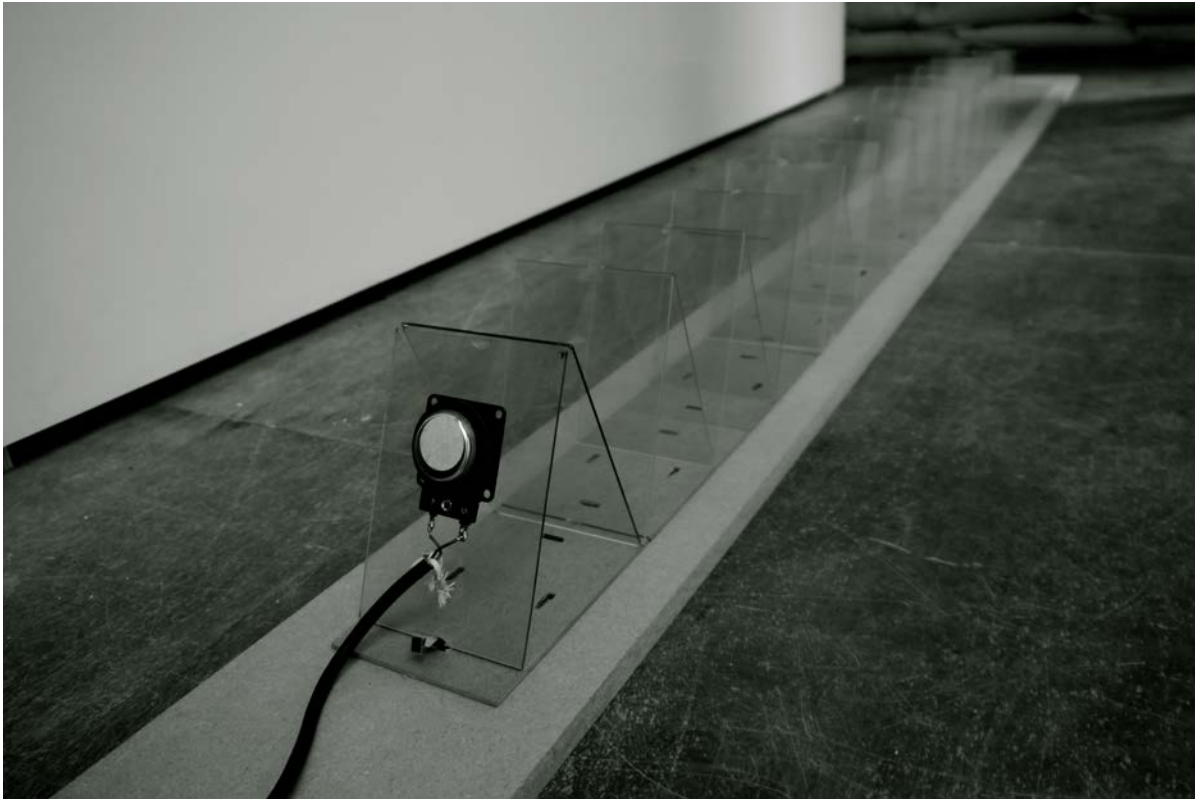
Figure 1.11: *ajar* - a sound installation with glass, transducer and sine tones

For me, the micro event is a result of active listening. Active listening looks forward to sound in silence and silence in sound, and importantly, stops me from doing *more* in order to listen. On the contrary, *more* only creates passive listening. Christian Wolff's *Stones* (1969) or Jamie Drouin & Lance Austin Olsen's *sometimes we all disappear* (2014) consolidate Ogura's theory of our ears remaining with silence whilst anticipating more silence. As Drouin & Olsen write, '[…] the intimate sounds exist partway between isolated and connected events, with the listener's environment asserting an almost equal role in defining the experience' (Drouin & Olsen, 2014). These musical pieces contain almost nothing, and are merely appreciated by active, empirical and democratic listening. Wolff's *Stones* offers a series of extremely small sounds simply produced by stones. In his non-technical environment, stones become much more

transparent, bare and pure as material, in response, our listening becomes more curious, wanting and concentrating.

I benefited from a strong sense of active listening when I performed Frey's *Un Champ De Tendresse Parseme D'adieux (4) (2011) for stones, dried leaves and whistles* as part of the Edges Ensemble at hcmf//[26] and Music We'd Like To Hear[27]. This composition employs small stones, dried leaves and whistles in order to produce quiet events, which amplified the quietness and soundlessness of the venues. By actively listening to such silent music, silence became both the strategy and the music itself. A similar notion is found in Beuger's *tschirtner tunings for twelve* (2005) composed of soft notes performed by twelve instrumentalists. Performers are given the score of thirty pages but instructed to play only a few tones per page. As a consequence of this empty architecture, the division between sound and silence becomes almost irrelevant in listening. Frey states that his music is 'silent architecture; silence of a room, a wall, a landscape, such as places or places that are silent.' adding that his work is 'silent music but not absent' (Frey, 2008b). Micro events magnify the silent field that establishes the critical aspect of my compositional practice. This recalls the central *noh* teaching; where there is no-action, it is the most entertaining.

1.4.2 Sustained Events

The form of Japanese *gagaku* as well as *noh* has influenced my compositional thinking to a large degree. *Gagaku* is composed of microtonal and long durational tones in extremely slow movements. In listening to *gagaku*, time passes without a clear perception of the past, present and future and the music seems to organise itself vertically. There are certain resemblances between *gagaku* music and contemporary

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[26] Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the University of Huddersfield, November 2012.
[27] A concert series curated by John Lely, Markus Trunk and Tim Parkinson. Our performance was on 11th July 2012.

drone music such as works by Lucier and Radigue though *gagaku* is indeed a music that is very composed and comparatively dialectic.

In Lucier's *On The Carpet Of Leaves Illuminated By The Moon* (2000), a koto player performs a repetition of notes against a continual oscillator. The piece explores varying beating patterns over time that shift between dissonant and consonant intervals. Though Lucier's score still *assumes* what may happen between acoustic instruments and pure sine waves, different performance results are expected on each occasion. Some of my pieces, for example *gnome* or *stringently flexible*, explore beating patterns with various sound components. What separates my music from Lucier's or Radigue's, due to the more abstract nature of the score, is a tendency to be contingent and indeterminate, accommodating more accidents and less *goals.*

Radigue's sound elements interrelate and establish a timeless motion and a sense of stasis in listening. The immense and infinite nature of her sound materials is notably exhibited in *Trilogie De La Mort* (1998) and *Nadjorlak* (2008) where she explores 'the versatility of the sound material, its elasticity, its suppleness, its richness' (Warburton, 2010, p.28). By eschewing melody, rhythm and progression, her sustained tones remain boundless, introducing Frey's idea of void volume, but this time void volume is within continual elements. Her music contains space that almost suggests emptiness. My portfolio also contains various approaches to present this sense of emptiness through presence and motion which ceases to suggest 'time'.

Holterbach discusses low frequencies in Radigue's compositions:

> Eliane is a totally intuitive composer. I guess she was trying to create an intense physical response with her music, and naturally the low frequencies seemed appropriate … It's a very rare use in music, a very few people concentrated their work on low frequency as she did … I've

asked her if airplane sounds did influenced her, and she suddenly realized she was living in Nice close to the airport and was able to recognize most of the plane just with their sound … (E. Holterbach, personal communication, February 14th, 2014)

It was through reading Holterbach's comments that I came to appreciate my constant employment of low frequencies in my music as an intuitive and visceral engagement. For example, *Two Lions* (2013) presents ULF (Ultra Low Frequency), and *zowa zowa* and *Espèces d'espaces 03* employ low noises in order to create subtle intensity and physicality. Low frequency also provokes a sense of emergence in experiencing music.

1.5 Approaches to Listening: Composer, Performer and Listener

1.5.1 Inessentiality of Stardom - Non-Hierarchical Experience

Konparu's 'inessentiality of stardom' (Konparu, 1980, p.15) understands *noh* theatre as a platform for audiences and actors to be of an equal status. This perception abandons hierarchical roles. I attempt to *listen* as a composer-performer-listener with a nonhierarchical attitude to music. Pisaro writes:

> We register time through change. The richness of sound is in its inherent instability, and the most unstable sounds are those which approach silence. At the border between sound and silence the ear is alive to change. It is awake. Silence asks the mind to listen. In the silence, the stillness, there is room for anyone. The silence of the listener is the same as the silence of the composer or the performer. Here we are on the same plain, experiencing what is most important by saying nothing at all. (Pisaro, 1997)

Silence is a space for anyone to explore listening. Listening provides us with a *room* to discover something emergent and retains a field consisting of 'various balanced presences':

> Space, sound and listener create a field of tension informed by the various balanced presences, a field that can become an existential experience of physical and mental existence for the listener. (Frey, 2004)

Frey approaches this field in *Ferne Farben* (2013), a piece that comprises a maximum of fifteen notes over its twelve minute duration. However, each performer 'plays only four

or five notes in the whole duration'[28]. By performing *not performing*, listening is the central of moment-to-moment activity. In this, the boundary between the composer, performer and listener becomes unclear and less profound. It is listening that fulfills Frey's music and conveys a homogeneous architecture of his form. Zawa discusses Beuger's composition:

> At most concerts, the musicians and their performed sounds command most of the audience's attention, but here it felt more like the performers and the environment were existing equally, sharing the same space and time, creating harmonious music as a collective entity of chance events. There was also less of a sense of boundary between the performers and the audience, as if the stillness of the audience were a part of the music too. (Zawa, 2013)

I was aware of a similar homogeneity in the four hour concert of Beuger's *una noche oscura* (2004)[29] the score of which indicates that, 'all sounds are very soft and long to very long'. For our performance, the piece was divided into eight stanzas of thirty minutes, each of which contained a small number of notes. I had two stanzas that were completely silent, hence, almost the entire composition was about listening rather than performing. Such a durational and silent performance distorted my sense of time and space, and gradually, I began to experience *borderless* listening, contemplating *ma* and *mu* in terms of the temporal and spatial. My understanding of active listening also interconnects to the awareness of the space. Lucier writes:

> For several hundred years Western music has been based on composition and performance. Most attention has been focused on the conception and generation of sound, very little on its propagation. Written notes are two-dimensional symbols of a three-dimensional phenomenon … We have been so concerned with language that we have forgotten how sound flows through space and occupies it. (Lucier, 1995, p.416)

The nonhierarchical and spatial environment of each piece in the portfolio is supported by listening more predominantly than composing:

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[28] In the recording session, St. Paul's Church, the University of Huddersfield, November 2014.
[29] Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, St. Paul's Church, the University of Huddersfield, November 2013.

> Firstly, we need to concern the matter of listening. Cage's attitude leaning towards listening side more than composing side is closely in conjuncture with our contemporary mind that perceives music as sound no matter what creator's intention is. (Ono, 2013, p.58)

ka/ga/ku and *an dt wo* explicitly ask performers to listen to other properties in the performance. For instance, in *ka/ga/ku*, between the first and third minute, pianist B performs an imitation of pianist A. The guidance for the pianists is as follows: 'Pianist A - between *pp* and *p* / play 33 notes between D3 and D7 as you wish / at one point, two or three keys are played together till their sound decays completely.' and 'Pianist B - imitate the pianist A as precisely as you can / either in the same or different octave / several notes can be omitted or added in intentionally'. If the imitating condition is ever met perfectly, the two players perform identical notes. In reality, absolute homogeneity never continues due to various acoustic effects and personalities.

an dt wo (Figure 1.12) has a continual sine tone and pulse throughout the piece. Two pianists guess the pitch of the tone with which they begin their sequence. The notation invokes simple maths that decides the way the performance proceeds. The score also introduces a loose goal, 'aim to end with the same note as the one of the very beginning', which enforces listening and configuring the sequence. By stating 'almost 1/3 of notes are not performed' in *an dt wo* and 'several notes can be omitted or added in intentionally' in *ka/ga/ku*, silence is embedded as a critical part of the performance. Here, silence is not comprehended as filling a gap between sounds, but it contours the piece and becomes the main carrier of the essence of the work.

pianist A

0	0	0,1	●	3	5	●	0,2	2	0,5	0	●	0,5	●	2	1,2	0
4	4	8		7	10		7	7	10	16		10		4	6	4

ulse ────────────────────────────

pianist B

1		2	3		4

Figure 1.12: *an dt wo* for two pianos and sine tone

1.5.2 一音成仏 (*Ichion Jyōbutsu*) - One Sound is the Nirvana

The *shakuhachi*[30] teaching of 一音成仏 (*ichion jyōbutsu*) states that 'one sound is enough to attain nirvana'. I attempt to convey this significant manifestation teaching from *less* to *one*, and then, this *one* finally unites with 無音 (*mu-on* - no sound). Music normally encourages addition. Even within music that considers reductionism or minimalism as a strategy, addition is still a formal event. *ichion jyōbutsu* instead terminates accession and converges all our sensual attentions into one sound and no sound. Such an approach is also present in contemporary works such as those by La Monte Young, Lucier or Radigue who interrogate sound.

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[30] 尺八 (*shakuhachi*) is a Japanese bamboo flute.

Cage comments that, 'sounds one hears are music' (Tenney, 1983, p.19) and 'music is permanent … only listening is intermittent' (Cage, 2004, p.224). Pisaro observes,

> … for most of the long period after Silence was published (1961) – it seemed musicians were more interested in discussing Cage's ideas than his music. For Kunsu, the music of Cage, and of those who worked with him and followed in his wake was felt to be more radical and more useful than the writing: because it had so many loose ends and live wires still to be explored … Thus 4'33" was seen not as a joke or a Zen koan or a philosophical statement: it was heard as music. It was also viewed as unfinished work in the best sense: it created new possibilities for the combination (and understanding) of sound and silence. Put simply, silence was a material and a disturbance of material at the same time. (Pisaro, 2009).

The composer Radu Malfatti writes,

> … to me there is a big difference between presenting a piece consisting only of silence (which of course was a great achievement for his time) and the fact that you can use silence as a constructive element within the music itself. (Malfatti, 2002, p.66)

It is important for me to consider the interaction between sounds, and sound and silence. I am still motivated to infuse extra elements into a field but these sound activities must be *just enough* or *almost nothing* that pertain to silence or a silent situation. Toop writes:

> He (Manfred) has subtracted activity from his music to the point where almost nothing is left. (Toop, 2004, p.19)

Radigue states that,

> … the result was a music that takes its time, is demanding on the listener, and I will not forgive only one thing: that you do not listen to it. (Radigue, 2012)

con. de. structuring (2014) and *gnome* (2014) have an identical sentence, 'silent letter is a letter that is not pronounced yet without it the word makes no sense'. Silent letters, such as g<u>n</u>ome, <u>k</u>now or clim<u>b</u>ing, are not pronounced, but are as equally present as the rest of the letters otherwise the word would not make sense. Thus, what I imply

here is - Silence is here. You may not notice it but without it this work does not make sense. In this perception, silence reaches a status equal to that of sound. For me, it is more rewarding *not to do* than *to do*. From my collaborative experience, it is often much harder to make others *do less* than *do more* that puts an emphasis towards listening.

1.5.3 Music Without Beginning or End

Radigue has referred to her compositions as *musique combinatoire*, *proposition sonore* (sound proposal), *propos sonore* (sound comment) and *music without end* (Holterbach, 2012, p.9). These terms precisely describe her music - music that demonstrates no sense of beginning or end, manifesting an ephemeral space and renouncing a measurable time. Radigue explains the sameness of her music:

> There is not much difference between one work and another (of mine), no more than from the beginning of any one of my pieces to the end. It is never exactly the same, for sure, but it's never totally different. (Cowley, 2002, p.57)

Radigue incorporates harmonic partials and overtone partials into an accumulative music that transits within her slow compositional pace. In such gradual music, a listener is allowed to move away, leave and return to engage with the music again at any point:

> No one can concentrate on such tiny differences for such a long time. But it's not necessary. The piece can go along without you for a while. You come back to it when you're ready. And maybe the things you were thinking about while you weren't focused just on the music were also meaningful. That's all part of the experience. How you get into the music, leave it, come back again, and so on. And it's different for everyone. (Johnson, 1989, p.53)

As *proposition sonore* and *propos sonore* suggest, her *Trilogie De La Mort* (1985 - 1993) or *Omnht* (1970) introduce a perceptual transformation of time and space. The sound artist Emmanuel Holterbach re-constructed *Omnht* in 2006 and described the experience as 'sonic architecture of time and space … a vast edifice of vibrations, built

like a mirror of frequencies in which were reflected our inner worlds' (Holterbach, 2012, p.3). Radigue's music 'lives for each instant of sound' and 'demands such close listening, an attention to tone upon tone, which together create smooth sound arches' (Gregory, 2012), defining an arc for *music without end*.

Between 2013 and 2014, I reconstructed Lucier's *Music on Long Thin Wire* in various places[31] from which I extensively studied this work's perspectives and aesthetics. The piece generates continual harmonics and overtones that re-articulate the surrounding space. Lucier's approach to 'expressivity' in material is also evident in his instrumental compositions such as *In Memoriam John Higgins* (1984) and *On The Carpet Of Leaves Illuminated By The Moon* where he explores listening reception and perception. Beuger's *petits préludes pour la guitare* (2013) employs repetitive patterns that instructs, the player to be '(very) slow / very free' which also represents *music without end.* The guitarist Cristián Alvear Montecino comments:

> When I approach this kind of repertoire I always try to rethink what slow means, in this case I relate the concept of slow to tranquility. The method is simple: I play the piece a few times and record so I could hear it later, if the music seemed to me slow/quiet I know what the proper speed for the piece is. Essentially the apparatus that should dictate how to do a piece is the ear. (C. Montecino, personal communication, January 7th, 2015)

Montecino defines a distinction between Lucier and Beuger in approaching space:

> In Lucier's work space is explored, generated and makes you aware of the place that you're in through the music performed … In Beuger's case space is considered an autonomous sound source with which the performer must relate, it is in this relation that the music of Antoine happens. (Ibid.)

The aforementioned composers' and performers' various techniques and approaches to time and space have influenced my thinking towards composing empty (*ma*) space.

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[31] The University of Huddersfield (21 February, 2013 & 4 April, 2013), The Standing Waves featured in the Great Hall at The University of Leeds (20th April, 2013) and FON Festival at Cookes Studios in Barrow-in-Furness (26th - 29th September, 2013).

Exploring emptiness opens up a musical field where linearity and progression remain less important. My compositions, therefore, can start and end at any point without disrupting too much of my intention which reflects the idea of Frey's 'timeless presence',

> … spatial thinking has more to do with sound or the idea of the monochrome. Melody and the path have a beginning and an end, but sound and space have a timeless presence. (Frey, 2004)

Figure 1.13: a notation system in *Pulse*

Pulse is a concert piece that is concerned with the notion of *music without end*. The score contains the quotation by R. Murray Schafer: 'Water never dies and the wise man rejoices in it. No two rain drops sound alike as the attentive ear will detect.' (Schafer, 1994, p.19). Figure 1.13 shows the abstract notation system used throughout the piece. All sections are composed with certain pitches and nuances. I wanted the performer not to do more than the score specified. However, this intention was hardest for the koto player who had been traditionally trained in Japan. At the first rehearsal, she presented a score transcribed in traditional notation that interpreted time and expression according to her musical training. This version eradicated all the nuances

inherent in the original score. I had to ask her to return to the initial score in which icons specified shapes and textures of sound while spaces directly specified silence.

1.6 Approaches to Perception
1.6.1 真行草 (*Shin-Gyō-Sō*)

無 (*mu*) is considered as a negative field whereas 有 (*yū*) is a positive field. In Japanese culture, the negative field is experienced as one particular consciousness that manifests itself. 真(*shin*)-行(*gyō*)-草(*sō*) illustrates an Asian perceptual structure that discloses how the positive and negative field are inter-appointed by three types of awareness. The *Shin-gyō-sō* has strongly influenced my approach to structure and perceive *mu* and *yū* in music. Generally, Japanese tradition describes *shin* as the decency, *sō* as the informal (or the unprecedented) and *gyō* as something between. Gustie L. Herrigel describes *shin-gyō-sō* in 華道 (*Kadō* - flower arrangement art) as the following:

> In *shin-seikwa* [sic][32] as in formal *seikwa* the accent is on the strong predominance *shin* … *so-seikwa* is characterized by a more informal-looking style … *gyo-seikwa* has a more restraint and compact structure … (Herrigel, 1999, p.52)

A similar principle is applied to 茶道 (*Sadō* - tea ceremonial art), 弓道 (*Kyūdō* - archery) and 書道 (*Shodō* - calligraphy), however, Konparu takes a step further with the notion of *shin-gyō-sō* in *noh* in the context of *ma*:

> *Ma* is important not only as an abstract idea but also as a concrete structural element. We tend to regard most compositions as made up of an expressive part and a blank part, in a relationship of apposition that is at the basic level of perception. (Konparu, 1984, p.71)

Figure 1.14 examines the relationship between expressive (figure) and blank (ground) in connection with the *shin-gyō-sō* and the Gestalt theory that studies perceptual

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[32] 生花 (*seika*) means both *kadō* (flower arrangement art) and flowers.

symbolisation and recognition. Gestalt psychology explains that our consciousness prioritises one image over another. The first recognized image is called 'figure' and the rest is 'ground'. 'Multi-stable perception' is a term that describes the three primary perceptions our brain establishes as an immediate experience of the image. A famous 'bio-stable image' that manifests this theory is Rubin's figure and vase illusion (Figure 1.15) that shows a vase in the centre and two faces surrounding the contour:
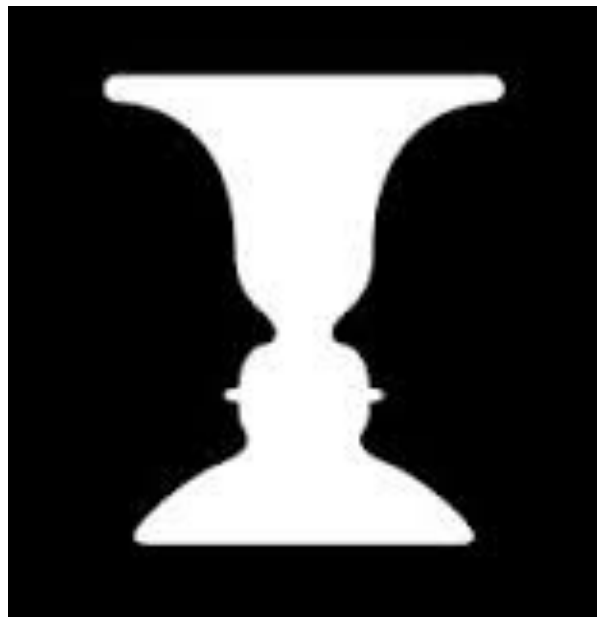
Figure 1.14: Rubin's *figure and vase illusion* (Rubin, 1915)[33]

three primary perceptions
1 (if one recognizes a vase first), a vase is 'figure' and two faces are 'ground'
2 (the distinction is unclear)
3 (if one recognizes two faces first), faces are 'figure' and a vase is 'ground'

The Gestalt cognition of 'figure' and 'ground' is almost parallel to Konparu's *shin-gyō-sō* but the way to accept 'ground' is notably contrasting. Gestalt presents 'figure' as the predominant image over 'ground', and emphasises the recognition of patterns where

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[33] Millodot: Dictionary of Optometry and Visual Science, 7th Edition, 2009, Butterworth-Heinemann, Retrieved from http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/_/viewer.aspx?path=ElMill&name=F0R-14-S2958.jpg&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmedical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com%2FRubin%2527s%2Bvase

'ground' is counted as formless and unrecognised. On the contrary, Konparu classifies 'ground' innately as 'figure', and qualifies 'ground' as the perceptible field independent from 'figure'. Konparu explains,

> … in *sō*, we seem to return to shin: figure to ground are made explicit. The difference, of course, is that in a *sō* level composition that significance is not in the figure but in the ground … (Konparu, 1984, p.72)

Konparu`s Diagram of Shin-Gyo-So
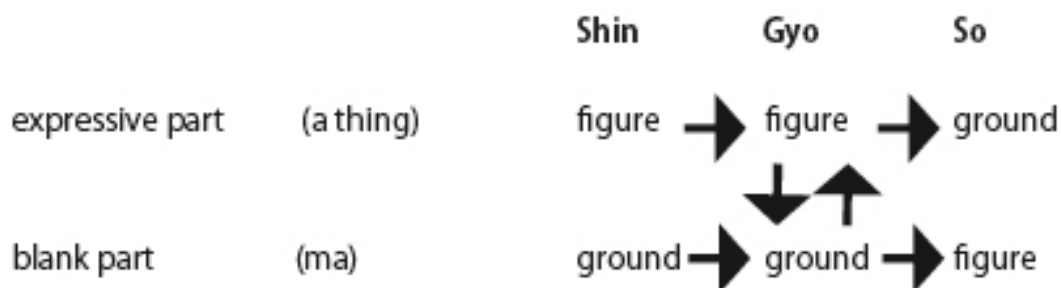
Figure 1.15: Konparu's diagram of *shin-gyō-sō* in relation to *figure* and *ground*

Shin-gyō-sō theory originated in China where *shin* was the discourse of the greatest virtue. Japan has exploited *sō* in a way that it receives a more distinct awareness. My work is strongly concerned with this awareness. Konparu declares that '*yū* is merely the thing to support *mū* (or *ma*)' (Konparu, 1984, p.80). He continues:

> In both East and West there has for some time been a grouping towards a notion of true artistic creation in extremes of abbreviation. In japan, for example, the expression '*Geijutsu to wa, shōryaku nari*' (Art is abbreviation), and in Europe, the famous 'Less is more' of Mies van der Rohe. However, neither of these pronouncements approaches in profundity Zeami's statement on acting in *Kakyō : Cencerning Single-Mindedness*, '*senu tokoro ga omoshiroki*' (What [the actor] does *not* do is of interest). (Konparu, 1984, p.73)

In music, when *yū* stays at the most minimal, a stronger sense of *mu* and *ma* become available in listening to *gyō* and *sō*. Beuger writes:

I like the idea of a piece of music being just a few sounds, of performing music as just playing a few sounds. Composing seems to me to be about making a few basic decisions, that open up a specific, still infinite world of differences: just a few sounds. (Saunders, 2009, p.231)

When materials are minimally present, their material relevance to each other becomes more immanent and valuable. Zawa finds a significant quality of *mu* involved in Werder's *ein(e) ausführende(r) seiten 218-226 (2002),*

> … even when the sound is alternated with silence, there is no feel of suspension. In the silences of this piece, the music is still moving forward … The substantial textures of these silences seem to be as important elements to this composition as the sounds … The tranquil, profound and introspective world of the piece seems to indicate some sort of enlightenment that all the phenomena in this universe are connected in some way, directing the listener's mind toward the infinite external world … In this piece, the performer restrains his individuality as much as possible, assimilating his sounds into the naturalness of the environment as best he/she can … (Zawa, 2013)

ein(e) ausführende(r) seiten 218-226 (1999-) consists of four thousand pages. Each page contains eight lines sectioned into five parts of twelve seconds each, that makes up eight minutes. The general instruction of the piece is 'one question constitutes *ein(e) ausführende(r)* : action or silence'. A performer either provides an action of six seconds of sound or silence, apart from when (.) appears, which indicates twelve seconds of silence. A listener notices time through silence that changes. When I write music, I am actively concerned with the converging juncture between appearance and disappearance - *gyō* and *sō*. Beuger discusses this emptiness 'after something gone':

> The way the sound appears (very rarely, very soft, rather short) is already very much a form of disappearing: the moment it is there, it is already gone. Then, at some point, it has disappeared altogether and doesn't return. What remains is what was already there: silence, but now without the rare occurrence of the sound. A silence coloured as it were by the absence of the sound: the sound has gone, isn't there anymore. The concept, or better the experience of 'not anymore' as the strongest possibility for us to relate to emptiness or the void has been the focus of my attention for many years. This focus on emptiness and silence, I feel, is absolutely connected to the idea of solo music. Today I would, axiomatically, say that the content of a solo is the void. (Saunders, 2009, p.233)

Beuger's *24 petits preludes pour la guitare* (2013) carries the short performance instruction, '(very) slow, very free'. Beuger's above statement is reflected in the composition by giving it no tempo or other time indicators, parallel to Werder's work shown above. The periodic pattern structures non-dialectic experiences and expands our listening to respect a greater variety of volumes. It encourages constant transitions between *shin* (where sound is prominent), *gyō* (where sound and silence are blurred) and *sō* (where silence is prominent). By repeating actions, one hears instability in transformations which creates another observable perception - the dualism of perfection and failure called 侘び寂び (*wabi-sabi*) and 乙 (*otsu*).

1.6.2 侘び寂び (*Wabi-sabi*) and 乙 (*Otsu*)

Most of the Japanese arts are ritual iterations, in which they aim to discover particular silence as beauty. In 華道 (*Kadō* - flower arrangement art), seasonal flowers are installed in order to express the immortal and mortal world, recapitulating the philosophy of 茶道 (*Sadō* - tea ceremonial art) that explores the humble, withering and imperfect world through the tea drinking ritual. *Kadō* and *Sadō*'s formalities mediate the concept of 侘び寂び (*wabi-sabi*); the Japanese coherence of quietness, simplicity, transience, aging and decaying. In Japanese art, objects must display elegance as well as imperfection. The importance of 遊び心 (*asobigokoro* - *a* playful moment) is often invoked so as to disrupt perfectness. This transforms a faultless work into something that contains a sense of failure. The dual existence of perfection and imperfection delivers the paramount *wabi-sabi* beauty. Koren explains the Japanese essence of 'let it be' in his *wabi-sabi* book:

> It is also important to know when *not* to make choices: to let things be. Even at the most austere level of material existence, we still lie in a world of things. *Wabi-sabi* is exactly about the delicate

balance between the pleasure we get from things and the pleasure we get from freedom from things. (Koren, 1994, p.59)

Koren confirms the importance of *letting things be* which manifests authenticity in material that cannot be recreated by a mechanism that only moulds perfection. Correspondingly, 乙(*otsu*) initially means *not the best* or *the second*. However, the word is used in Japan to describe something particularly tasteful and exquisite. The idea of evaluating natural accidents and events is exemplified in my composition works such as *fade in and fade out procedure* or *koso koso* which also mediate a *wabi-sabi* interference. I use adjectives such as *discreet*, *soft* or *inaudible* to suggest small qualities in sound. Both compositions experiment with the cross-fading of sustained notes where a performance shifts between the consistent and inconsistent, and the stable and unstable in order to experience *shin-gyō-sō* and *wabi-sabi*, which reassess the aesthetics of negative-ness.

The portfolio to a lesser or greater degree represents my exploration of emptiness described throughout this chapter. I have outlined and discussed various techniques to exemplify the significance of listening and different modes of perception in the music of micro and sustained events. My works consist of micro sonic elements that inform a sense of nothingness within which all interest lies.

CHAPTER 2

The commentaries here examine different approaches, perceptions, emerging issues and refinements throughout my research. One example from the submitted pieces addresses each subject examined in Chapter 1. Where appropriate, more than one example is presented in order to discuss commonalities and variations between pieces. Here, I aim to pin down the abstract concepts I have investigated in Chapter 1 with direct reference to my actual techniques and methodologies. My compositions have gradually become more empty and abstract towards the end of the PhD. I express my strong interest in the interplay of absence and presence in detail by investigating a range of form and content employed in the submitted works.

As Lucier says, the 'main activity to composing is to eliminate many different possibilities of the piece … you have to work and think hard until it gets to the point where only the essential components are there' (Harder & Rusche, 2014). Similarly, I attempt to eliminate dozens of initial ideas and possibilities until only a pivotal idea finally remains. My particular inquiries often iterate, and are repeatedly re-investigated and re-examined in different pieces throughout the portfolio.

2.1 *koso koso* - Approaching *Ma* and *Mu*

In this section, I introduce my text composition *koso koso* and the related pieces that demonstrate my interpretation and practical employment of *ma* and *mu*. Of all the pieces, this work best describes an important proposition that I maintain within my practice of *senu hima ga omoshiroki* (1.1.4).

2.1.1 Phenomime and Psychomine

Japanese onomatopoeia inspired me to create a series of compositions during the PhD period, and prompted me to deal with the musical nuances of these particular words. I am interested in the perceptive difference between the composer's intention, materials, reader and the final event. When using Japanese onomatopoeia, a perceptive distance emerges in my work creating a sense of ambiguity and silence.

gaku gaku
①Describes something that was fixed in place but comes loose and begins moving, such as a loose tooth. ②Describes part of the body trembling.

がくがく
①固定してあったものがゆるんで動く様子。②体の一部が小刻みに震えるさま。
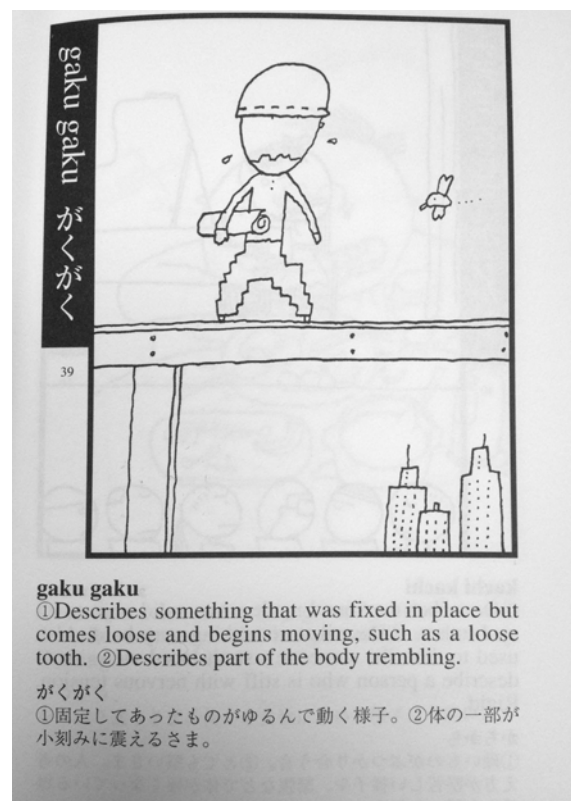
Figure 2.1: an example of Japanese phenomime '*gaku gaku*'

There are three types of Japanese onomatopoetic sound symbolism: phonomime, phenomime and psychomime. Phonomime is a typical form of onomatopoeia that verbalises and approximates actual sounds. This type is commonly found even in English such as 'bow-wow' and 'splash'. Rather than this, what fascinates me are the other two categories. Phenomimes aurally depict physical forms and motions. They are imitative sounds to describe non-sounding events. For example, whilst the English

adjective 'tense' only signifies a state of strain or tautness, the adjective phenomime が

くがく(*gaku gaku*)[34] signifies a state of strain as well as the sound produced by the

physical movement of straining (Figure 2.1). Similar characteristics are found in

psychomimes that aurally depict emotions and bodily states. For instance, whilst the

adjective 'excited' only signifies a state of excitement, the adjective わくわく (*waku*

waku) signifies a state of excitement as well as the sound representative of this

emotional property. Phenomimes and psychomimes define non-aural phenomena with

aural attributes. When this concept is conveyed into a score context, it creates a poetic

dilemma, especially when working with people from outside of Japan who culturally

find it hard to reflect on these perceptions. I find that some onomatopoetic expressions

are universal whilst others are culturally specific. Whereas *hira hira, shīn* or *bata bata*

seem to invoke comparable nuances, *moso moso, boro boro* or *pikka pikka*[35] are not

clearly comprehensible to non-Japanese people by definition.

A word 'table' [tey-buh] means nothing as a sound but signifies 'table' as an object. On

the contrary, a word 'buzz' [buhz] defines the sound of an action and signifies the action

itself. Similarly to 'buzz', the phenomime ひらひら (*hira hira*) signifies the sound and

action itself but its action is, in reality, non-audible. It is the silent attribute in this

language which I apply to my musical scores. Figure 2.2 shows the score of *koso koso*

which contains the word こそこそ, its definition and usages. Here, things are just

delineated like a dictionary without exposing any of my personal compositional

inclinations. When composing *koso koso*, I struggled with the amount of information I

wanted to provide within the score. I kept trying to take out or place additional texts

until I eventually settled on this balance that manifested empty blankness (*ma* and *mu*).

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[34] がくがく(*gaku gaku*) implies other meanings as stated in Figure 2.1.
[35] *hira hira* - fluttering without sound, *shīn* - very quiet, *bata bata* - clattering, mota mota - moving clumsily, *boro boro* - badly damaged, *pikka pikka* - shining as new.

こそこそ　　　　　　　　　　　sneaking around secretly; whispering in discreet

koso koso　　　　　　for
someone like a thief sneaking around: someone whispering quietly;
behaving stealthily: doing something without getting noticed

Figure 2.2: text and space in *koso koso*

code of silence comprises *jili jili, gussuri, sotto, jiwa jiwa* and *zowa zowa*. The scores are identically structured as *koso koso*. However, they have no performance instructions. Here, the word in each score remains self-sufficient. For example in *sotto* (Figure 1.5), the word そっと and its definition, 'gently, lightly and slip quietly', are the only references to actualise events. The score suggests no tempo, duration, pitch nor rhythm, in which absence potentially determines many modes of performance. This blankness (*mu*) is the idea of the score, where this cluelessness somehow discusses the clue to its composition and performance. My use of phenomines and psychomines in my scores is still being developed and refined and is something that I will continue in the future.

Recalling Young's *1960 #7* (1960) having one sentence and two notes and Beuger' *tout a fait solitaire* (1998) containing a few lines of instructions in order to perform one tone,

I explore how far I can pursue absence within the score architecture through solo performance in these works. What happens if a score only constitutes a single word? Would this emptiness be received as abstraction or concision? Would it succeed in provoking any kind of relation for readers at all? I am interested in how my employment of *ma* and *mu* is received by the reader. For this album, it was crucial that I created a solo performance in order to define my own sense of emptiness. It illuminated a special architecture in the music in which silence and emptiness (*ma* and *mu*) were manifested and experienced. I tried to be as neutral as possible to transform *ma* and *mu* concepts into a listening situation.

2.1.2 *Ma* and *Mu* in Performance

My phenomime and psychomime scores especially allow relativities (*ma*) to emerge between the writer, text, reader, and situation (Figure 1.3), maintaining a visual and verbal absence (*mu*) that eschews any expected musical information. So, how do *ma* and *mu* affect performance? In *koso koso*, players make circle(s). Each performer creates a sustained tone in turn with an inaudible cross-fade. Everyone in the circle completes their part, then repeats one more turn. I use a circular space with the performers facing-inwards in order to intensify the social integration that invokes a sense of *ma* between the participants.

This piece was performed by the Edges Ensemble in various concerts. In rehearsals, the piece provoked occasional laughter and other forms of social behavior (nudging neighbors etc.). Such non-technical music events tend to cause self-consciousness and disruptions of concentration. However, participants begin to notice the difficulty and complexity of undertaking the simple task, because here, the detailed texture and small movements are all exposed and emergent on the surface. My practice especially amplifies this awareness when there is no-action - *senu hima*. *koso koso* introduces

more listening than performing and in doing so examines Zeami's aesthetics. An important part of the performance occurs in the silences where I am not playing but listening. This indicates that I simultaneously perform, compose, and listen to silence, which enhances the perception of *gyō* and *sō.* Here, silence is perceptual, only recognisable in response to space. When transmitting sustained notes within the circle, the music remains architectural and spatial. These are the qualities I am particularly interested in when working on the piece as a performer. The piece informs limitless inquiries; instrumentation, pitch, timbre, duration, how to start / end and so on. Each time this piece was performed, I tried to clarify that it must be played *as instructed* without extra theatre or drama which could be a challenging aspect to those who were used to *express* in music. I wanted *koso koso* to be a simple reading of the score and wanted performers not to wait for her turn passively but to listen to the silence *created* at each moment. Here, listening was how she would relate the self to the composition, other performers and space (*ma*).

2.1.3 *Ma* and *Mu* in Scores

PPM book is a companion composition to *koso koso* that plots interactions between various phenomimes and psychomimes. The score offers each performer a set of words to choose from, and specifies how many notes must be performed by simple mathematics. Other musical matters are consciously absent. In one rehearsal, a performer was utterly irritated by the abstract (and possibly poetic) mode of the piece and kept asking me to explain my intention and purpose with the work with a continual snigger. Abstractness creates certain issues especially when I employ the Japanese language which is *already* by its nature inconclusive and cryptic. This nature is exemplified in *haiku* culture, which expresses the whole in only three lines containing five, seven and five words respectively. However, in the most refined *haiku* poems, the ambiguity resulting from a concise use of words produces the most beautiful precision

sufficing in meaning of the poem which articulates a seasonal message. I attempt this sufficiency with very few materials, which to me, is the most difficult proposition in constructing a sonic work. This is one of the primary areas I continue to explore in relation to my own development of *ma* and *mu.*

Werder's *2005/1* (Figure 1.9) employs *emptiness* and manifests silent time and space. So do my score works using phenomimes and psychomimes. Is this empty property a form of music in itself or is it purely conceptual? How do we play when a score is so absent? Werder's texts, suspended in a vacuum and strongly intended, *cannot* be ignored but *must* be worked upon. Werder writes on *2005/1*:

> I wanted to propose mainly two things, both regarding the medium of the score and the performance practice: first, that the level at which compositional strategies regarding the classical parameters of sound, harmony, process etc. basically operate their effectiveness, would not play any (prominent) role anymore, and secondly, that any place and any time are equally perfect (perfect in their totality) regarding an actualisation of *2005/1*. Any place and any time would disclose what they disclose … (Werder, 2012, 2013)

Three words - time, space and sound, disclose enough of his propositions and intentions. The level of a composer's exposure within a score is a subject I often battle with and try to overcome. For example, minimal event instructions in *tada no score* pieces suggest that, similar to *2005/1*, any situation is 'equally perfect' to initiate actions. The texts for *tada no score* were originally created on leaves, pavements, stones and so on found in woods, streets or the city (Figure 2.3). For instance, *no.3* was written on a pavement stone, 'at any speed / clap your hands / 20 times' whilst *no. 7* was on a green leaf, 'hum a tone / as long as / your breath lasts'. I was, as a composer, consciously concise in defining these words, which contained my intention towards *emptiness*. Later on, some of the *tada no score* pieces were performed in concert situations. Though each concert directed independent musical decisions, it was

obvious that their performances reflected on my scores. This proves that the score had
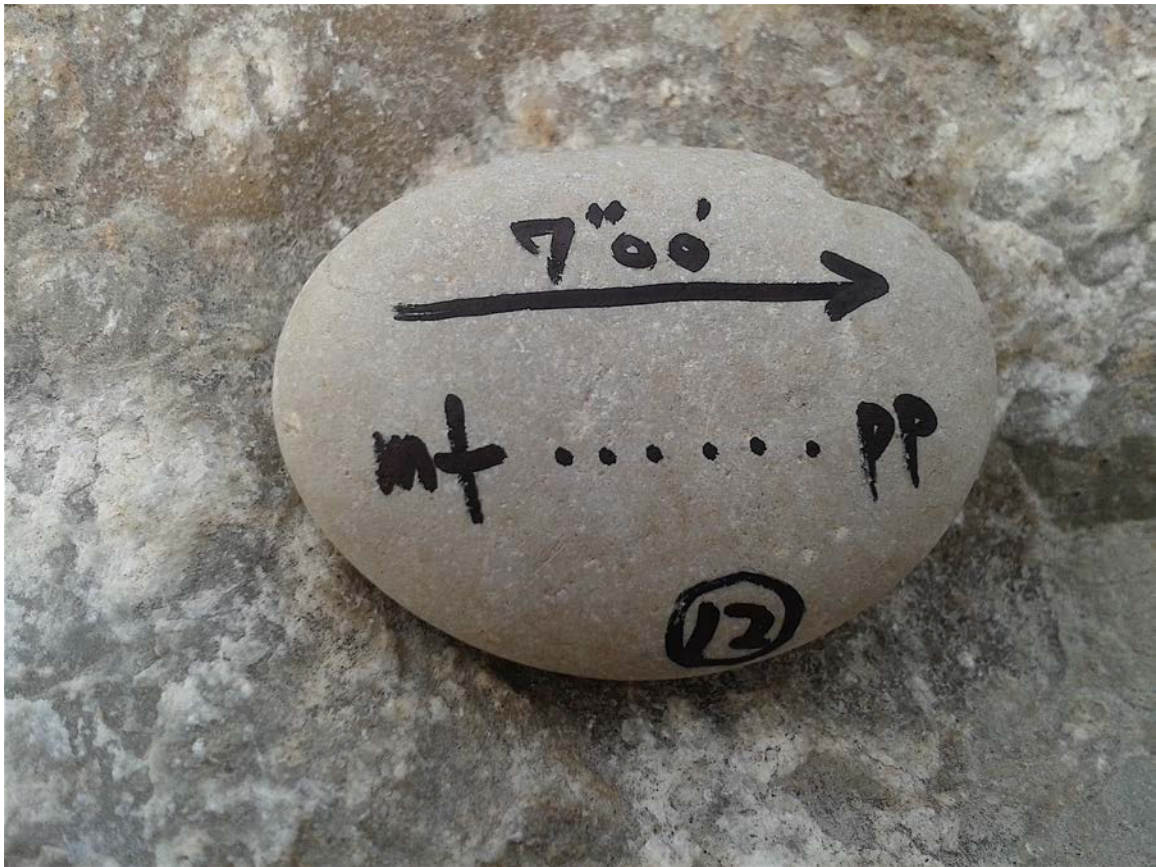
a way to communicate with the readers through emptiness (*mu*) and relativity (*ma*).

Figure 2.3: *tada no score no.12* [36]

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[36] It was composed and written on a stone somewhere in Austria.

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2.1.4 White Image

Figure 2.4: an employment of white image in *code of silence* album

I embody the idea of no-action in compositions and performances as well as visual designs towards my works. The *code of silence* album cover (Figure 2.4) expresses *white.* On the cover is a UV-varnished text that can hardly be seen without light reflections. My approach to my label (Melange Edition) designs recalls Bob Law's *Castle LX* (1980), Robert Rauschenberg's *White Painting [three panel]* (1951) and some other visual arts that attempted to display white as expressive on its own terms. Law's 'being nothing which is something' (Saltoun & Schubert, 1999, p.78) illuminates my approach to visual and aural practice that amplifies the being of material. By avoiding an imposition of any external image onto the music contained inside, the white then

creates *hima* that leads audiences to focus on the compositions. The intention is also evident in the *koso koso* publication (Figure 2.5). I am satisfied to find that the monolithic design magnifies my use of blankness which illustrates my central tenet of nothingness or unimpressiveness. The nothingness *contains.* It is a pregnant nothingness. I am very conscious to *do less* rather than *more* in order to explore *senu hima.*

Figure 2.5: こそこそ *(koso koso)* - a collection of my text compositions (2014, Bore Publishing)

I have examined *ma*, *mu* and *senu hima* through practical examples in this section. I extensively investigated and explored the notion of *emptiness* during my PhD research which has led me to pursue a minimal aesthetic and to perceive material as a pure entity. In the next section, I will discuss how I explored material in the *treow* sound installation.

2.2 *treow* - Approaching Materials

treow is an ancient noun for truth and tree. The implication of the word perfectly demonstrates this site-specific sound installation that employs trees as a critical part of the work. In *treow*, audiences are encouraged to *hug* and *listen* to trees that play musical tones generated by wind (Figure 1.6). *treow* concerns the site (space) as one of the key properties that defines the piece in relation to other factors.
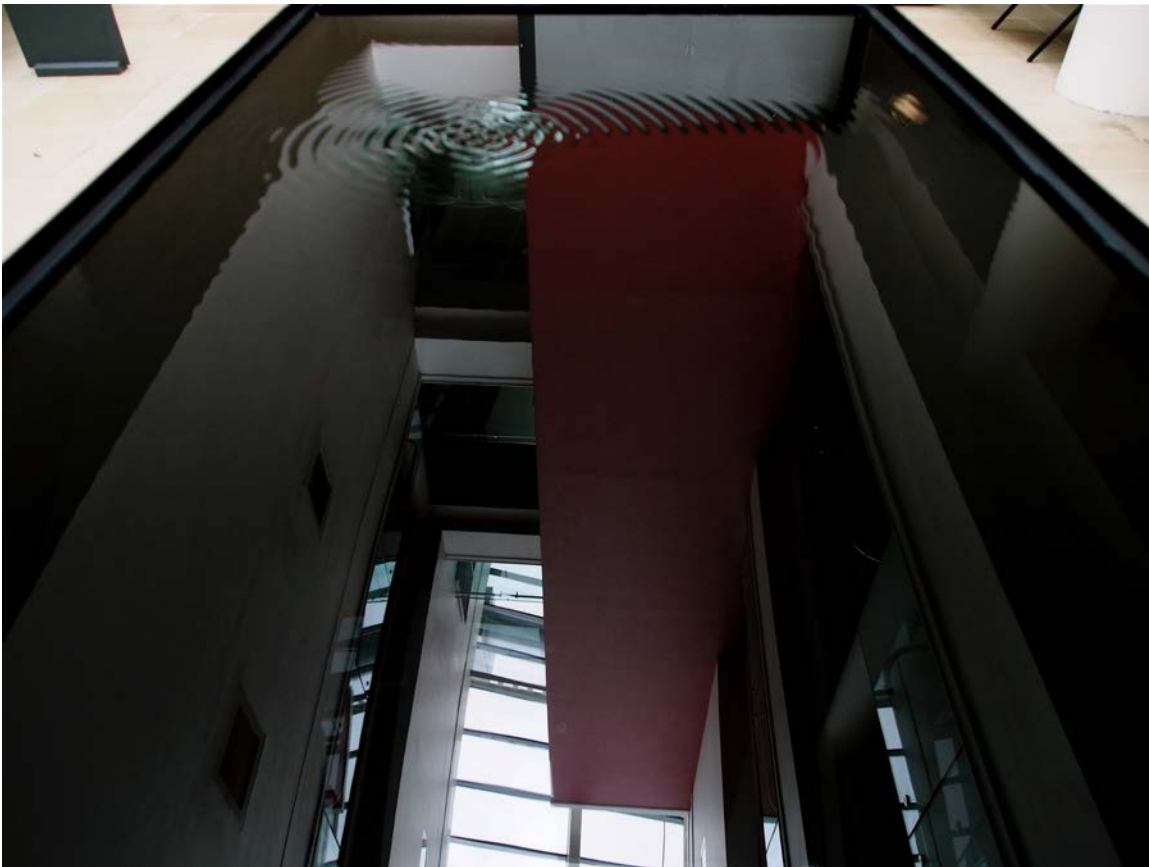

Figure 2.6: cymatic patterns in *RadiAT* sound installation

Previously to *treow*, I had produced several sound installations that considered materials, phenomena and their relations. For example, *RadiAT* (Figure 2.6) investigated cymatic visual patterns caused by vibrations of different frequencies. Here, a sine tone composition was constructed by a geiger counter detecting levels of

radioactivity in the air which was played through four speaker cones laid underneath a water pool. Different frequencies produced morphing images of ripple patterns on the water's surface. The piece transformed sound waves into visual waves through physical propagation. *1→5* used electronic motors and magnets that generated electromagnetic fields in order to move small objects and to cause sounds. These examples illustrate my employment of materials in order to perceive natural phenomena. Both works critically illuminate my approach to small ideas (or facts) and its perception.

I co-organised a weekly hacking platform *HudHack* and various workshops at The University of Huddersfield between 2012 and 2014. These opportunities helped me to digest diverse approaches and practices in response to materials and phenomena. Chiefly, Minoru Satō's kinetic object and electromagnetic field workshop, and Jez Riley French's field recordings of metal fence wires influenced the initial concepts of *treow*. Satō's radical approach to phenomenology and process, and French's recording suspended metal fences enabled me to think simply in manifesting sonic elements in my works.

2.2.1 String

I am fascinated by strings as a material. I am interested in their microtonality and sustainability as instruments which led me study various instruments including the Indian sitar and Japanese shamisen in the past. As explained briefly in 1.3.3, I performed *Lucier's Music on a Long Thin Wire* several times during my PhD period (Figure 2.7). On each occasion, the piece produced broad ranges of frequencies enforced by a strong electromagnetic field. Lucier had initially developed the piece as a performative instrument. After several performance attempts, he came to the conclusion that it must stand by itself. He comments that,

... I played the wire several times as a solo piece and once as a duet with David Rosenboom in Toronto. When Don Funes asked me to make a work for his Live Electronic Music Ensemble in Potsdam, New York, I invited his players to feed their synthesizer signals into the wire. I was not happy with any of these performances, however; the music never went beyond a kind of poetic improvisation. I finally decided to remove my hand from the musical process. (Lucier, 1992)

This interestingly recalls Radigue's comment that, 'you drive sounds, but then, they sing together without you' (0.2) which reflects a similar idea in *treow*'s autonomy and homogeneity.

Figure 2.7: *Music on a Long Thin Wire* (Lucier, 1977) performed in Cookes Studio, Cumbria (2013)

My first attempt at *Music on a Long Thin Wire* employed a hand-made monochord whose string was approximately one metre. The experimentation did not create any aural output but only dangerous sparks. A few more attempts made me notice that one or two metres of wire would not be sufficient to drive a signal. This result, though, triggered ideas for my *box of austere* (Figure 2.8), a small self-made instrument

consisting of one or two tunable piano strings. I made two *box of austere* instruments out of one old shamisen. These strings are driven by a E-Bow that directs electromagnetic fields to produce electronic sustained tones. I use this instrument to perform with sustained tones and to drive small parametric shifts of synthesisers. The technical environments of E-Bow and *Music on a Long Thin Wire* are 'very close but not exactly equivalent'; a E-Bow 'relies on feedback using two transducers whereas *Music on a Long Thin Wire* stimulates the interaction between the oscillating wire and magnet' (M. Bokowiec, personal communication, February 12th, 2015). I plan to integrate the technologies of both *Music on a Long Thin Wire* and the *box of austere* into a new piece in the future.

Figure 2.8: *box of austere* instrument

I enjoy constructing my own instrument as I can make something that contains only what I need. The method I use in *composition* is similar between score making, performance, installation and DIY processes. In this sense, my DIY aesthetic does not share much with the larger DIY culture which tends to deal with *more* ideas and knowledge. When I co-ran a hacking workshop *HudHack* at the university, I tried to create a platform where any person could share and discuss their interests rather than only experts expanding their skills. I enjoy working in such an environment, however, it is quite rare for me to meet someone who shares my minimal aesthetic in DIY culture. I am interested in refining one *thing* (capability, object, idea etc.) which, to me, is the hardest task in creating art works.

Strings have been used as the main materials in a diverse range of sound works including Carsten Stabenow's *Tilt/Line* (2012), Paul Panhuysen's *The Mechanical Orchestra* (1994) and Max Eastley's aeolian harp installations. These works likewise deal with the extended musical possibilities of strings outside of equal temperament. I am also fascinated by the more instrumental deployments of strings carried out by artists such as Ellen Fullman and Panhuysen, however, this was not explored in the portfolio and is one of the areas I would like to investigate in the future.

In *treow*, I work with vibration phenomena to create micro music using strings. *treow* employs a piano wire, contact mikes, transducers, wooden boxes, compressor, amplifier, sine wave generator, mixer and trees. The technical research and experimentation continued for a few months until I finally found a system that worked. A fraction of change in the parameters and material positioning seemed to invoke radical shifts in the sound signal which I had to control. The piano wire between the trees incites nodal movements when a strong wind arrives, which directly correlates with what one hears. The accelerating and decelerating tones are totally dependent on

the wind that blows at the site. Hence, this indeterminate phenomenon is directly dependent on the circumstances of the weather. The audio signal is subtle and occasionally almost inaudible. This piece illuminates my sonic aesthetic that embodies material and space in order to produce autonomous sound. Material and space are integral to my works, and as equally valued as sound.
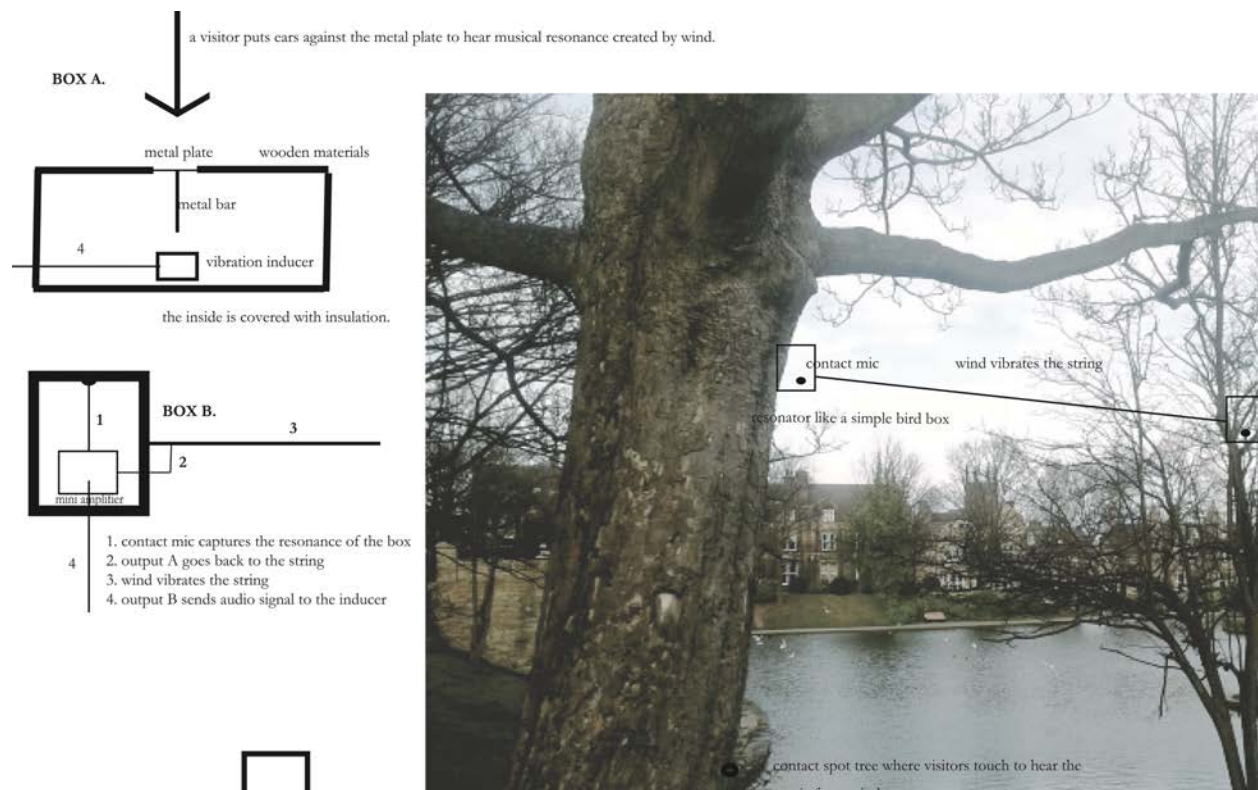
Figure 2.9: a part of the first schematic of *treow*

Figure 2.9 shows the initial structure of *treow* that employs a metal plate as seen in Laurie Anderson's *The Handphone Table* (1979-), Glenn Boutler's NHS Hull Wilberforce Centre installation (2008-11) or Markus Kison's *Touched Echo* (2007-2009). It embodies the transmission attributes of sound via bodily contact. Here, sound is reproduced by a player, and then, routed to vibrate the metal plate. By one's elbows making contact

with the plate, the audio signal travels to the cranial cavities that act as speakers enabling sound to be heard.[37]

The protection of the equipment was a primary problem as *treow* was to be installed outside in an open space. Boulter and Anderson's pieces were designed for inside display where total protection from external damage was possible. In the case of *treow*, being situated outside, I had to shelter the equipment properly without losing the sensitive contact point between the metal surface and elbow. On top of that, these examples of works only re-played audio materials which required much less space than what I intended to do with *treow*. The budget was another obstacle. It was not sufficient enough to purchase such fragile and complex technology. *treow* sought more un-damageable and site-specific designs. I also anticipated a freer circumstance where more than one person could experience the speaker trees at one time. Gradually, the idea of *hug-a-tree* came into my mind.

The most recent *treow* system requires two powerful transducers to activate the trees as a sound system (Figure 2.10). Here, the wire's nodal movement, which is relative to the wind's texture, wire length and other natural occurrences creates small sound signals. I use contact microphones to pick up the signal which is then routed down to the compressor, filter, amplifier and mixer. The audio signal is played through transducers attached to the surface of one tree. As the contact microphones are located on the same tree as the transducers, feedback occurs, intervenes with the signal circuit and generates occasional howling noises. I have no scientific statistics on how trees transmit sound differently. Density, size, surface thickness, texture, moisture

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[37] *Handphone Table* schematics, 1971, Anderson, Retrieved from https://hapstancedepart.wordpress.com/2012/06/02/and-i-said-who-is-this-really-anomalous-visits-with-laurie-anderson/

and other parameters must affect the capability of audio transmission. Different rehearsals and various locations resulted in distinct sound outcomes.
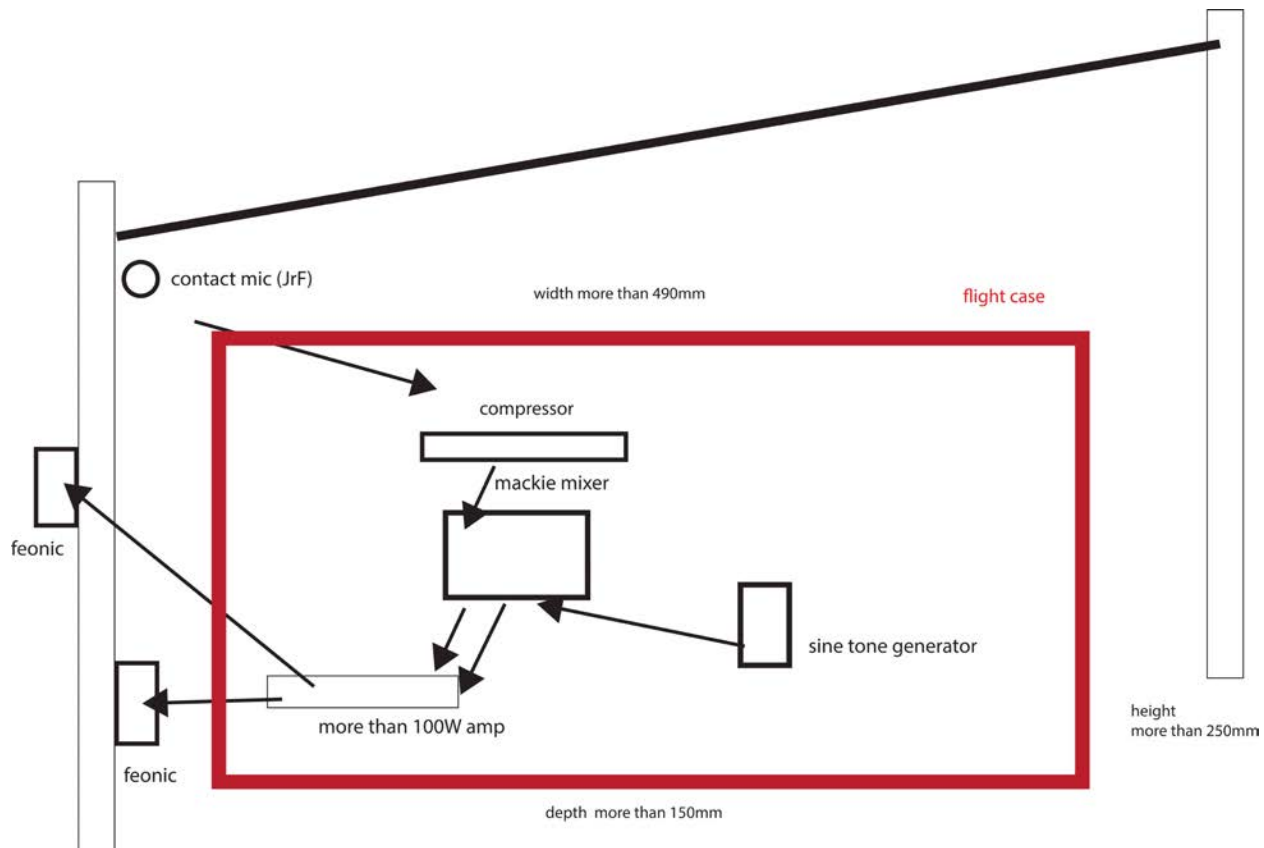
Figure 2.10: the most recent schematic of *treow*

2.2.2 Perception

When the wind is persistent, one can hear sporadic patterns or continual tones. I had continual gusts in two rehearsals, but in the first public performance, the weather was sunny and clear with no wind. What then became more engaging was the appreciation of listening that dealt with almost nothing. My works often examine these discreet events that are sometimes hard to perceive. As Sandback emphasises, a work is a combination of illusion and fact. In my practice, the experience is in the dichotomy of presence and absence, and hearing and not hearing. However, it is a significant

challenge to maintain such a peculiar aesthetic in a site-specific environment that engages with the public. Perhaps, the hug-a-tree gesture helped audiences to meet with my experimental practice, benefiting from the tangibility of the physical and tactile interaction. When the piece was performed at Greenhead Park in Huddersfield, diverse groups of people came to visit *treow* and listened to the sound carefully. Hugging gestures and active listening made audiences aware of small occurrences in the site, providing us with opportunities to recapture the space - the world surrounding us.

A sound installation like *treow* is probably perceived differently from one instance to another. It is not at all important for audiences to have a conceptual understanding of my work and practice to enjoy the work. However, if *treow* was set up in music festivals where audiences are familiar with my concept, the listening experience may become more prescribed. Does the knowledge prevent audiences from a pure experience as an expectation becomes hierarchical? Is active listening the result of certain knowledge or that of the least knowledge? I like to think that my work responds to a situation and space, instead of limiting understanding to one prescribed conclusion.

2.3 *grade two / grade two extended* - Approaching Text

2.3.1 *Kanji* System

grade two and *grade two extended* are the related compositions created for the *next to nothing* album[38] and I will examine them as examples of my approach to text. Both compositions comprise multiple words derived from a group of *kanji* characters in grade two school exercise books (Figure 2.11). The idea derives from my cultural interest in the logographic attributes of *kanji* ideograms. Each *kanji* character describes a word and possesses one or more meanings. By combining these characters, a new word is established as in 人間 (1.1.2). For another instance, 空 means sky and 気 means

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[38] A trio album by Bruno Duplant, Dominic Lash and myself (Another Timbre, 2014).

energy, and the amalgamation of the two 空気 means air. Different groups of *kanji* are allocated to each school grade to learn and practice. The grouping is dependent on the level of complexity of the *kanji* characters. Therefore, the exercise books list *kanji* without citing the contextual relationships between them, making the lists utterly random. The *kanji* in Figure 2.11, reading from top to bottom and right to left in order, mean 姉 big sister, 妹 little sister, 引 pull, 雲 cloud, 園 garden, 遠 far, 黄 yellow and so on. I liked the juxtaposition of literal randomness and unintentional nonsense, and decided to integrate these into the *grade two* text compositions.

Figure 2.11: a *kanji* exercise book - a text source for *grade two*

2.3.2 Score

The two *grade two* pieces are developed using various constraints. *grade two* follows the musical scale of CDEFGAB (Figure 2.12). I am drawn to the literal nature of this scale system probably because music education in Japan uses the solfège method[39]. I am aware of CDEFGAB within words such as li<u>g</u>ht, bl<u>a</u>nk or m<u>a</u>king when I employ texts in scores for musicians. This is the musical notion in literature which I am currently interested in. CDEFGAB within the text are outlined for performers to play, yet, other musical decisions such as registers remain open in order to avoid too much circumscription and closing-off of other potential outcomes. Keeping a great number of open decisions in the scores invites different approaches but also create confusion. I have experienced a couple of occasions during the PhD research where I presented my scores and immediately recognised uninterestedness or boredom in performers' faces, which clearly implied 'is that it?', and then, they tried to do something more than the score had informed them to do.

One specific type of acoustic phenomenon that I had in mind in *grade two* was that of the accidental beating patterns. As three performers follow similar notations, such phenomena may happen at any moment. In our realisation, I deliberately performed with long sustained tones that gave more chance for other frequencies to join in to create frequency differences, which we succeeded in at several points of the piece. The score, as opposed to Lucier's facilitation of beating patterns predetermined in scores, invites this aural phenomena only by chance. When I am a performer of such a score, I intend the phenomenon to happen which naturally informs me of a specific way of performing. If this piece is performed by other players, I am not disappointed even if no beating pattern occurs.

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[39] A pitch description with Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti.

grade two extended examines the opposite approach. Here, each performer has a specific task. One performer creates a sentence from randomly juxtaposed words that then become his performance instructions. The other two pick one word out of choices and treat it as their performance instruction. In their cases, only one note calculated according to the guidance is maintained for the duration of ten minutes. Performers play their ten minutes independently and alone. Nothing is expected to interconnect. However, sound elements emerge into one experience and try to establish a coherent sense in listening. This transformative attribute of sound is a very crucial aspect of the piece.

alternate
light
think
line
height
country
black
now
ability
details
making
order
stasis
city
feeling

8-12 minutes

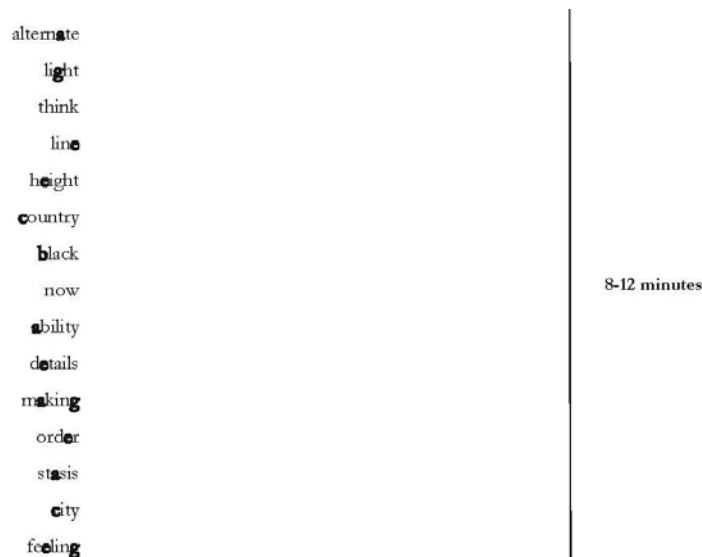Figure 2.12: a notation system in *grade two*

2.3.3 Time

My text scores often encompass time references. For instance, *ka/ga/ku* is a six minute piece divided into four sections, each of which contains distinct tasks for performers to undertake. *grade two* is eight to twelve minutes in duration but this is only an approximate value. The instructions for the piece indicate that each performer is to go

through the thirty-two words in the score. Each word accommodates either no musical note (spot etc.) or one to three note(s) (we__ak__, s__elf__, f__eelin__g etc) to be performed. As only some of the thirty-two sections to be performed contain pitch, so the music anticipates no-action wherein one *performs silence,* corresponding to s*enu hima.*

My compositions are divided into four categories:

1 contains global time schedule, tasks freely performed within the piece.
grade two, con.de.structuring etc.

2 contains sections, requires a time-keeping device, tasks freely performed within sections.
ka/ga/ku, Espèces d'espaces 03 etc.

3 contains no time schedule. finish when everyone completes their tasks.
koso koso, The Tortoise And The Crane, PPM book etc.

4 contains no time schedule but needs a counting system. finish when everyone completes their tasks.
object performance, an dt wo etc.

Where a time device is neglected, we process movements according to an individual perception of time (pace, *ma*). Frey comments:

> In performance, I don't use the metronome (or sometimes, I use it, but not to play with it, just to remind occasionally the tempo), but it is a mixture of your tempo feeling, using the ears, making little adjustments. I try to play as good as possible in the right tempo, but other musicians (with sometimes other tempi) are also part of the piece, and it will happen a floating and shifting rhythmic landscape [sic]. (J. Frey, personal conversation, October 22nd, 2014)

Hughes also writes:

> Playing without a time-keeping device inevitably leads to inaccurate time keeping; one player's ten minutes will be another's eight or twelve minutes and removing the stopwatch can make the players consider the thingness of a composition in a different way. (S. Hughes, Personal Communication, November 25th, 2014)

Metronome tempo markings and bars are never used in my works. However, I often employ a personal counting pace (*ma*) in works such as *object performance*. This is a step away from forms of time-keeping that determines everyone's pace, where the subjective perception of time, space and relativity instead creates the timeframe. One's pace (tempo) defines *ma* that considers the relationship between things and within a thing. Embodying such a sense of time in compositional works directly considers *ma* as time expanded into the spatial matter.

2.3.4 Remote And Live

The *next to nothing* album consists of four tracks. Two of them are composed by me and the other two scores by Duplant and Lash respectively, both of which investigate construction and integration of events. We added our individual parts, discussed issues and shared ideas remotely. Duplant's *a field, next to nothing* instructed, 'other performer(s) follow the lead performer with a note of exactly, or close to, the same pitch and intensity. This should either overlap with the lead performer's note, or follow after less than one or more second delay', whilst Lash's *three players, not together* asked, 'each player records one section and sends it to the next player, who then sends it to the last player (so one section will be recorded in the order 1, 2, 3; the next 2, 3, 1 and the last 3, 1, 2)'. In both methods, the first performer added a part, the next listened to the first part and overlaid a new part, and so on, gradually building up the whole. This approach allowed us to be interactive and interdependent. On the contrary, *grade two* and *grade two extended* suggested a parallel recording in where performers would add individual parts without listening to the others. I deliberately chose not to re-record any element of the performance so that a feeling of *live-ness* was retained in the pieces. In keeping with the aesthetics of *wabi-sabi*, I include mistakes and accidents as natural musical occurrences.

Playing physically together in the space inevitably creates a form of homogeneity. Duplant's *a field, next to nothing* was performed live by Lash, Frey and myself at the CD launch party in Cafe OTO[40]. The concert engendered a moment-by-moment listening on the part of the performance that playing remotely lacks. I performed with an AKS synthi to lead the piece which Lash (double bass) and Frey (clarinet) followed. Frey has perfect pitch and guessed most of my notes correctly but the microtonal nature of the old synthesizer and clarinet generated accidental beating frequencies. Then, Lash was more radical and subversive, performing with much lower registers that resulted in additional harmonic relations.

2.4 *Espèces d'espaces 03/04* - Approaching Form

2.4.1 *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*

This section discusses my notion of musical forms by introducing *Espèces d'espaces 03* and *Espèces d'espaces 04* from the album *Espèces d'espaces*[41] (Figure 2.13). These compositions explore my approach to micro events and sustained events. Soon after I contributed a composition, *presque rien*[42] based to Frances Ponge's prose for Bruno Duplant's Rhizome.s label, Duplant asked me if I wanted to work on four ten-minute pieces in respect to the Perec's book *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*[43] that examined the functionality of text and space.

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[40] Jürg Frey and Friends, Cafe OTO, London, November 3rd 2014.
[41] The duo album by Bruno Duplant and myself (Suppedaneum, 2014).
[42] A compilation album (Rhizome.s, 2013).
[43] *Espèces d'espaces* in original French title.

Figure 2.13: *Espèces d'espaces* album

2.4.2 *Espèces d'espaces 03*

Espèces d'espaces 03 is made up of characters (Figure 2.14) that need to be interpreted as voice or sound events. Following *Pulse*, the score of which contains different shapes and symbols that determine how to perform koto, this piece employs nonliteral characters as notations to which each performer must bring their own performance proposals. The score contains a large amount of emptiness that anticipates space and silence, approaching a micro music where events happen sparsely.

It was our first collaboration and I made the score without knowing much about Duplant's approach and aesthetics. This factor was an impetus for me to develop this work in the most impersonal way. The typography and letter notations suggested

timbres, textures, dynamics and so on. I was interested in how a dialogue would emerge using only strange letter characters.

P2

ᾶ   € â   €œè   ¨

€è'   ‰ã ®   å·   ¥å   ¦è   €

...

â   € ã ƒšã   ƒ¬ã   ƒƒã

,   ¯ã   «ã ᾶ ᾶ,   ᾶ ¨ã   € æ

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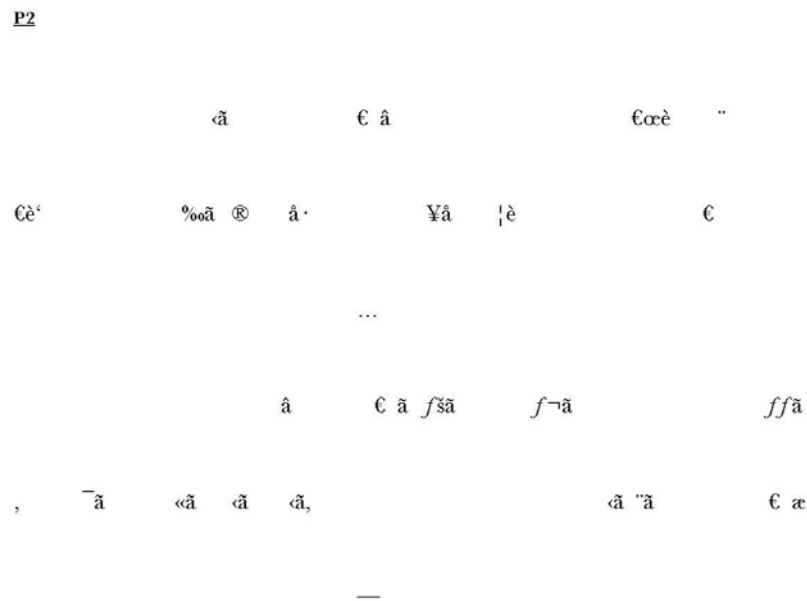
Figure 2.14: a notation system in *Espèces d'espaces 03*

2.4.3 Micro Events

I played non-pitched noises; pingpong balls, speaker cones, cable hums and a DIY noise machine whilst Duplant used musical tones; voice, electronics and percussion. I was happy that we both listened actively. In realising this piece, I noticed that working remotely could create a particular environment to contemplate solitude. Our synchronised and desynchronised patterns of sound crafted a sense of micro form. In the creation of these patterns, active listening was essential. A quarter of the way through the piece, there is a long period of silence then a high pitched frequency is introduced, followed by a series of quiet events. When an almost inaudible high note emerges from silence, its subtlety encourages contemplation of what is actually there

to be perceived. Listening to such a situation is very active and inquiring. This is an important experience for me that happens in micro event music.

Perec was interested in jigsaw puzzles. He wrote in the preamble to his book *A User's Manual*:

> The perceived object … is not a sum of elements to be distinguished from each other and analyzed discretely, but a pattern, that is to say a form, a structure: The element's existence does not precede the existence of the whole, it comes neither before now after it, for the parts do not determine the pattern, but the pattern determines the parts … (Perec, 2008)

Each piece of the jigsaw is a part of the whole. When the two are together, the one ceases to be one, but instead, the two become the one and so on. He continues: 'In isolation, a puzzle piece means nothing' (Ibid.). The *Espèces d'espaces* album aurally and visually corresponds to Perec's thinking. *Espèces d'espaces 01* is presented as a jigsaw puzzle (Figure 2.15) and *Espèces d'espaces 04* is printed on the back of a fragment of a map. The label manager Joseph Clayton Mills, who devised the album design, explains that it 'invites the listener / reader to think of everything as a puzzle that needs to be pieced together from disparate parts that may or may not all fit together' (J.C. Mills, personal communication, February 13th, 2015). He explains the use of map pieces,

> … Is it a part of a whole? What determines the relationship of part to whole? … I wanted each of the maps to be different from all of the others, depicting a different slice of space in a different style and in different languages … What kind of puzzle would that make? What kind of space would it map? Are they all mapping the same space? … it works somewhat like the jigsaw puzzle, except one only has one piece, different from all the others. Which is kind of like any given person, or any given moment, or any given sound, or any given word, or any given space … (Ibid.)

Mill's indeterminate choices of visual materials highlight the language, the space, and the relationship between the local and global. 'Is it a part of a whole?' and 'do they fit

or misfit together?' inquire sensibilities of micro events. I deliberately create missing parts in my works to construct a particular situation. Missing fragments are critical parts of my works that maintain the experience of emptiness. This incompleteness is akin to an unfinished puzzle where the table or other surface is still visible in places beneath the puzzle itself.

Figure 2.15: *Espèces d'espaces 01* score as a form of jigsaw puzzle

2.4.4 *Espèces d'espaces 04*

The score of *Espèces d'espaces 04* includes five sentences that invite events for no-input mixers and feedback. For instance, 'horizontally' is stretched out vertically with a slightly diagonal sense across the page (Figure 1.2). *Space* appears four times with various adjoining texts such as 'opera' or 'filter'. I composed this piece as a duo and anticipated a series of sustained tones slowly morphing into each other. Our

performance opted towards much louder and rougher timbres than I had expected but the form was not so far away from how I had envisaged it.

I extracted words from pages three, four and nine of *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* which expressed Perec's reflections on space which I identified with. Words and spaces were derived from the original context apart from one section - 'filter'. The original text was FULLER and the minor deviation occurred because I happened to make a spelling mistake in the first place and kept it as an accidental occurrence. I often leave this type of incidental *asobigokoro* (desire to play / a playful moment) (1.6.2) within scores to introduce an element of *fault*. The capital letters were transformed into lowercase due to my personal and intuitive preference. By extracting texts in this way, I attempt to objectify words and spaces so that they can be perceived in alternative ways. This is where, as a composer, I begin perceiving musical ideas in text and space.

2.4.5 Sustained Events

I am interested in the musical elements I perceive in text. *grade two* highlights CDEFGAB within words. *Espèces d'espaces 03* develops events in letter shapes, and in *Espèces d'espaces 04*, I employ Perec's significant attention to space to structure music. I produced a continual noise on VCS3 synthesisers to manipulate textures with low frequencies, attempting *void volume*. The timbral control of these sustained tones was different from that of *an dt wo* or *fade in and out procedure* where the tones maintained the purity and sameness over time. In this piece, the timbre of the sustained tones was inconsistent and transformed throughout. After the section, 'a fairly strictly horizontal', there comes, 'space opera'. I had expected a literal sense of operatic and dynamic events from Duplant so I employed small noises as if these were commenting from behind the opera stage. However, his sonic intention towards this

section was similar to mine. Though our reading was remote and actions were created independently, we produced coherent sustained phrases that resulted in *Espèces d'espaces 04.*

Most of my compositions and installations contain sustained tones that cumulatively change over the course of time. Drones in *jiwa jiwa, gen* and *e.a.c.d.* transform listener's attention from one point to another over the a long period of duration whilst *jili jili* and *an dt wo* enjoys different perceptions within the consistent tones. I also examine repetitive pulses in the same way as sustained events in works such as *Architectural Model Making* (Hughes, 2014) and *fade in and out procedure. gussuri* and *gnome* juxtapose fragments of sustained events to create an overall continuity. My installation pieces employ continual events in order to highlight *changes.* Locally, one hears diverse layers of sustained tones in *Espèces d'espaces 04.* Listening experience develops in a rhizomatous way which suggests no direction to follow. From each root, multiple stems advance and evolve in multidimensional paths. This view enhances the non-hierarchical perspective in the experience of music. It is in the moment-to-moment engagement that sustained events reveal pregnant emptiness.

I have articulated how these two scores inspired micro and sustained tone compositions, and have intended to illuminate the value of listening. I would now like to describe my strategy for active listening by examining my composition *gnome*.

2.5 *gnome* - Approaching Listening

Gnome is a composition for piano and sine tones, and considers approaches to invoke active listening. I met the pianist Lisa Ullen at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in 2013 when she and Phillip Thomas performed my composition *ka/ga/ku*. In the autumn of 2014, I was a composer-in-residence at EMS in Stockholm where we

collaborated again to pursue the idea of silence and listening. It was during this residency that *gnome* took shape.

2.5.1 Piano

Due to their rich and harmonious characteristics, I find piano sounds to be suggestive of theatricality and emotion which opposes my sonic aesthetic. When I was commissioned to make a piano piece *ka/ga/ku*, I spent time exploring what I might enjoy about the instrument. Having looked at Christopher Fox's *Thermogenesis* (2005), Morton Feldman's *Two Pianos* (1957) as well as Cage and Takemitsu's prepared piano experiments, I pressed and depressed piano keys, and prepared the piano to find sounds that I wanted to employ in the new piece. After all, it was its pure sound and decay that I wanted to explore, qualities that I find in piano music by Laurence Crane, Frey or Lucier. The decay of a piano note demonstrated such a degree of absence in terms of something *fading away*. I was particularly interested in how the notes remained present for quite a while without the use of the sustain pedal. I wanted to allow the nature of this decay to be more obvious and active in *gnome*.

2.5.2 Silent Letter

As briefly discussed in 1.5.2, *gnome* provides a statement that evaluates silence. The score juxtaposes random words that contain silent letters, and at the same time, highlights the musical notation of CDEFGAB in the same way as *grade two*. Figure 2.16 is a piano section which contains the prose: 'A lamb knows, castle whistle and bridge listen, write a right gnome that signs climbing handsome ghost who knocks a knight knitting naught over night, writing with salmon and calf'. It is open as to whether this prose may influence the direction of a performance or not. This abstraction of text scores represents not a freedom but a 'responsibility' according to the composer Joseph Kudirka,

… is there really any freedom there? How is that more or less free than writing a specific pitch? Really, it just gives the performer a responsibility of choice ... think choosing is a responsibility… text can make things very, very specific, but also leave lots of choice. To just ask for 'a sound' really does allow almost any sound. The performer now has to ask themselves 'why am I making this sound and not another?'. This is a responsibility the composer has given them … (J. Kudirka, personal communication, February 13th, 2015)

He continues with a description of his personal approach,

… when I compose, I think something sort of like this: would any possibility be acceptable? If it's any possibility, I will just choose something with chance or make a decision that is easy. If the answer is that only some possibilities are acceptable, I leave that open. This gives the performer the responsibility to choose what is right for the piece which they can do the best … So, I don't really think that's like freedom; it's like being given a job to do something but not being told the best way to do it. (Ibid.)

This 'responsibility' is simply *listening* in my practice. We listen to the distance between the composer and performer. My intentions and concepts can happily be left unspoken so that the score approaches performers on its own terms. Here, we perform the texts non-hierarchically as a composer-performer-listener. It is also my method of *sharing ideas* between the composer and performer. Rather than discussing my scores through terms such as authority, interpretation, freedom or responsibility, for me, my scores are the means to *share* ideas. During the recording sessions for *gnome*, Ullen and I listened to each other, ourselves and the space we were in. Beating patterns frequently occurred between my sine tones and her piano with listening being intensified and the feeling of time being suspended in space. It hardly mattered who was leading the piece or causing tones and noises. The sense of homogeneity was exploited at Flykingen[44] where it was impossible to avoid noise disturbances from other parts of the building. In the end, these accidental noises enhanced the final composition.

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[44] A concert hall in Stockholm.
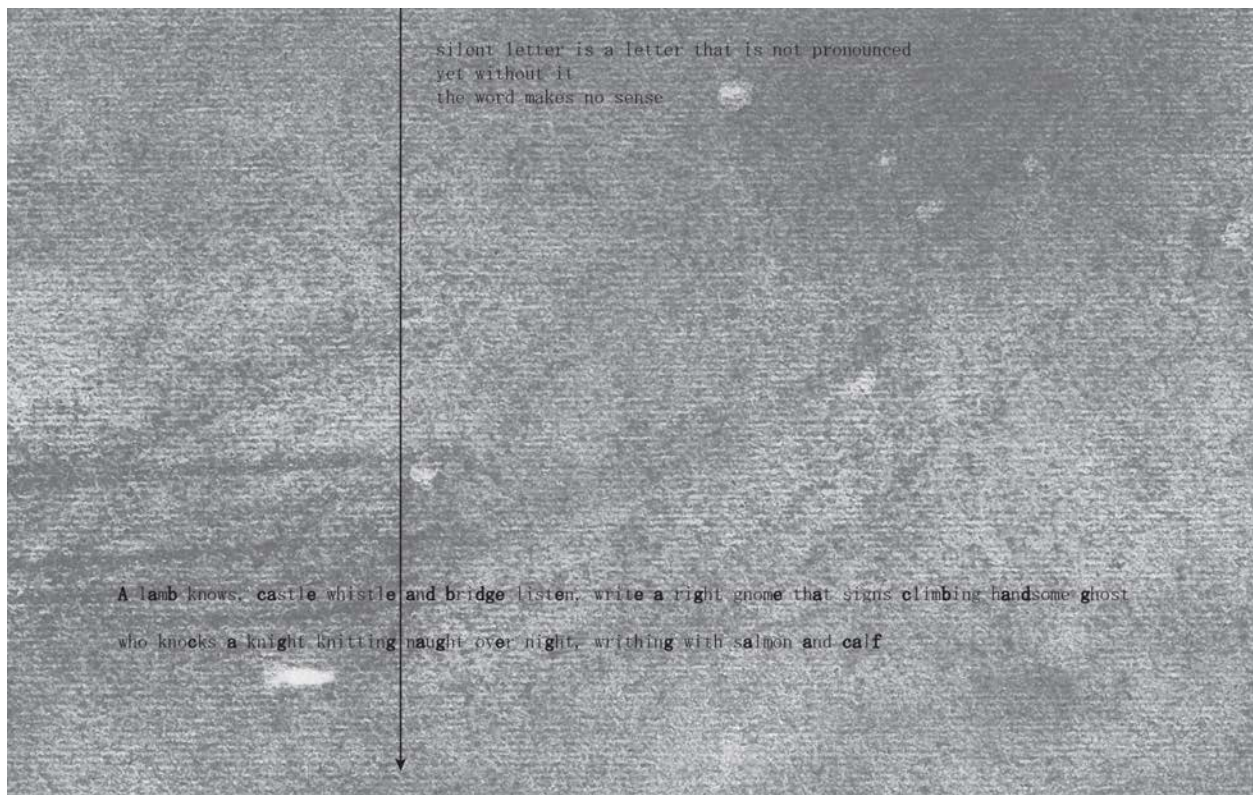
Figure 2.16: a piano part in *gnome*

2.5.3 Sound and Silence in Score

The score of *gnome* is coloured in various shades of grey. In the piano part, a vertical arrow points downwards crossing over a sentence whilst the sine tone section has a horizontal line in parallel to a sentence. The instruction 'make an individual reference to the arrow and the visual in the score' encourages performers to respond to the strength of grey and differences of typography of the score. I wanted these to suggest motion, texture, timbre, dynamics and whatever else could be related to temporal activities. By playing *not many* notes, this composition emphasised emptiness. The piano resonated in response to the space and sine tones, silence and space in the light of our active listening. Listening acutely to minute activities made us experience prominent motions within stasis, and stasis within motion. This 'timeless presence' allowed *gnome* to evolve in homogeneous manner.

2.6 *con.de.structuring* - Approaching Perception

2.6.1 Perception
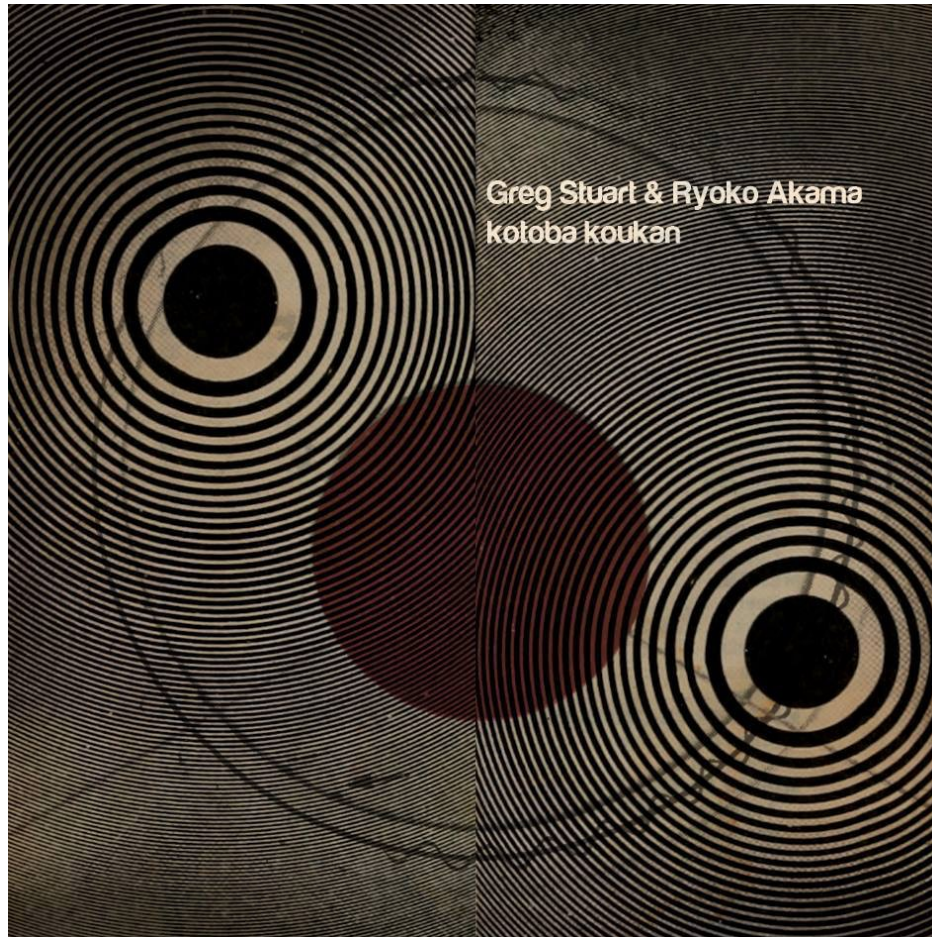
Figure 2.17: *kotoba koukan* album

In continuing to demonstrate the value of active listening in my work, I examine *con.de.structuring* to discuss different modes of perception arising as a result of listening. This work, for duo, was composed as the final part of the *kotoba koukan* album (Figure 2.17)[45] to complement the other three longer compositions that make up the project. I generally prefer composing pieces of longer duration in order to articulate emptiness within the work. However, having created several of short pieces during the last three years including *ka/ga/ku* and *an dt wo*, I began to define a

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[45] A duo album by Greg Stuart and myself (Crisis Records / Lengua de Lava Records, 2015).

method of constructing short forms that would still manipulate an idea of emptiness and be free from being restricted by time.

con.de.structuring takes as its starting point a quotation by John Berger from his BBC TV series *Ways of Seeing* (1972): 'It is as if the painting, absolutely still, soundless, becomes a corridor connecting the moment it represents with the moment at which you are looking at it, and something travels down that corridor at a speed greater than light, throwing into question our way of measuring time itself'. Here, I aim to articulate *gyō* and *sō* perception by applying a paradox towards sound qualified as *soundless.*

2.6.2 Soundless Sound

con.de.structuring provides a very simple set of instructions to the performers:

01 each performer predetermines three sounds that can be described as soundless

02 each performer plays three soundless sounds at least once in each minute. every sound should be played for ten seconds.

03 on only one occasion, each sound should be played for thirty-seven seconds.

04 when five minutes are complete, stay quietly till all performers finish their parts.

Each player prepares three *soundless* sounds that are performed for ten or thirty-seven seconds each minute. In order to perform *soundless* sounds, each performer has to consider what *soundless* can mean for them, be it in terms of timbre, volume or physical activity. Stuart created his part using heavily-processed field recordings which were intended 'to remove what was there and to create something else' (G. Stuart, personal communication, February 2nd, 2015). He approached the notion of soundlessness by collecting sounds that were not a product of performance but that of non-action. His atmospheric sounds were almost like synthetic white noises, yet containing deep and natural contexts within them. I produced my part with three micro

sounds; a high-pitched tone, hum-noise and an insect-like note, all created using a VCS3 and AKS synthi. I overcame the nuance of *soundless* by choosing the least enhanced sonorities. I wanted sounds that were isolated or lonely but nonetheless present. We both employed distinct sounds though the idea of *soundless* was taken into consideration when choosing them. Whilst I had expected a great level of silence or soundlessness, our actualisations were much clearer and playful and introduced overlapping *shin-gyō-sō* perceptions. When Stuart's field recordings override my synthetic noise, the music articulates corporeality (*shin*). Then, the absence steps in whilst the sound still lingers (*gyō*) till the deeper silence resonates still (*sō*). The balance of *gyō* and *sō* alters in each encounter with the piece within which many premises of motion are hidden but existent. Each iteration of the work is different in character as the levels of *gyō* and *sō* are by no means fixed but transformative.

2.6.3 Performers

This piece's minimalistic approach engages with *senu hima* which could be hugely influenced by the number of performers. I often use a phrase, 'for more than XX performers', where I am open to any circumstance. However, a simple score, to me, is likely to alter its result depending on the number of performers. I am interested in text scores that can be played by anyone or in any situation as exemplified by works such as Sam Sfirri's *natural at last* (2010)[46]. Scores by Sfirri are often specific in many ways, but at the same time, maintain a certain level of abstraction similar to works of Beuger and Frey. *con.de.structuring* follows in a similar vein. It is a duo performance in the realization in the portfolio which reveals absence and contrast. A trio is likely to be denser and a quartet will potentially be quite sonically imposing. In scores such as *koso koso*, the number of participants does not matter as much as each action is always constructed between two performers. However, in other cases, a larger number of

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[46] Sfirri's score series based on Samuel Beckett's quotations.

performers could results in unwanted complexities which loses *otsu* and *wabi-sabi* qualities which are more explicit in simpler forms. I would like to investigate if my scores could still envisage *emptiness* in big groups by working with larger ensembles in the future.

CONCLUSION

Throughout my PhD research, Japanese art, culture and its philosophy extensively helped me to understand more deeply Zeami's notion of where no-action is (*senu hima*). This empty field is an overlooked property, as my commentary and works demonstrate. This empty field is pregnant with possibilities and potential. This particular attention is an important area of research I would like to develop in the future within diverse categories of sonic practice. My experiments with these subjects with a broader sense of materials including text and space have gradually shifted towards the more minimal and abstract in the light of my view on emptiness. Now, I continue to investigate how I can most effectively consider these principles in further compositional works and installations.

Another important element has been my approach to subtle musical forms; micro events and sustained events, invite listening and perception. My musical practice emphasises *gyō* and *sō*, which allow time and space to be considered as one experiential matter. This again demonstrates the extraordinary notion of *ma* that creates a critical ground for my musical strategies. I have attempted to explore an homogeneous platform for listening to and perceiving sound, and as a result, *ma* has become an essential component of my compositional methodology and technique.

Having completed my portfolio of works, I currently appreciate that my experiments with sound and silence are a way of *sharing* the aesthetic of emptiness with other practitioners. Having several commissions for performances and compositions in the coming years, I would like to take these opportunities to address the exploration of my topics and concepts in different situations which are not restricted in their thinking towards space and time, that I feel, is a strong characteristic of my current works. I

would also like to continue to explore my ideas through publications for the Melange Edition label and Reductive Journal in which I have freedom to discuss my research subjects. There are also tours and projects I am involved with as a curator in the near future. This is an exciting avenue for me as I am able to contribute and disseminate my ideas, expand this particular field of research, and extend resources, links and networks.

The process to complete this portfolio and commentary has contextualised my intentions to create *music* through broader methods. Sustaining and reworking my musical principles has merely made me comprehend and value my interests more. Interest that I hope to enrich in future works.

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APPENDIX

01   transmigration

Ryoko Akama

Transmigration

for MMM...

Transmigration

Antagonism lies everywhere in our life. It provokes and fosters each other.
Within this piece, the elements of time and timelessness, of certainty and uncertainly, of determinacy and indeterminacy, of stability and unstability are fragmented as sound collaboration.
We are a part of the eternal organic continuity of life - **transmigration** - and the luna system influences all entities to the highest degree. We must admit, that is, succumb to it.

The idea of the composition comes from "*kyureki*", the old Japanese lunar calendar. Kyureki was made to remind you of time and life according to the four seasons of Japan and the lunar system.
Theoretically the score can start and end at any point within its circular graph system. However, this time we begin on the date - March 11th.
The identity of each instrument is *the moon*, *the time* and *the earth that contains….*

Once I was an evacuee. What I am is the result of the day - No regret.

Does everyone realise that ordinary things "*atarimae*" which we take for granted are the most extraordinary gifts we could possibly possess?

I did not. Now I do.

"..the important questions are answered by not liking only but disliking and accepting equally what one likes and dislikes. Otherwise there is no access to the dark night of the soul." quote by John Cage

Kyureki - Japanese old calender
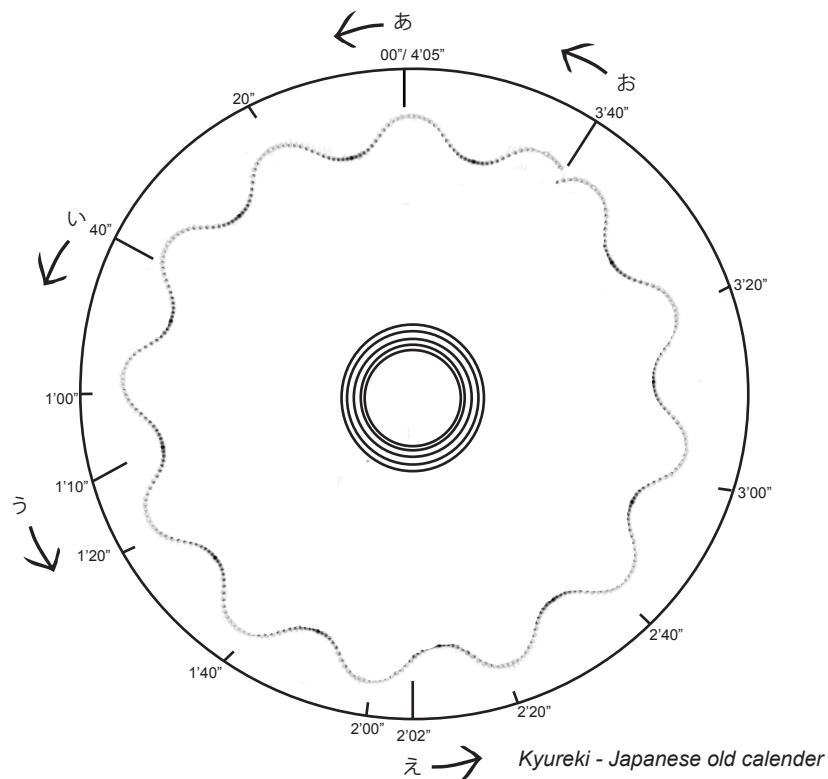
There are 5 sections - あ，い，う，え，お
The score starts at 00" and moves anti-clockwise through to 4'05".
The individual parts of the socre are given mainly on five-line staves.
Allow your mind to move as guided by the luna calender.

Each player has their own score, which contains instructions
for performance.

If possible, use only one stopwatch for precision. However
each player may use their own stopwatch.

あ(a)
duration of 40"   (00'00" - 00'40")
い(i)
duration of 30"   (00'40" - 01'10")
う(u)
duration of 52"   (01'10" - 02'02")
え(e)
duration of 1'38"   (02'02" - 03'40")
お(o)
duration of 25"   (03'40" - 04'05")

total duration 4'05"

new moon

full moon

lunar cycle
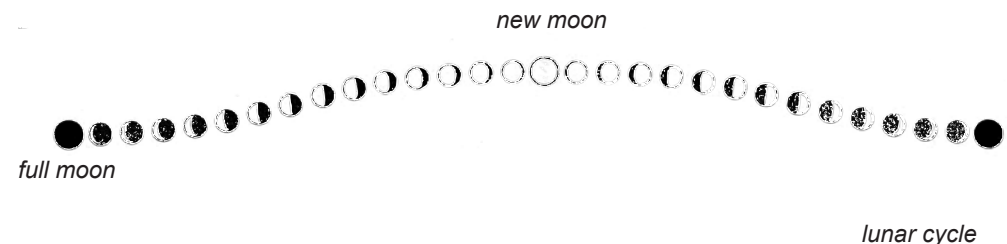
Alto Flute

あ(a)
duration of 40"   (00'00" - 00'40")
い(i)
duration of 30"   (00'40" - 01'10")
う(u)
duration of 52"   (01'10" - 02'02")
え(e)
duration of 1'38"   (02'02" - 03'40")
お(o)
duration of 25"   (03'40" - 04'05")
total duration 4'05"

Read notation traditionally.
The sequence of segments moves anti-clockwise.
A slur continues to the next segment.

Violin and flute enter together smoothly as a
stopwatch starts. Play with flow and least obviousity.
G is introduced at う and down to F in え. Most care is
requested in changing pitches.
Aim for continuity, taking as short a breath as possible
whilst maintaining a stable pitch timbre.
The image here is continuity of time but in timeless context.
Begin the piece by gradually fading in to *mezzopiano* and
finish by fading to niente.

legatissimmo
mp sempre
gliss. to G
gliss. to F

あ 00"/ 4'05"
お 3'40"
20"
い 40"
3'20"
1'00"
3'00"
1'10"
2'40"
う
1'20"
2'20"
1'40"
2'00" 2'02"
え

Violin

Violin and flute enter together smoothly as the stopwatch starts.
Pitch and timbre should be as stable as possible unless indicated otherwise.
Move onto the next section gracefully and subtly.
The violinist must listen to the flautist as to avoid coinciding changes of bow direction with the flautist's breaths.

Aim for continuity throughout.
Begin the piece gradually by fading in to *mezzopiano*. Never play louder than *mp*. Maintain the dynamic throughout.
Finish by fading to niente.

Instructions:
<u>Between 2'20" and 3'40"</u>

⊘²   (l.h.pizz.) Note on any open string at specified point to create slight attack with a left hand. The number above specifies how many strings are to be plucked.

<u>Between 1'40" and 2'40"</u>
Unstable - Between noise and harmonic sound, changing bow speeds and pressure (never louder than *mp*).

ord.   Play normally

distorted (molto sul tasto)   Noise sound produced by bowing above the fingerboard with slow bow speed (never louder than *mp*) .

<u>Between 2'40" and 3'20"</u>
Unstable. Change timbre twice at 2'40" and 3'00". Back to ord. at 3'20"

★   Different timbre from the previous note. Make sure the given pitch is clear.

Violin

あ(a)
duration of 40"   (00'00" - 00'40")
い(i)
duration of 30"   (00'40" - 01'10")
う(u)
duration of 52"   (01'10" - 02'02")
え(e)
duration of 1'38"   (02'02" - 03'40")
お(o)
duration of 25"   (03'40" - 04'05")
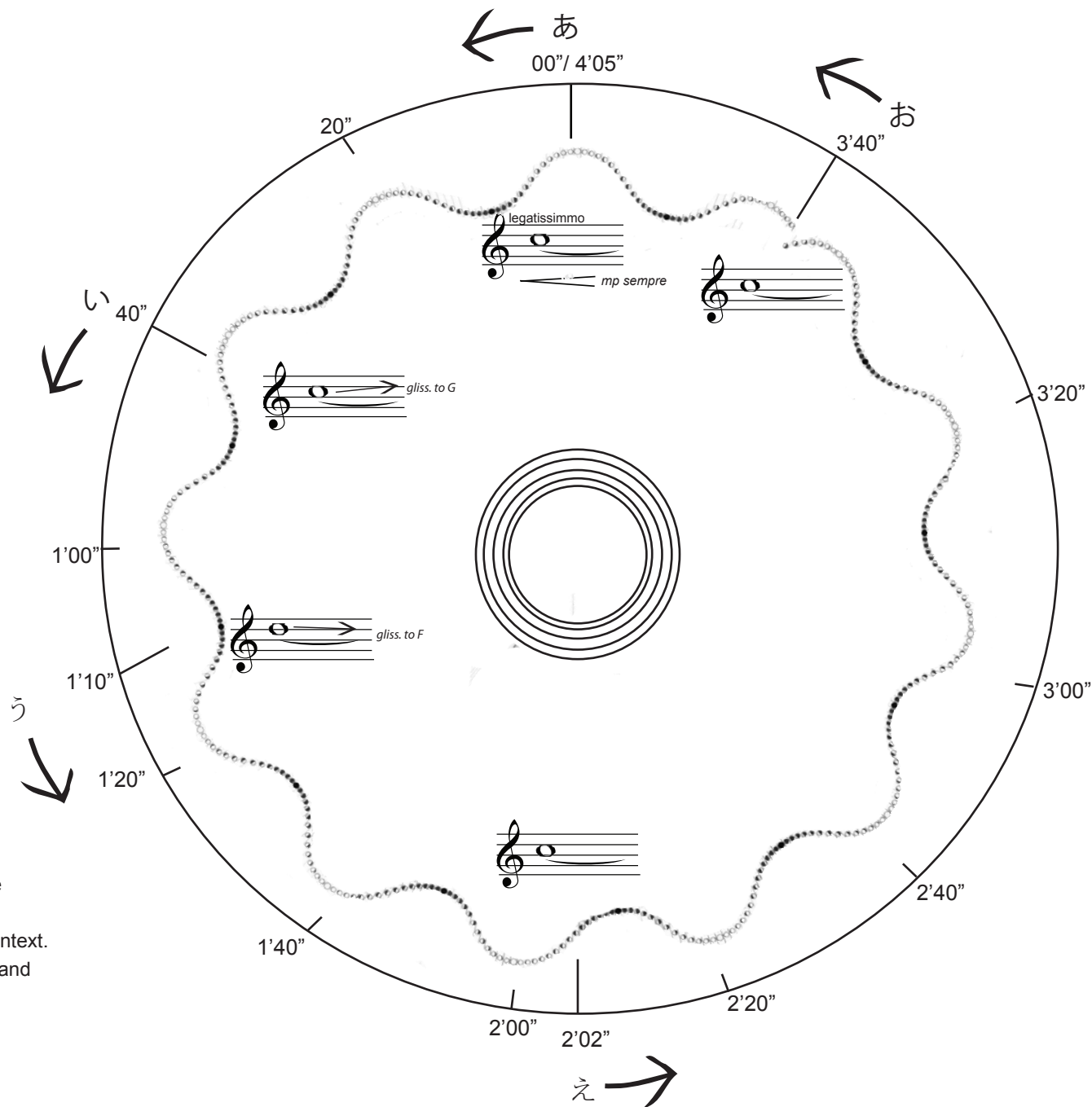total duration 4'05"

Every 20 seconds, when the lunar cycle
reaches a new moon, a change happens.
The D introduced at 20" should enter as
smoothly as possible.

read notation traditionally.
the sequence of segments moves anti-clockwise.

new moon

full moon

a violinist plays with a cyclic image of the moon

Piano

Play all notes and given instructions during あ，い，う，え and お for a specific duration. When no dynamic indication is given, the pianist should play between the range of *pianissimo(p)* and *mezzoforte(mf)*.

The pianist must coodinate a timing and tempo by herself, that is, she must position when to play events freely within each section. However the relation of notes on bass and treble clef needs to be concerned.
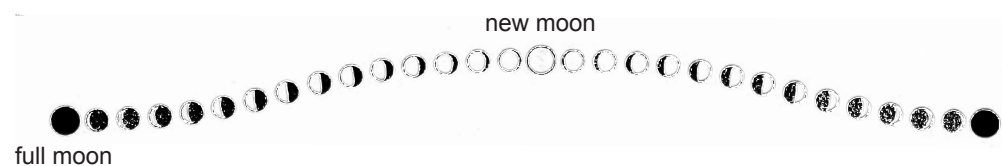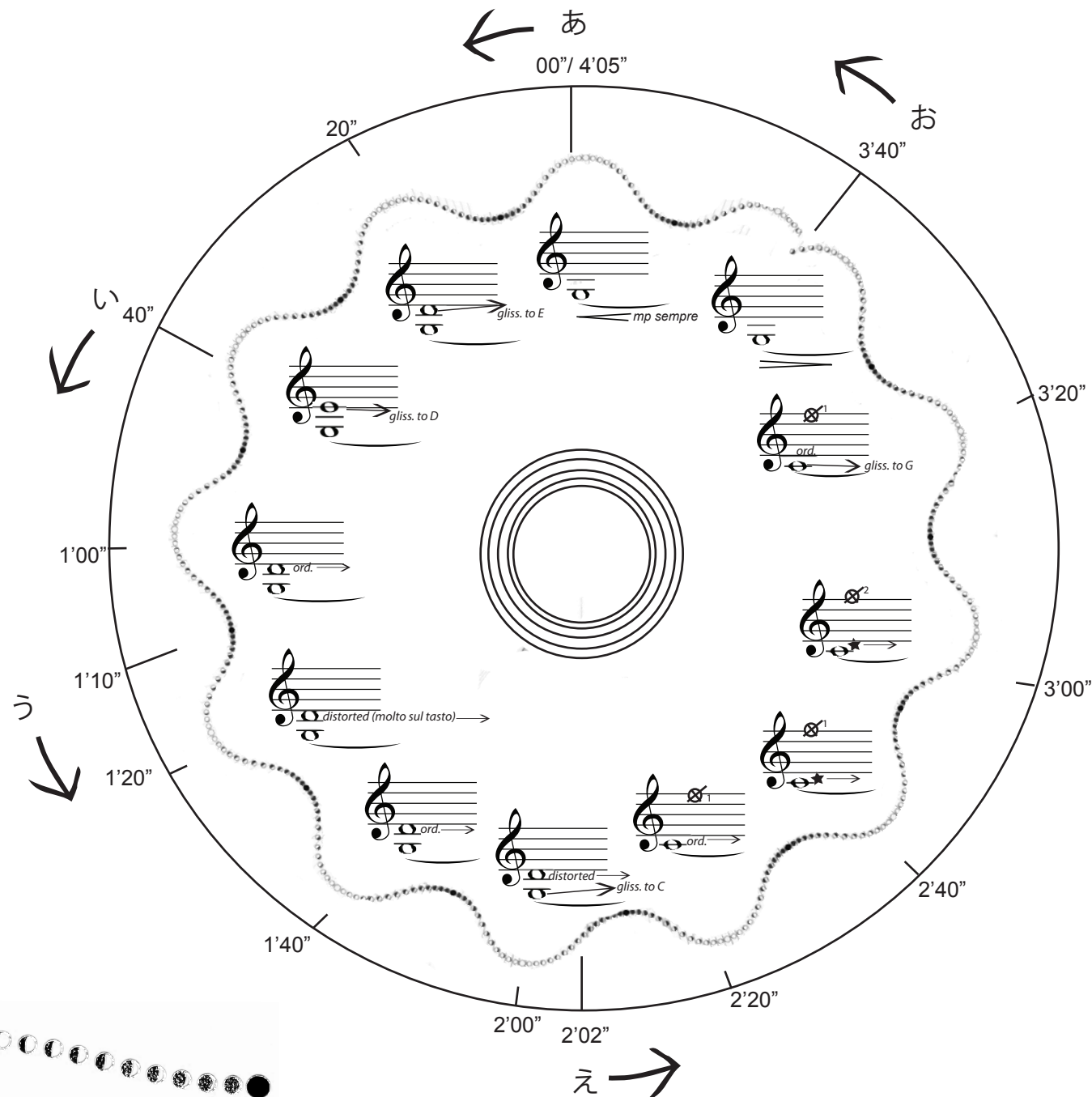
あ(a)
duration of 40"   (00'00" - 00'40")
い(i)
duration of 30"   (00'40" - 01'10")
う(u)
duration of 52"   (01'10" - 02'02")
え(e)
duration of 1'38"   (02'02" - 03'40")
お(o)
duration of 25"   (03'40" - 04'05")

total duration 4'05"

read notation traditionally.
the sequence of segments moves anti-clockwise.

Instructions:

◇   Keys depressed silently

✕²   Pluck inside the piano. The number above specifies how many strings to pluck.

◼²   Superball. The number above specifies how many bounces to make. Try not to lose control and stop it after the number of bounces indicated.

•→»   Sustain pitch for any duration.

mid.▭┘ Sostenuto pedal down

higtest in pitch
C
lowest in pitch

higtest in pitch
B
lowest in pitch
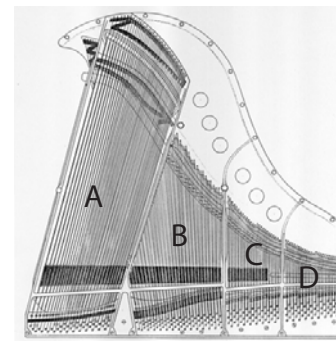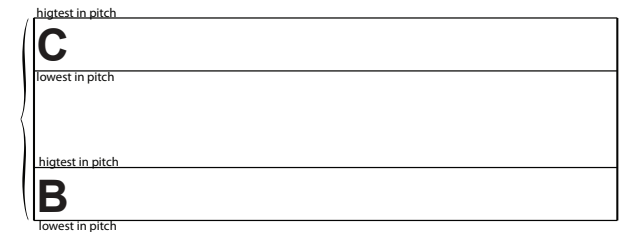
For い and え
Inside piano - fields of B and C as shown left. The graph on the score has two areas stated B and C. The height refers to the pitch range.

For え use as many superballs as you like. Make a staccatto effect each time a ball bounces. Never lose the ball and always catch after each action.

transmigration: page 7: piano 2
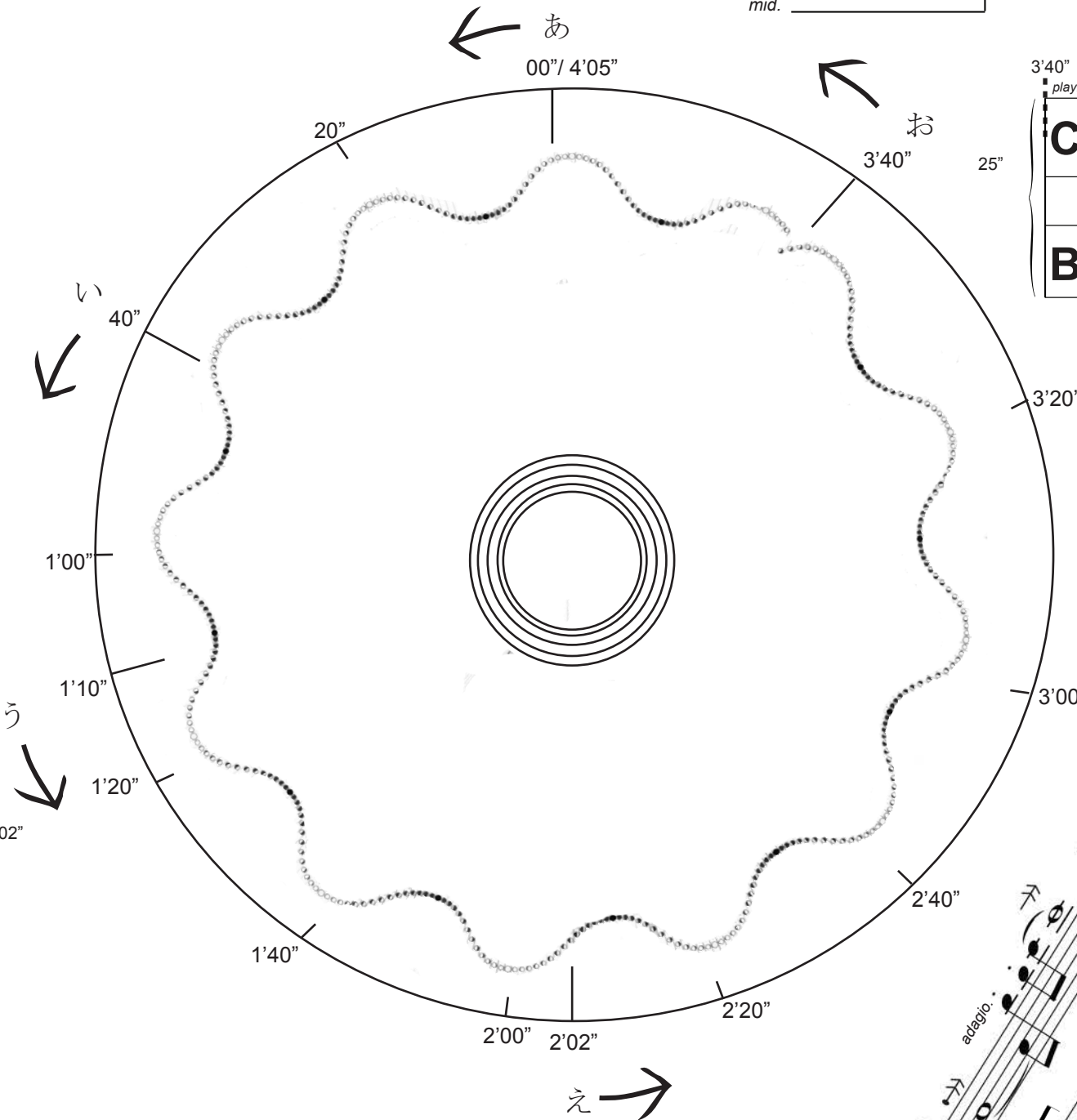
02   The Tortoise And The Crane (tsuru kame)

鶴亀

A crane lives thousands of years

A tortoise lives ten thousands of years

序 Jo (Introduction)

CRANE

-the light of the sun and moon

-one resound to the heavens

TORTOISE

-the season of early spring

-the sound of ten thousand families

破 Ha (Scattering)

CRANE

-pay homage to our lord's tranquil

-the crane dance

TORTOISE

-numberless as grains of sand

-the tortoise dance

急 Kyu (Rushing Towards The Ending)

CRANE

-like the snows of winter

-dance brings thousands upon thousands of years

-rivers

-forests

TORTOISE

-maple leaves in the showers of autumn

-voices of those above clouds join in the song

-mountains

-plants

For performers of more than two

鶴 The Crane and The Tortoise 亀

-auspicious congratulatory event-

Each player finds one or more *traditional* instrument(s) or object(s) that create sound (It can be conventionally traditional or provocatively alternative).

Divide performers equally into two groups - *crane* or *tortoise*.

1   Each performer chooses a text from *Jo* section. *Crane* group selects texts from the crane part and the *tortoise* group from tortoise part.

2   Each group forms a line, parallel to each other. Whoever is in front is your partner.

3   After a short silence, performers at each end of the lines start the sequence.
        Sound can be a tone, noise, sustained or repeated, representing an interpretation for the chosen text.
        Sounds can be repeated but no melody should be produced.

4   The first two performers finish collectively and then the next two start together after a few seconds of pause. The same action continues until everyone completes. If a number of players in one group is odd, the last person plays alone.

5   Each performer chooses a text from *Ha* section.
        Repeat 3 － 4 with *Ha* text.

6   Each performer chooses a text from *Kyu* section.
        Repeat 3 － 4 with *Kyu* text.

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03   presque rien

for viol and sinewaves

L'eau (qu'il contient) ne change presque rien au verre, et le verre (où elle est) ne change rien à l'eau.
The water (what it contains) does almost nothing to the glass and the glass (where it is) does not alter the water.
Francis Ponge; 1948

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viol.1

04 Pulse
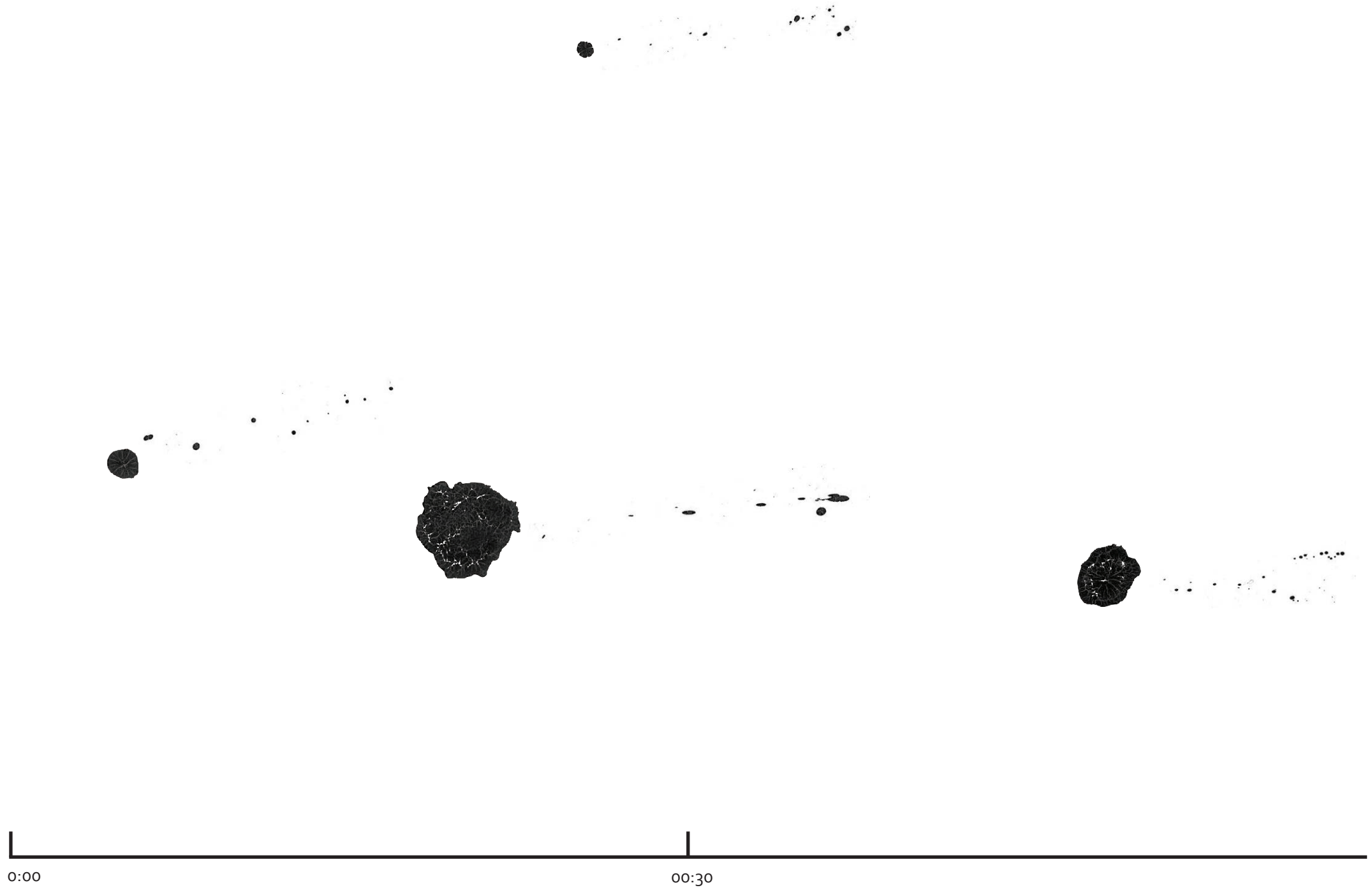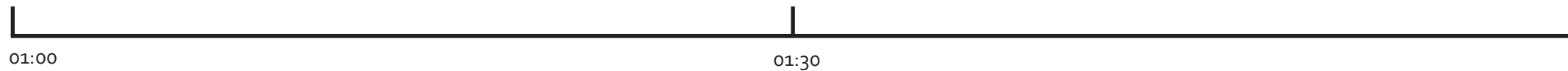
Pulse

for koto and pulse performance

13 stringed koto: Sumie Kent

pulse performance: Michelle Lewis-King

technical support: Ashley Green

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tuning: banshiki (B)

- water (secondly earth) deficient in Sumie`s pulses before performance

- determined / restrained / regular

`water never dies and the wise man rejoices in it. No two rain drops sound alike as the attentive ear will detect'

by R. Murray Schafer

start when the space cues

approx. 01:00

pulse reading

pluck texture

hear the decay of sound

second comes after half way of the decay

approx. 4"

consciously slow

pulse reading

long pause

2
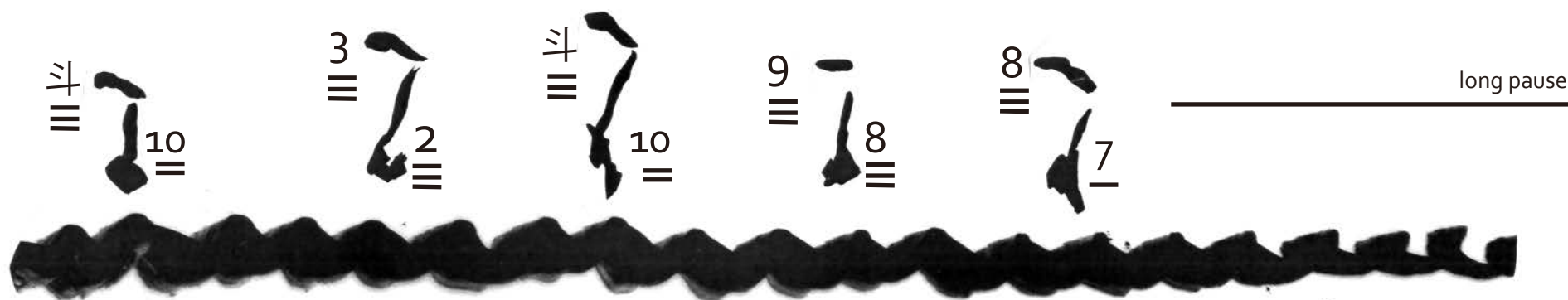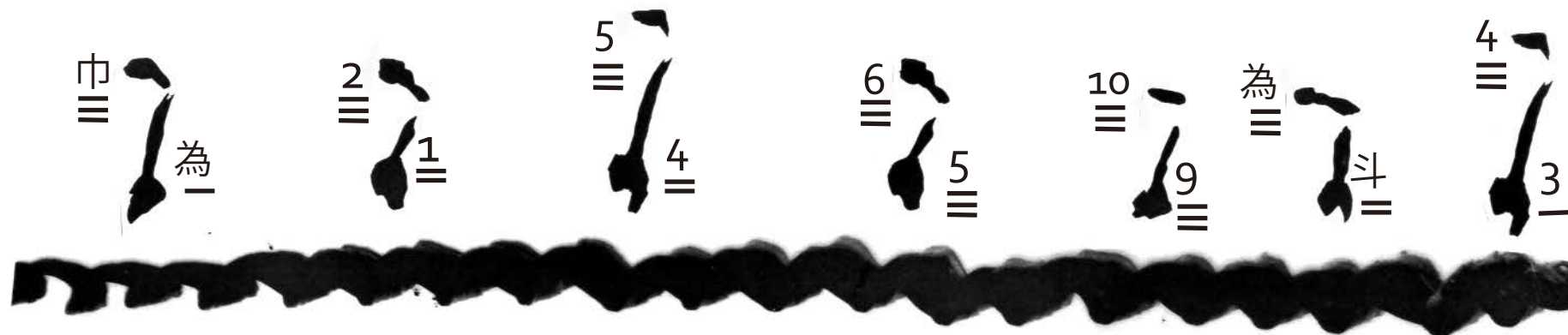
consciously slow
play as if dance following the pulse lines

right
4 2 1 4 2 1 4 2 1 6 4 2 1 4 2 1 4 2 1 6

left
7 8 7 巾 7 為 7 斗 7 8 7 10 7 為 7 10 7 9 7 巾 7 為 7 斗

almost simultaneously

less and less

4 2 1 4 2 1 6 4 2 1 4 2 1 6 4 2 1 4 2 1

7 9 7 為 7 10 7 為 7 巾 7 斗 7 8 7 10 7 為 7 巾 7 斗 7

extremely slow

2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2
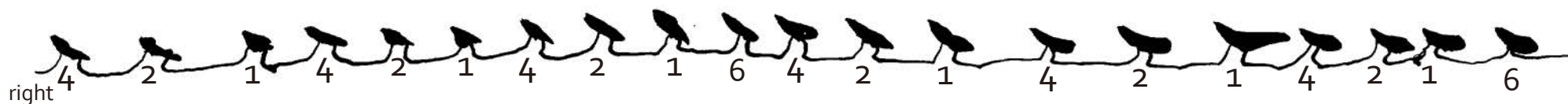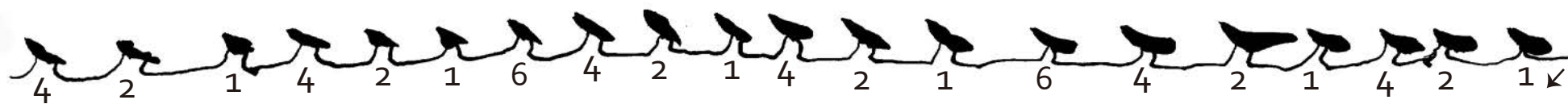
change right to left unnoticeably

3

play as if simultaneously

4

• play as if simultaneously

right

hear the decay of sound

3-5"

3-5" 3-5"

max. down

8 7

8 7

pulse

8 7

8 7

巾 巾 巾 巾 巾 巾 巾

pulse

8 7

8 7

為 巾 為 巾 為 斗 斗 為 為 為 巾 巾

pulse

斗 為 巾 斗 為 巾

fade out in order

6
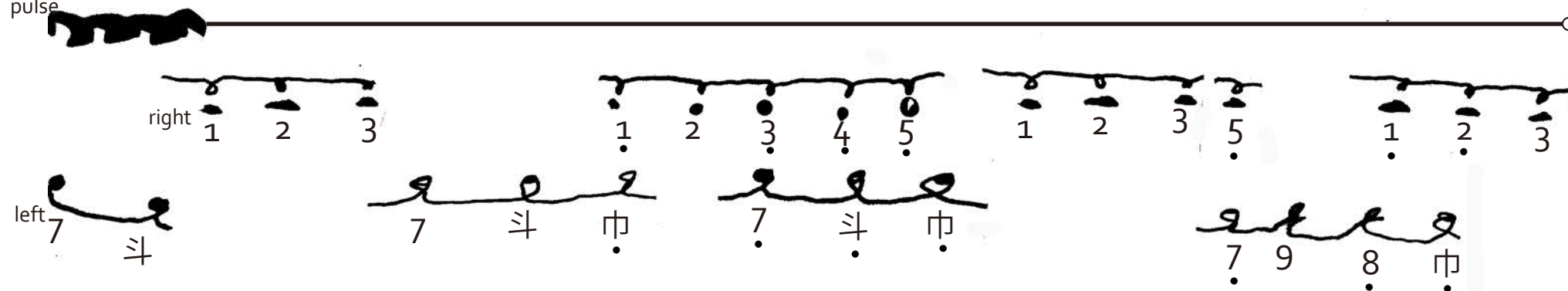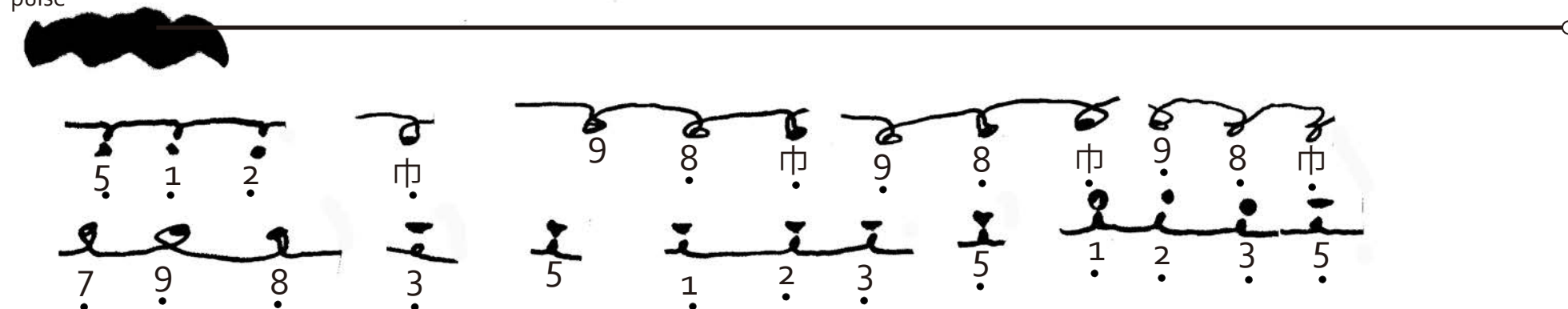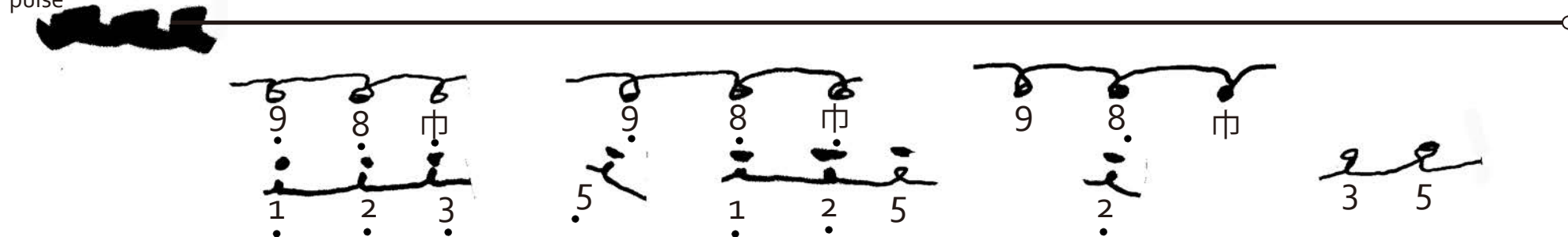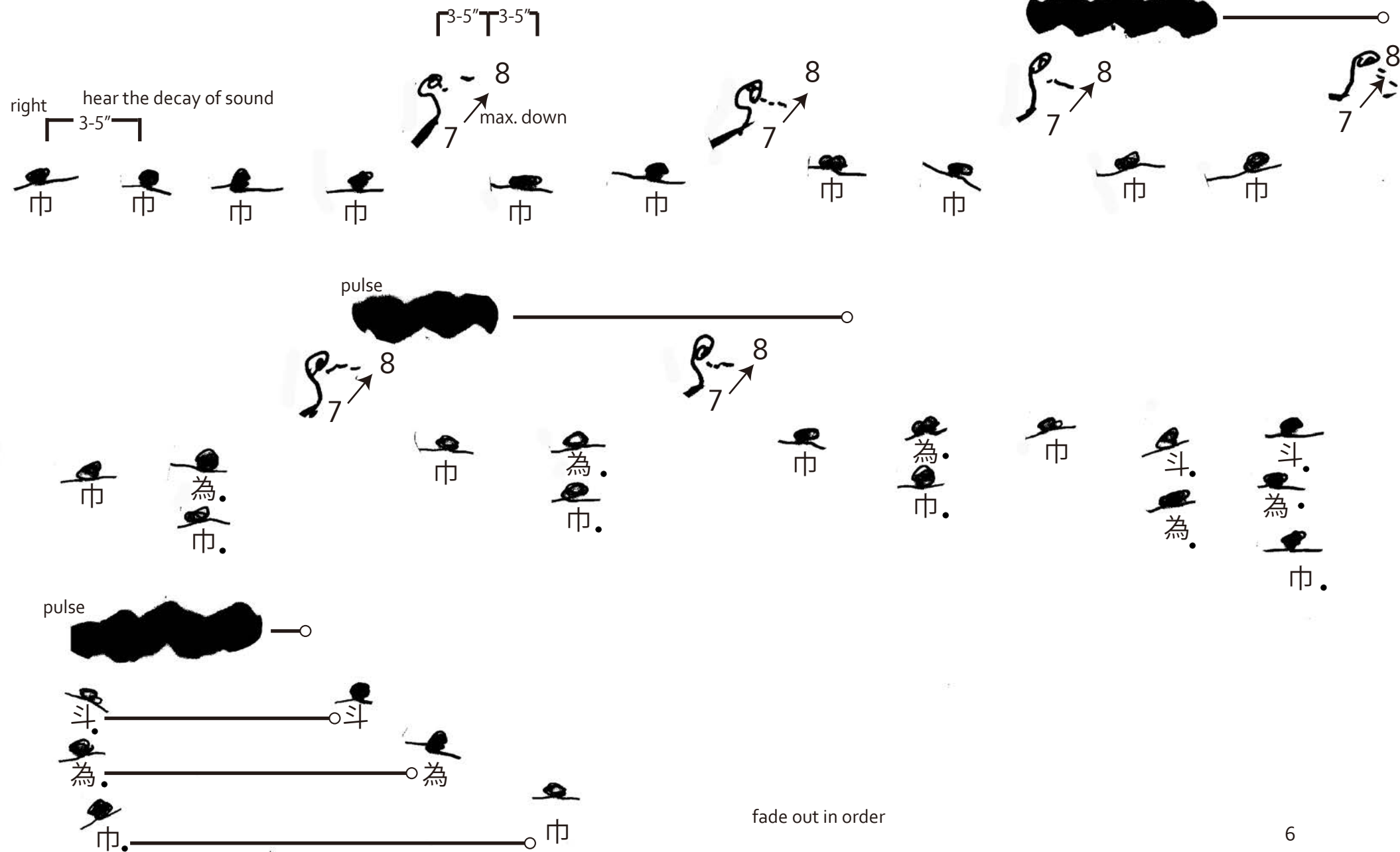
05 Two Lions

Tone Of Orient : Two Lions Instructions (approx. 12-15 minutes)

if >   *< suddenly*   *he >*   *< over..*   *pause*
                                                                              over and over

stop glitch

18Hz

{100}+350   18Hz

FG (130)   {1K}+350 FG (413)

    fadein   fadeout   BoA (615)

                                            LEFT string highEBOW

down.. >   *< again*   *the son>*   *< and the* *both>*   *< rotated in*   *fragrace > < celebrated*
                 and again   *lions*   *the sky*

                                                              18Hz

                 fadeout   FG (130)   FG (5832)
                                               {100}+350   {10K}+525
                                                       fadein   fadeout

                 fadeout   BoA (1314)

                                                              RIGHT string lowEBOW
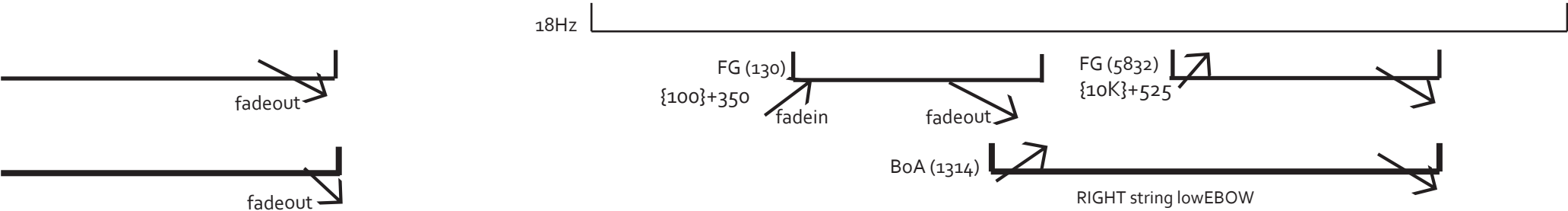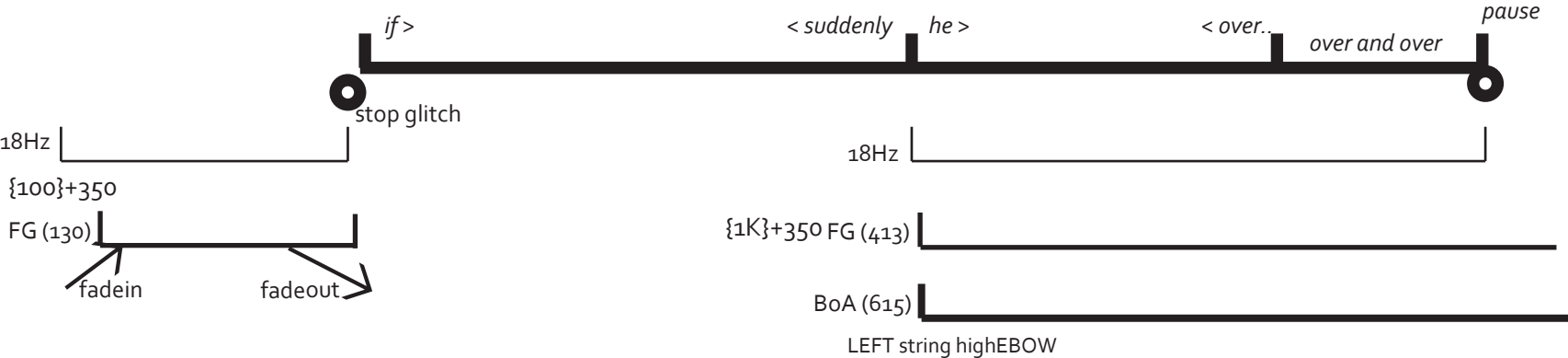
06   koso koso

こそこそ　koso koso

for perfomers of more than three

each player selects soft and discreet sound source(s).

performers make a circle. decide who begins the piece and which way the performing order proceeds, clockwise or anticlockwise.

the first player plays a sound as long as (s)he wishes. The next player slowly fades in as the first player gradually fades out.
Each sound can be sustained or sporadically repeated over time. X fade should be made as carefully and unnoticeably as possible.

the same action continues until every player completes.

the group makes one more turn. each player can find other sound or simply repeats the same sound source.

こそこそ

sneaking around secretly; whispering in discreet

koso koso

for

someone like a thief sneaking around: someone whispering quietly;

behaving stealthily: doing something without getting noticed

07   ka/ga/ku

ka/ga/ku

two pianos and electronics

for Philip Thomas and Lisa Ullen

Ryoko Akama 2013

follow the stopwatch as precisely and vaguely as possible.

only one, two or three keys are played at the same time.

00:00 - 01:00

silence

between ppp and pp

play 17 notes on white keys (between G4 and D6) as you wish.
try not to release a key until a next key is fully pressed.
at one point, a note is played alone until it decays completely.

last note is C6.

pause

00:00 — 01:00

silence

between ppp and pp

play 14 notes on white keys (between D5 and C8) as you wish.
try not to release a key until a next key is fully pressed.
at one point, a note on a black key is played alone until it decays completely.

last note is C7.

pause

01:00 - 03:00

between pp and p

play 33 notes (between D3 and D7) as you wish.
at one point, two or three keys are played together.
until the sounds decay completely.

01:00 — 03:00

imitate the pianist A as precisely as you can in any octave.
several notes can be omitted or added in intentionally.

03:00 - 05:00

imitate the pianist B as precisely as you can in any octave.
several notes can be omitted or added in intentionally.

03:00 - 05:00

between pp and p

play 44 notes as you wish (between D4 and C8).
at one point, two or three keys are played together.
until the sounds decay completely.

05:00 - 06:00

pause

between pp and ppp

play 13 notes on white keys (between G6 and C8) as you wish.
try not to release a key until a next key is fully pressed.
at one point, a note on a black key is played alone until it decays completely.

last two notes are pitch C6.
the final note is performed until the sound absolutely dies away.

silence

05:00 - 06:00

pause

between pp and ppp

play 12 notes on white keys (between G4 and G6) as you wish.
try not to release a key until a next key is fully pressed.
at one point, a note is played alone until it decays completely.

last two notes are pitch C7.
the final note is performed until the sound absolutely dies away.

silence

08   eight stones for pyhajoki

eight stones - for pyhajoki
for two performers

with
two marumori stones/ two fukushima stones / two hailuoto stones / two pyhajoki stones plus
one or more sound source(s) for each performer plus
DIY geiger counter

The duration is between 06`35"  and 74`35"

Set the count-down on the stopwatch.
This piece can be performed amplified or non-amplified. If amplification is used, try not to be loud,
keep the delicacy in all sound happenings.

Each performer randomly selects four stones from the prepared eight in order to use in the sound
performance. They can be rubbed, hit, dropped, thrown or manipulated in any way to make sound.
Choose (an)other instrument(s); any sound source such as objects, voice etc.

Start with silence. After a good length of silence, begin the stopwatch.

Performer 1 begins to play a sound when the GC screen shows Fukushima. The chosen sound can
be continuous, repetitive or an action but aviod to create melodical gestures. Performance stay as
subtle and quiet as one wishes. Each time the screen shows Fukushima, the performer 1 adds/subtracts
sound, changes sound to another or manupulates the parameter.
Do so as slowly and unnoticeably as possible.
A good x-fade is applied. Try to avoid agressive shifts throughout the performance.

Performer 2 begins a sound when the GC screen shows Pyhajoki. (s)he follows the rules in the identical
way as the instruction to performer 1.

The piece completes as the stopwatch stops.
Any sound still being played fades out gently until there is no sound at all.

Silence.

09   ichion jyobutsu

00100110001001100110001001100100110010011011000110000111011

00100110001001100110011001110000011100000111001001100100111011000011010000101 0

001001100010011001100100011010100110001001100000011010000111011

001001100010011001100100011000000110001001101110011010100111011000011010000101 0

00100110001001100110001001100100110010011011000110000111011

00100110001001100110011001110000011100000111001001100100111011000011010000101 0

001001100010011001100100011010100110001001100000011010000111011

001001100010011001100100011000000110001001101110011010100111011000011010000101 0

11   gnome

gnome

piano and sinewaves
for Lisa Ullen

ryoko akama 2014

<u>for piano</u>
play every bold note once during the ten minute performance.
<u>for sinewaves</u>
play every bold note with continuity during the ten minute performance.

make an individual reference to the arrow and the visual on the score.

for piano

silent letter is a letter that is not pronounced
yet without it
the word makes no sense

A lamb knows, castle whistle and bridge listen, write a right gnome that signs climbing handsome ghost

who knocks a knight knitting naught over night, writhing with salmon and calf

for sinewaves

silent letter is a letter that is not pronounced
yet without it
the word makes no sense

A lamb knows, castle whistle and bridge listen, write a right gnome that signs climbing handsome ghost

who knocks a knight knitting naught over night, writhing with salmon and calf

12   an dt wo

an

dt

wo

an dt wo : approximately 5 minutes

no metronome or timewatch is requested. follow your own counting speed.
each number determines the difference in semitones. ● is the unspecified length of pause.
aim to end with the same note as the one of the very beginning, however, it is important to carry on
the fundamental rule of the score.

pianist A:
the sequence is played once from left to right. start after listening a few tone pulses. end with the utter silence.
play all notes as softly as possible. each key is pressed down until the decay completes to nothing.
listen to the pitch of the tone pulse. the guessed note will be your referential pitch (the starting note).
almost 1/4 of notes are not performed.

pianist B:
begin at any numbered section of 1 to 5. start after 5-10 seconds after the pianist A. end with the utter silence.
play all notes as softly as possible. each key is pressed down until the decay completes to nothing.
listen to the pitch of the tone pulse. the guessed note will be your referential pitch (the starting note).
almost 1/3 of notes are not performed.

ryoko akama 2014

pianist A

0   0   0,1 • 3   5 • 0,2   2   0,5   0 • 0,5 • 2   1,2   0   2 • 3,3   3 • 0   2   1   1

4   4   8   7   10   7   7   10   16   10   4   6   4   6   6   12   4   7   10   8

pulse ⟶

pianist B

1   2   3   4   5

0   0   0,1 • 3   5 • 0,2   2   0,5   0 • 0,5 • 2   1,2   0   2 • 3,3   3 • 0   2   1   1

4   4   8   7   10   7   7   10   16   10   4   6   4   6   6   12   4   7   10   8

13   objects performance
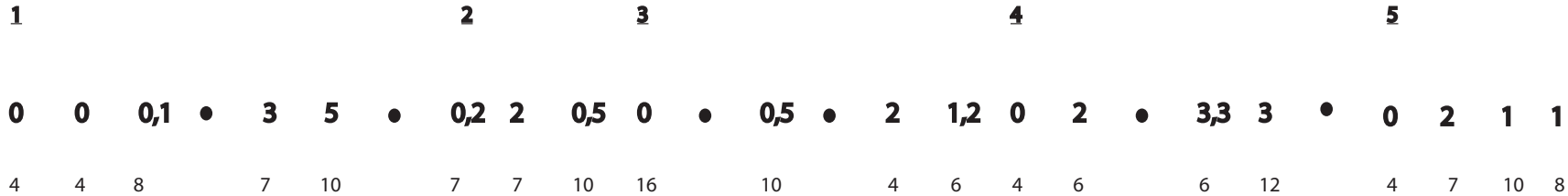
objects performance

ryoko akama 2014

objects performance

for more than 3 performers
(and a couple of objects each)

spread around randomly in the performance space.
start together at a pre-decided cue. no watch / stopwatch is required.
choose one score to perform out of the three. the arrow shows time direction.
each performer counts numbers along the arrow at own pace as closely as to the speed of second.

perform gently. between pp to mp.

...

follow the arrow and adjoining numbers. when a number changes, pick a word from the page. each word suggests how you
may play your object(s). you are able to repeat or continue an action. for example, when you reach to the number 42
on the score 1 and choose 'hit', you may hit object(s) only once and stay quiet for the rest of 41 seconds or repeat
hitting object(s) for 42 seconds. you can not pick a same word more than once. the piece is expected to last between
eight and twelve minutes, depending on performers' counting speed.

...

the performance ends when every player reaches to the arrow top.

touch   tap   wobble   101   start

stroke   18   42

nothing   blow

                          scrub   4   91

              whatever   5

scrub   90

                                                              nothing

glaze

                          0   72

                          35

              7

hit   aound

smear

                                                              rub

                                                  knock

                          56

                  throw

              22

                              blow   drop

68   tap

                                                  score 1

nothing

stroke

start

5

93

tap

71

throw

strike

hit

turn

30

nothing

2

hit

18

34

7

scrub

whatever

hold

rub

0

blow

57

round

108

blip

44

blow

nothing

touch

blip

80

scrub

whatever

62
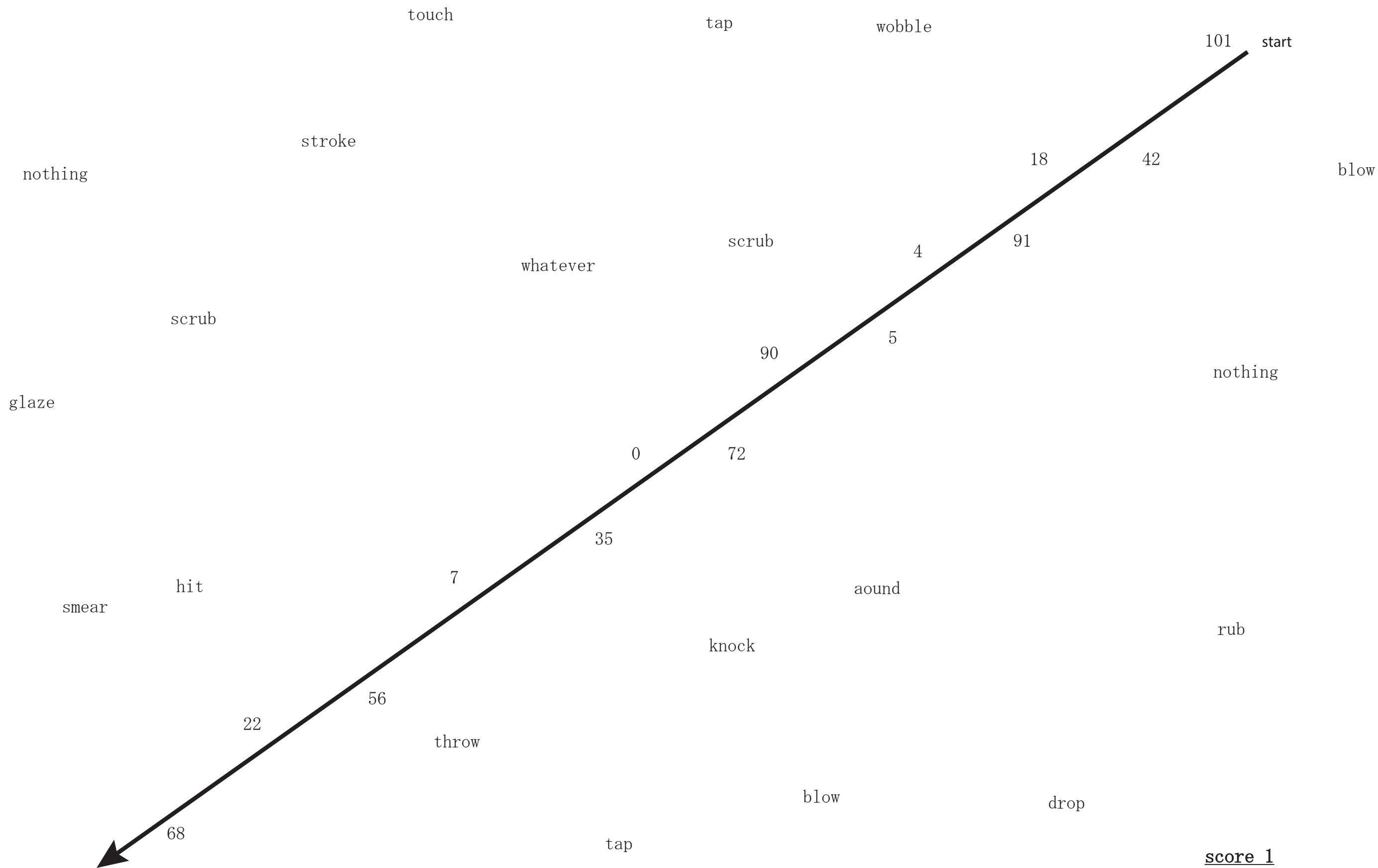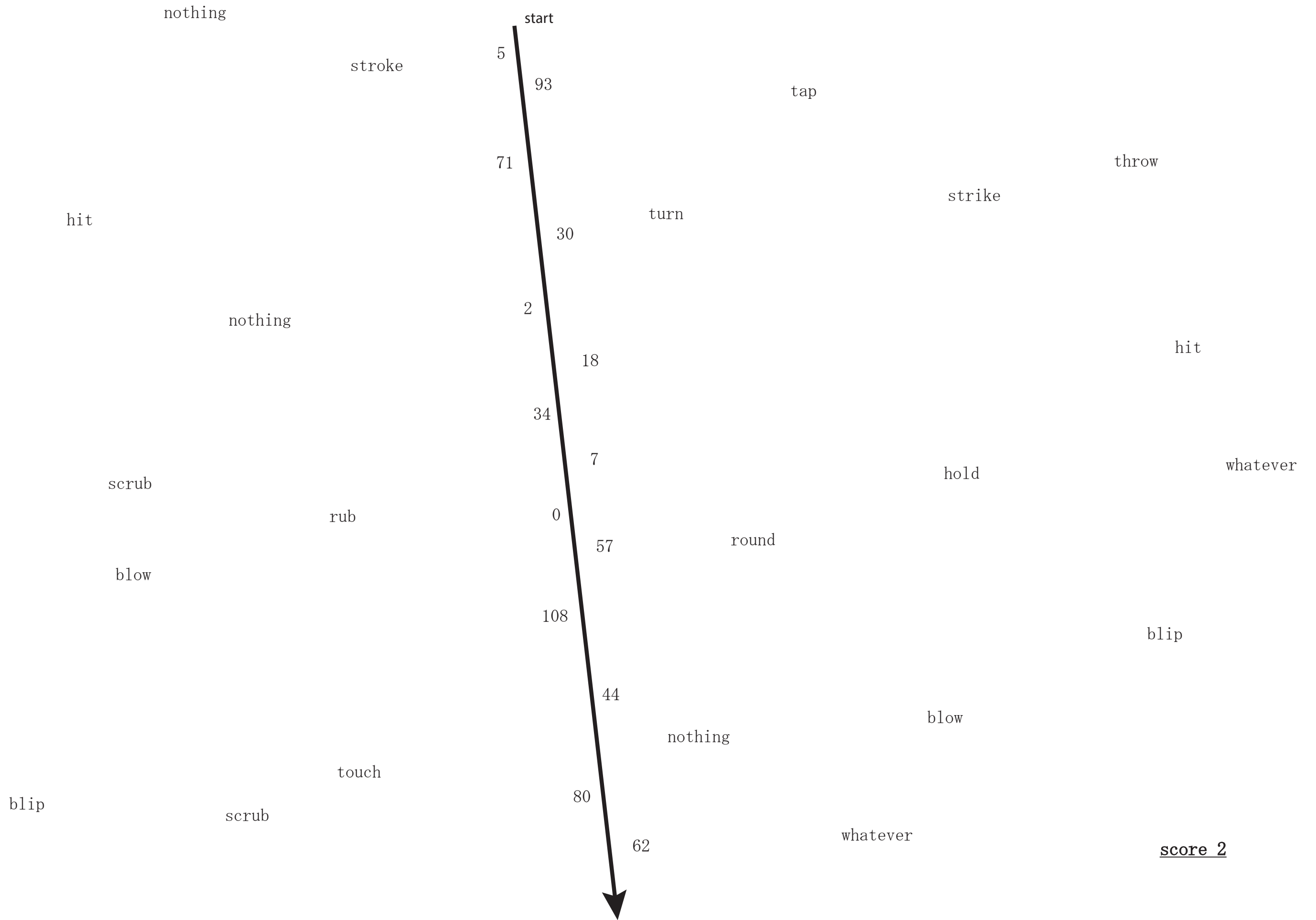
score 2

score 3
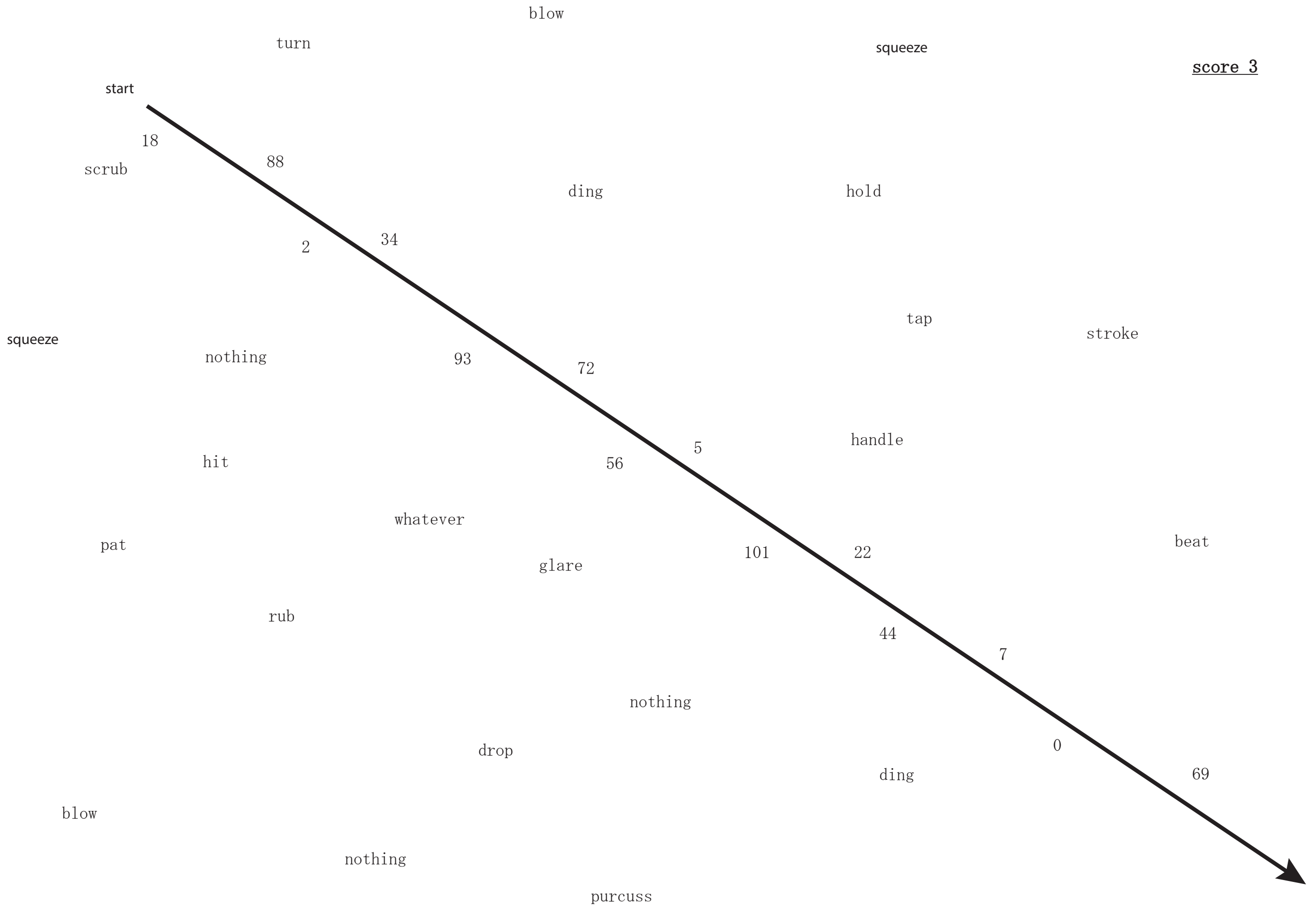
PPM book

PPM book

for more than 3 performers   ryoko akama 2013

instructions:

each perfomer chooses one or two PPM(s) to work with.
choices can overlap with other performers.

PPM is a sounding text that describes a situation.
It is not how it may sound like but sound itself.

Think of how chosen PPM(s) may be interacted with your
surrounding environment and sound from other performers.

each performer can prepare more than one sound for a PPM.
avoid melodical or over-theatrical gestures. PPM book should
be realised plainly and uncomplicatedly, not abstrusely.
perform moderately quiet.

performance duration should be 5, 7 or 12 minutes. A stopwatch
is required but used only as an approximate time reference.

a performer plays chosen sound(s) for X times.
X is decided by one of the following rules;
1   a number from a chosen page
2   addition of two numbers from chosen page(s)
3   subtraction of two numbers from chosen page(s)
never go under 0.

a change of timbre can be counted as one if a performer
determines to play a sustained tone.
for example, if X number is 5 and (s)he plays a sustained
tone, the sound begins (1) then 4 changes in texture/parameter
are applied(2,3,4,5).

a sporadical event can be perceived as multiple actions
but repetition intentionally created as a tone can be
counted as one sound.

ふぁし　ふぁし

phenomenon: wind blowing over moss

17

7

fashi fashi

for example

{Fashi fashi..}

4

とぅく　とぅく

phenomenon: flowing. streaming, pouring

tuku tuku

for example
{I can hear tukutuku from the kitchen.}
{The sound of river goes tukutuku.}
{Tuku tuku..}

さら　さら

14

2

sara sara

for example

{My TV went sara sara in the morning.}

{I can not see anything, it is sara sara.}

{Sara sara..}

7

うんぐぐんくんく

phenomenon: beling extremely slimey, sticky

12

3

un gugun kunku

9

for example
{I put too much glue, un gugun kunku.}
{The spaceship was attached by unrecognised un gugun
kunku monsters.}
{un gugun kunku..}

きょむ　きょむ

physical state:

1 imaginary sound of a hollow part in a throat

2 imaginary sound of knees when jumping weakly

6

11

3

kyomu kyomu

for example

1 {It rambles kyomu kyomu.}

2 {My knees went kyomu kyomu on the playground.}

{Kyomu kyomu..}

もそ　もそ

physical state: eating rice quietly

5

7

moso moso

10

for example
{mum ate her rice moso moso.}
{I watch a movie and eat rice moso moso.}
{moso moso..}

まゆ（ふ）まゆ

physical and mental state: of a mouth wanting to
make conversations but has no idea of possible subjects.
stuck with words.

15

1

mayu (hu) mayu

7

for example
{I should`ve said something to her, but I was mayu mayu.}
{My mouth feels so mayu mayu in the office.}
{Mayu hu mayu..}

り 一

phenomenon: state of fast responce of modern
digital tools. (re comes from "re" turn)

11

3

reeeee

for example
{reeeee..}

5

ぎちゃ　ぎちゃ

mental state: unsatisfied, annoyed
and do not know how to get away from
the mental condition.

9

1

5

gicha gicha

for
{I feel gicha gicha, wanna go home.}
{Stop being gicha gicha. It is fine!}
{Gicha gicha..}

5

ぶみょーん

physical and mental state:
(use your imagination)

16

7

bumyoon

For example
{Bumyoon..}

ふよ　ふよ

14

physical state: walking through a town/city
without any destination or intention.

4

huyo huyo

10

for example
{She was walking huyohuyo for a long time.}
{Huyohuyo.. huyohuyo.. where am I going now?}

まぶ　まぶ

18

mabu mabu

8

physical and mental state: beautiful sub bass
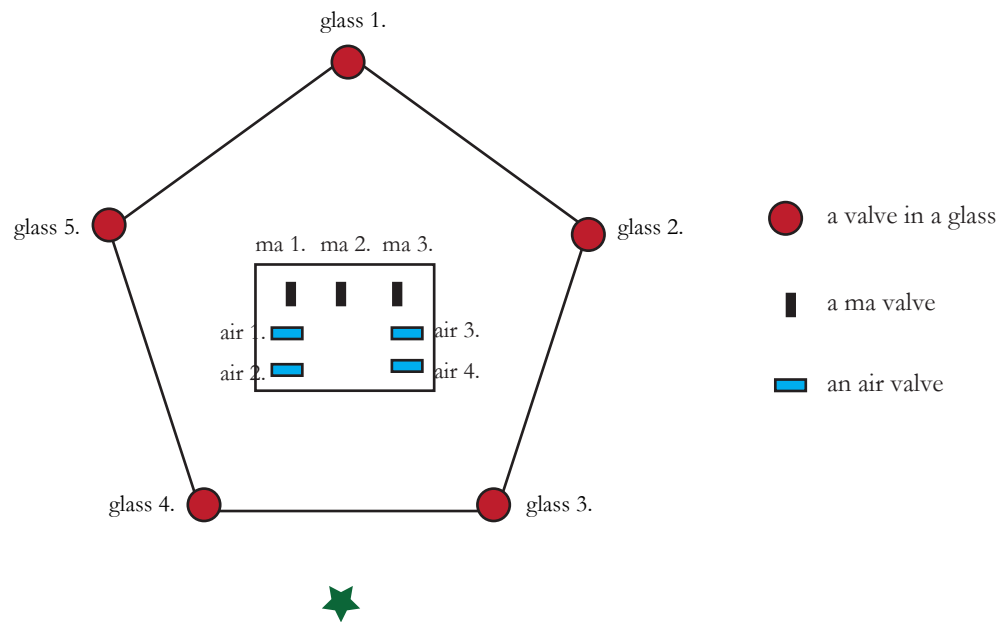resonaing through your body.

13

for example
{My favourite music feels mabumabu.}
{This acoustic is quite mabumabu.}
{Mabu mabu..}

15   stringently flexible 12

glass 1.

glass 5.

ma 1. ma 2. ma 3.

air 1.   air 3.

air 2.   air 4.

glass 2.

glass 4.   glass 3.

● a valve in a glass

▮ a ma valve

▭ an air valve

preferably the performance happens in the middle of the space.

However if it is on stage, ✦ is the front.

⊢———→ duration between 60 - 100 seconds

Each section fades in as unnoticeably as possible to the audible volume level. This depends on the space and atmosphere.

No part should be louder or more prominent from others. All sounds are treated equally.

Each valve on a red spot ● is hung from a ceiling or a mike stand and tuned into the resonance frequency of each glass.

Five glasses are preferably different sizes and shapes.

ma valves and air valves are tuned to glass valves (variable in octoves) : ma1 to glass3, ma2 to glass1, ma3 to glass5, air2 to

glass2 and air4 to glass4.

air1 and air3 are tuned freely. Use filter tubes to create various textures and pitches in air valves.

The piece should end in approx. 20 - 25 minutes.

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stringently flexible12 : for Jean-François Laporte

16   stringently flexible sketch
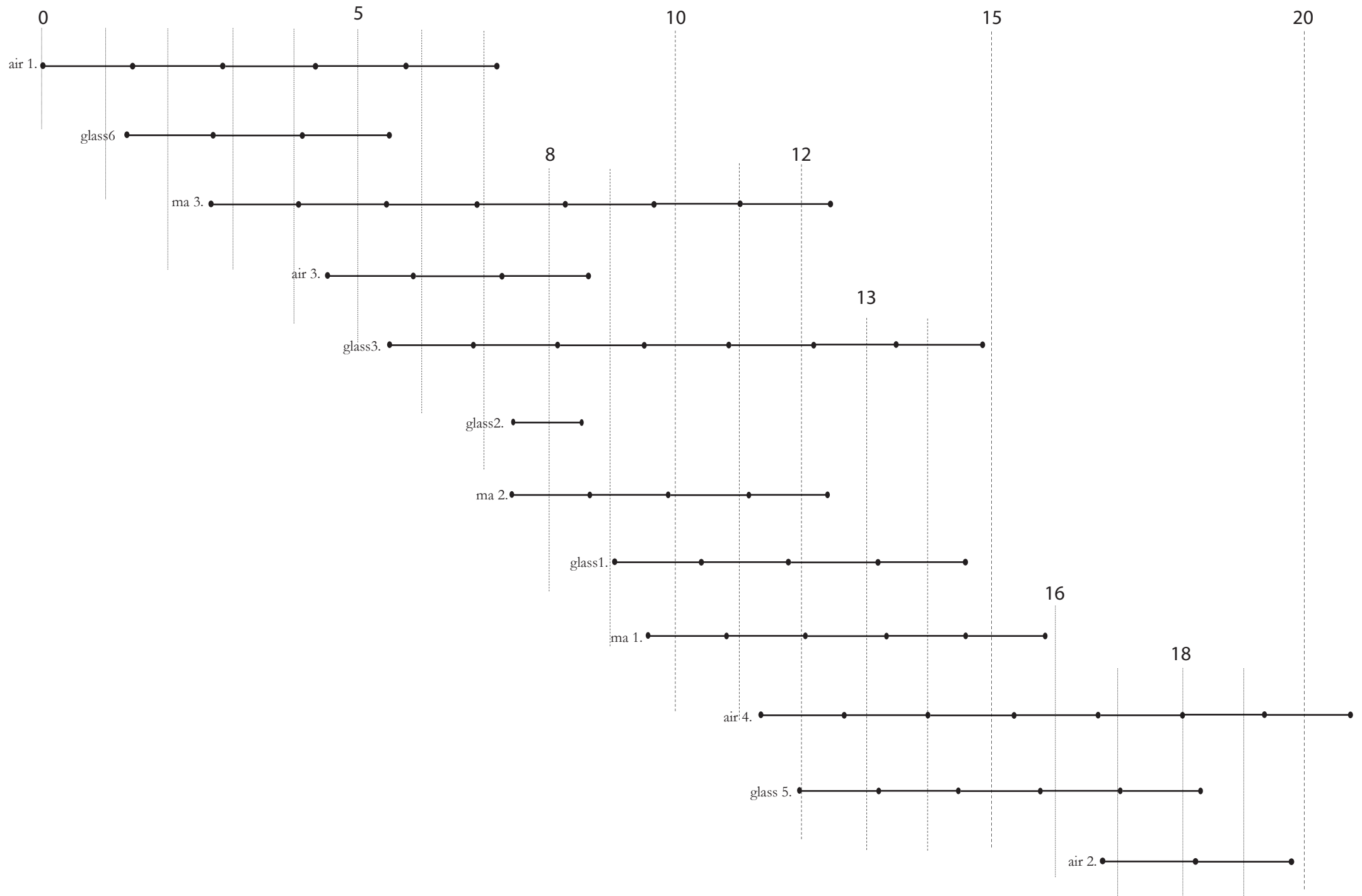
Stringently Flexible Sketch : for Cello, Organ and Sinewaves
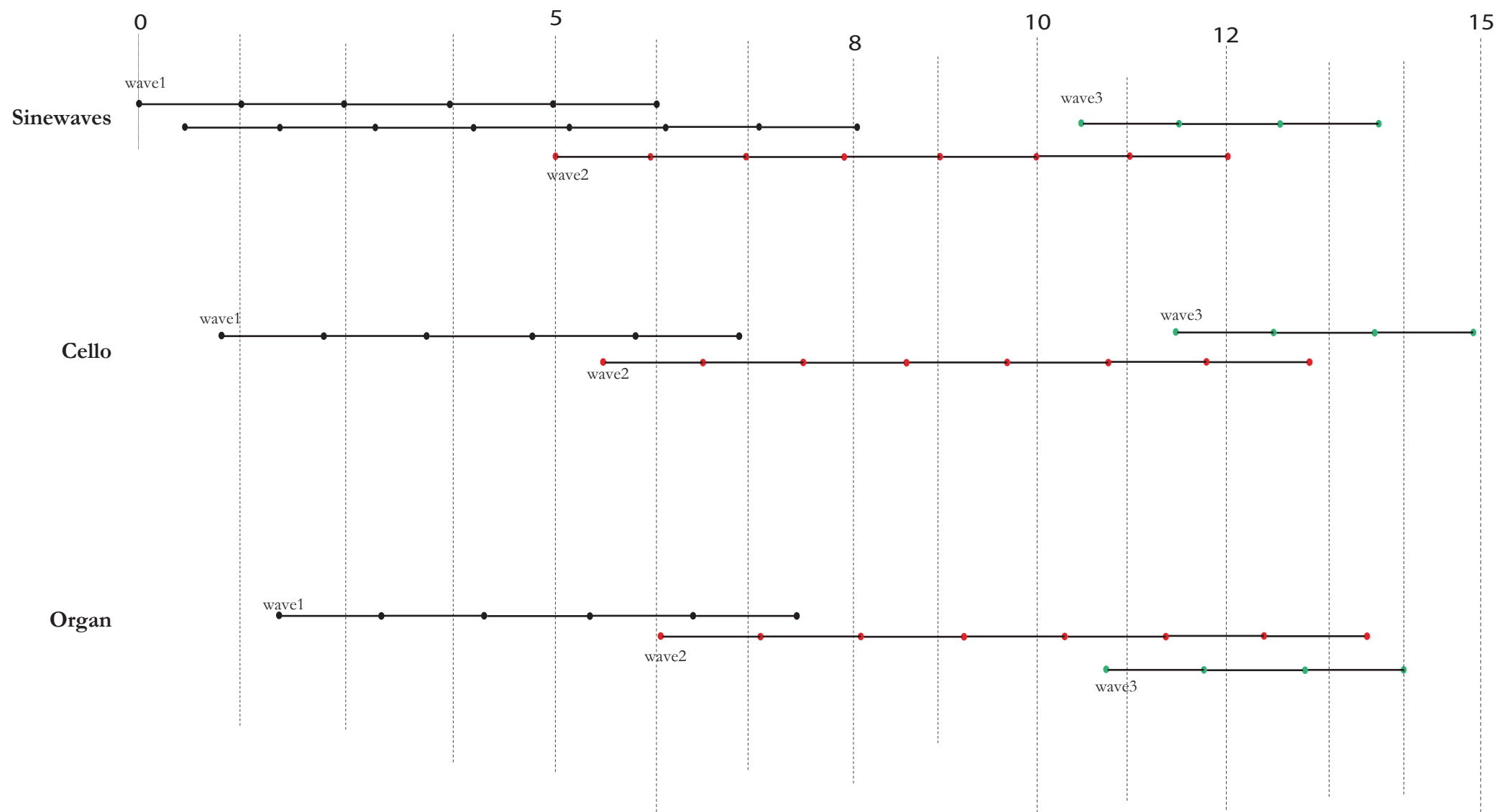
approximately 15 minutes. sound fades in and out as unnoticeably as you can. each wave should be the closest frequency to the wave heard from the previous wave.

try to match the timbre and volume to what is previously played.

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17   Espèces d'espaces 03

<u>Espèces d'espaces 03</u>

for two performers (voice and sound)

each line:	30 seconds
total:	10 minutes

P1: performer 01

P2: performer 02

instructions: movement 01: 2minutes

voice   when there is a recognisable capital letter, pronounce it using own voice phonetically.

sound   sign letters are played by any chosen sound sources other than voice. Their shapes and semantics can be translated freely and treated as texture, pitch, duration or dynamic of the sound parameter. a performer brings in his/her own musical interpretation.

instructions: movement 02: 8minutes

sound   when ã appears, change the sound to another or create a change in parameter.

you can use a same sound as long as it is not successively chosen.

sign letters are played by any chosen sound sources. Their shapes and semantics can be translated freely and treated as texture, pitch, duration or dynamic of the sound parameter. a performer brings in his/her own musical interpretation.

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movement01

Ą   ¤   ī   Ę¤ **ŋ** ¤   ˇ

      ¤   Ī   Ą¤ŗ¤   Î **Ĩ**   Ît

            Ĩ Č   ¤   Î   Āæ   ¤   Į

      Ā¸   ¤¤Æ   Ą Ę   ¤ ¤   ¤ë

movement02

ã €Œç ”Ÿã ã,

‹ ã “ã ¨ã € ã ã ,Œã ¯ ç©ºé – “ã ‹ã, ‰oç©º é—“ã

, ã€ ã ªã, ‹ ã ¹ ã è°«ä½ “ã, ' ã ¶ã

¤ã ‘ã ªã „ã , ˆ ã †ã

«ç§» å‹•ã ™Mã ,‹ ã “ã ¨ã ªã ® ã §ã

, ã ,

P2

‹ã € â €œè ¨

€è' ‰oã ® å· ¥å ¦¦è €

…

â € ã ƒšã ƒ¬ã ffã

, ¯ã «ã ‹ã ‹ã, ‹ã ¨ã € æ

—

P1+P2

¥å ,, ã ® ã ªã ‹ã «ã •ã ¾ã —ã ¾ã ª ç©º

é– “ã Œã , ã , ‰oã, ã,

Œå§ ‹ã , ã,

‹ã € ,

18   Espèces d'espaces 04

Espèces d'espaces 04

00:00-00:15   position in   space

00:15-01:30   space   filter

01:30-07:30   a fairly strictly

                        h
                          o
                            r
                              i
                                z
                                  o
                                    n
                                      t
                                  a
                                      l

07:30-10:00   space   opera

10:00   leave   a   space

For two non-input/feedback mixers (you may allow some devices within mixer feedback routes)

Ryoko Akama 2013

19   grade two

grade two : for performer A

8-12 minutes

elder sist**e**r

old**e**r sister

pull

clou**d**

p**a**rk

f**a**r

y**e**llow

subj**e**ct

summ**e**r

hous**e**

son**g**

draw

tim**es**

se**e**

s**ea**

pi**c**ture

outsid**e**

corn**e**r

joy

liv**e**ly

sp**a**ce

roun**d**

ro**c**k

f**a**ce

boiler

m**e**mory

return

cow

fish

capit**a**l

stron**g**

te**ac**h

brother

close
shape
plan
origin
word
prime
door
old
afternoon
language
factory
public
vast
alternate
light
think
line
height
country
black
now
ability
details
making
order
stasis
city
feeling
paper
temple
self
time
room
shrine
weak
neck
autumn
week
spring
write
little
spot

8-12 minutes

20   grade two extended

colour

food

heart

new

relative

geology

number

west

voice

start

sunny

cut

snow

ship

line

front

group

run

many

fat

body

stand

little brother

hill

land

pond

knowledge

tea

noon

long

bird

morning

straight

visit

shop

dot

electricity

sword

winter

that

east

answer

head

same

: make a sentense out of words above. write down on a paper.

: that sentense is your score. the duration is ten minutes.

path

read

inside

what

south

meat

wing

horse

buy

sell

half

watch

father

wind

divide

listen

rice

walk

mother

direction

north

every

myriad

wheat

bright

sing

hair

gate

night

field

arrow

friend

bow

business

week

come

hometown

reason

story

Performer B
: find out which alphabet (a,b,c,d,e,f or g) you can see the most within this page.
: that alphabet is the pitch to perform for the duration of ten minutes: slow crescendo - softly sustained - slow decrescendo.
: pick up one word. the word becomes the reference on how you perform the sound.
Performer C
: find out which alphabet (a,b,c,d,e,f or g) you can see the least within this page.
: that alphabet is the pitch to perform sporadically for the duration of ten minutes.
: pick up one word. the word becomes the reference on how you perform the sound.

21   tada no score

look up at clouds

and

sing 'ahh'

follow

the blue line

and hum ...

at any speed

 clap your hands

20 times

play a sound

play a silence

pause

     repeat again

sound of wind -

sound of no wind -

whisper with

grass

5 times

hum a tone

as long as

your breath lasts

footsteps

and

airplanes

kira kira -

      sparkling

play kira kira

at highest speed

speak of sound

and

      tinkles of
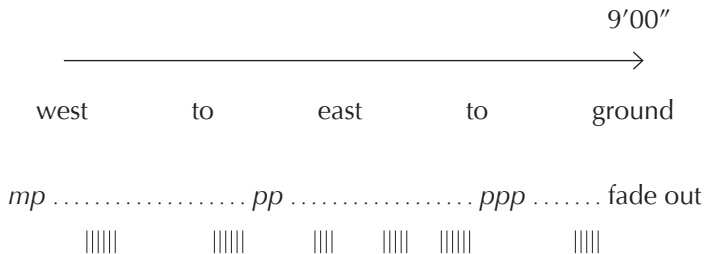
      old   party

10.

wind whistle

vertical.

horizontal.

7'00"

$\longrightarrow$

mf . . . . pp

9'00"

west   to   east   to   ground

mp . . . . *pp* . . . . *ppp* . . . . fade out

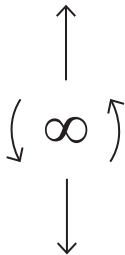||||| ||||| |||| |||| ||||| |||||

13.

autumn

$\downarrow$ 25 metres

winter

Ah -   'til midnight

A.   play a sound -
   change 8 times over 16 minutes

B.   play a sound -
   divert 20 seconds after A's change

C.   play a sound -
   divert 32 seconds after B's change

accumulate

in 20 minutes

then end

suddenly

じわ　じわ

slowly happening:

jiwa jiwa

as for
tears coming down slowly
oil is permeating the surface gradually
someone is getting closer without any movement

23   sotto

そっと

gently;lightly;slip quietly;

sotto

for

to handle something with care

ex. he held the wine glass gently in his fingertips;

to make a swift, and unnoticed exit.

ぞわ　ぞわ

trembling notion
shivering, shuddering

zowa zowa

for
zowa zowa suru - I feel zowa zowa
zowa - trembling

25   jili jili

じりじり

closing in;burning;scrape

jili jili

for
a person A closes in/backs away from a person B;
the sun is slowly working its way into things (i.e. your skin);
something scraping on the ground.

26   gussuri

ぐっすり

soundly

gussuri

for

fast asleep;sleeping soundly

30   con.de.structuring

con.de.structuring
for more than two performers

five minutes without any clock or stopwatch

It is as if the painting, absolutely still, soundless, becomes a corridor connecting the moment it represents with the moment at which you are looking at it; and something travels down that corridor at a speed greater than light, throwing into question our way of measuring time itself.
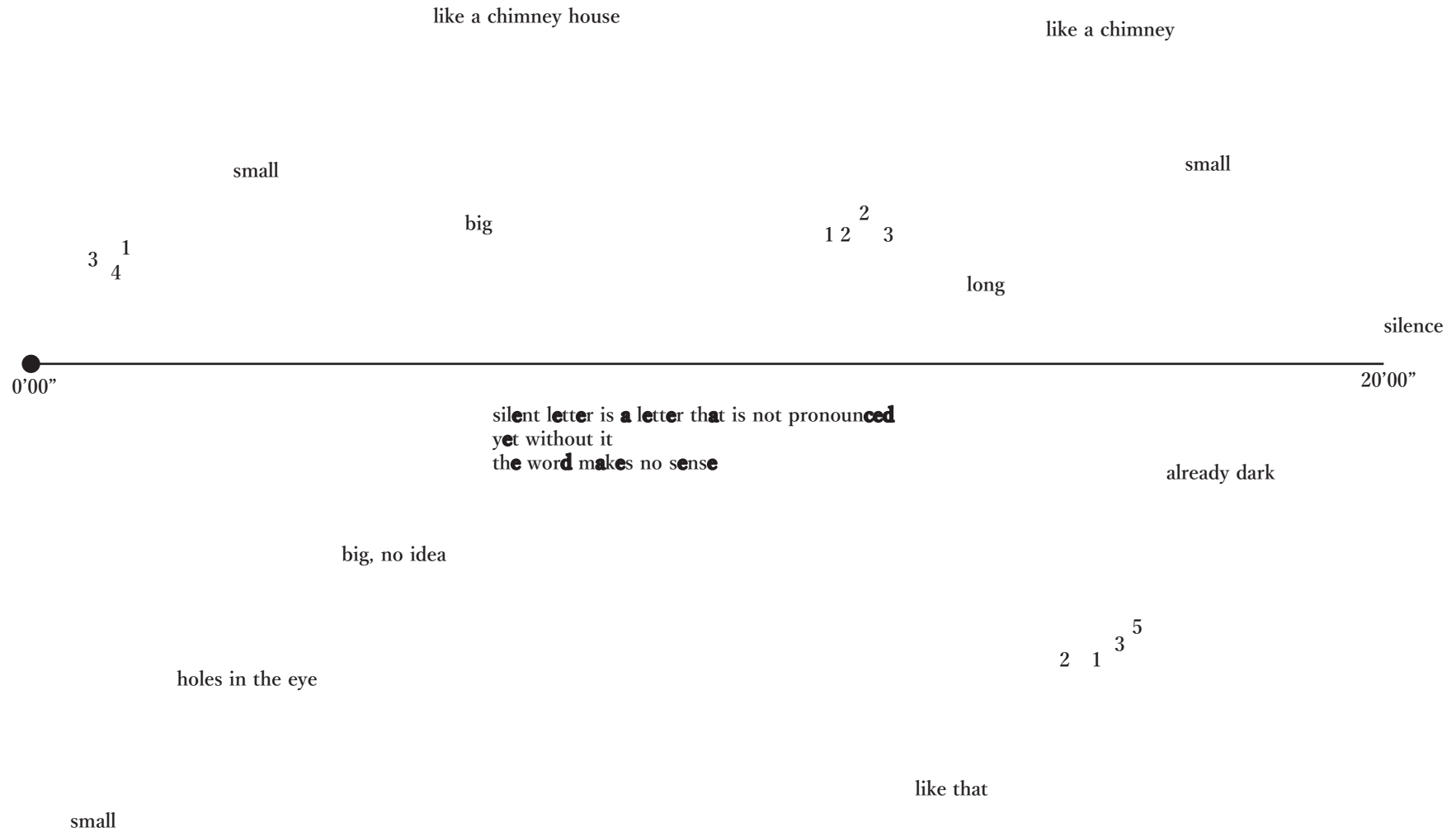(John Berger: 1972)

01 each performer predetermines three sounds that can be described as soundless.

02 each performer plays three soundless sounds at least once in each minute. every sound should be played for ten seconds.

03 only one occasion, a sound should be played for thirty-seven seconds.

04 when one's 'five minutes' is complete, the performance ends. stay quietly until all perfomers finish their 'five minutes'.

31   e.a.c.d.

e.a.c.d.

like a chimney house

like a chimney

small

small

big

2
1 2   3

3 1
   4

long

silence

0'00"

20'00"

silent letter is a letter that is not pronounced
yet without it
the word makes no sense

already dark

big, no idea

5
3
2 1

holes in the eye

like that

small

32   fade in and out procedure

duration : 25 minutes

1. fade in continuous sound1 slowly.

2. ensure that sound2 is faded in to create audible patterns against sound1.

3. fade in sound3 that controls overall atmosphere. the fade-in should be inaudible.

4. fade in sound4 to get the set of sounds to become the single act.

5. if sound5 is required, fade in now. sound5 should be placed either on the top or at the bottom.

6. fade out procedure is the reverse of the above.

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33   line.arm.e

line.ar.me : for guitar and sinewaves

prepare a timing device but do not have to be necessarily precise. The piece is approximately 12minutes.

sinewaves:

choose three sine tones - between 89hz to 347hz - and allocate them to three lines on the bottom of the score. try to create sine tones that have warn and organic texture.

Each tone is performed according to the horizontal time reference. Try to fade in and out as unnoticeably as possible.

guitar:

choose four notes on any guitar string and allocate them to| ‖ ‖| ‖‖ . Never stop a decay of each sound. A next sound should overlap with a sound currently played naturally.

horizontal and vertical references are not specified in any way. It is up to a performer's interpretation. However, the number of icons within individual minute zone shows how many of each note should be performed within that period.

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line.ar.me
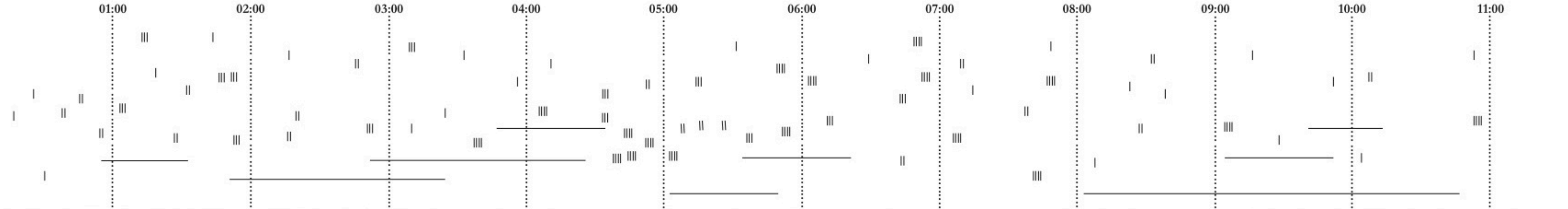
34   gen

gen

play a long note

dichotomy

again and again
with instruments that are not usually employed to make a long note

for more than zero performer
ryoko akama 2015

35   acorn

acorn

for a.pe.ri.od.ic

ryokoakama 2015

どんぐりが

　　　　一つ落ちたり

　　　　　　一つの音

　　　　　　　　　(細見綾子)

acorn

　　　　one falls

　　　　　　a sound of one

　　　　　　　　(by Ayako Hosomi)

duration of fifteen minutes

only approximately though

audible

                      but slightly inaudible

yet absolutely absent

at each minute, you play a note

only once

sometimes twice

- optional - arbitrary

no more than twice

- authority -

only one minute in

fifteen

minute life, you play

nothing

there is no gap longer than thirty seconds between sounds

why_

because so_

sometimes fine_

maybe not_

no more than three sounds are played at the same time⋯

do we hear it?

we listen to it.

while performing?

I think so.

remote and delicate

and

each sound is performed fairly long and soft

must/

can/

maybe/

not too long.

fairy.

fairly.

not fiery.

only once in fifteen minute life, one soft and distant and isolated and remote and intimate and delicate and distinct -short sound is CAUSED by each performer

beCAUSE for something and nothing

                                        -you know that exquisite sound of an acorn in the wood-

does not have to be definitely
just sometimes
yet consciously

could be a noise

a tone

a non-pitched

almost here

almost hear

reductive   July 2014

Issue 01:
text_so_nance

ONE

ONE

Editorial

Reductive Journal attempts to assemble different forms of art all together to consider the complex interrelationship between sonic materials and text. In each issue, we approach various topics under the same theme with selections by contributors who observe unique interpretations to produce unreleased works candidly. The first issue, text_so_nance, celebrates our kickoff with Sarah Hughes, Hankil Ryu, Tsunoda Toshiya, Daniel del Rio and myself, exploring individual methodologies to challenge the elusive crossover of text and sound.

We have chosen a free downloadable PDF format to reach as many listeners as possible, manifesting very little whilst anticipating a crucial platform to sonically experience the realm of text. We hope that this experience will become the inevitable concept of the project that sparks farther interests, concerns and growth with continual feedback.

My sincere gratitude to the fellow editors and the artists involved in this issue. I would especially like to thank Daniel for his courageous endeavour to initiate such an engrossing event as Journal ONE.

Ryoko Akama
Editor

Ryoko Akama
PPM Book

PPM, PhenoPsychoMime, is my personal abbreviation to group together the particular onomatopoeias: 'phenomime' and 'psychomime'. Phenomime is a set of words that mimic physical forms or motions (e.g. 'bukubuku' is used for assembling bubbles, and 'charachara' indicates something being done thoughtlessly or in a messy fashion). Meanwhile, psychomime depicts psychological states, emotions or feelings (e.g. 'dokidoki' for a state of being excited, and 'daradara' for a state of laziness). There are over one thousand PPMs in Japanese onomatopoeia while other nationalities, such as Korean and Finnish, have similar sorts but in a far smaller quantity.

A PPM is a phonetic word symbol used to describe a non-sounding event. It is not a representation of something, but is the thing itself that describes it. Even though a phenomenon has no actual sound, a PPM precisely characterises the event with the sound phonics. Therefore, a PPM is a sounding signifier for a non-sounding signified which sound is the sound of the signifier. Consciously or subconsciously, at least Japanese perceives and acknowledges PPM texts without any trouble. Here, the interconnection between a PPM text and a soundless situation is excitingly paradoxical and ambiguous, especially when applied to the musical context of text scores.

PPM book is composed of imaginary PPM words by visitors who came to my solo exhibition pheno_psyco_mime in Japan in 2011. At the entrance to the gallery, my message board asked the audience to invent their own imaginary phenomimes or psycomimes and write them down on postcards, which became the ingredients of the piece. What interests me here is that the context of invented PPMs are absolutely comprehensible and recognisable to my ears, which could be either because we share a common culture (Japanese) or reflect a global perception of sound (unitary understanding of aural phenomena). For example, though this is the first time I hear 'gichagicha' (from the score;p18) explained as 'unsatisfied and annoyed', it is discernible for me to envision a physical state of 'gichagicha' with the invented lexical meaning.

'Sarasara'(from the score;p12) suggests white noise as applied to visual media. However original it was to the visitor who left her postcard for me, 'sarasara' is already an existing onomatopoeia in Japanese that illustrates physical conditions: 1) smoothly flowing; 2) dry materials softly rustling; and 3) dry condition. The sound of bamboo leaves rustling is a good example of 1 and 2, referring to softly whispering dry materials. Here, we hear the actual sound of rustling

bamboo leaves, which classifies this 'sarasara' as a normal onomato-poeia. However, 'sarasara' also represents a state (3) of dryness and smoothness of surface such as skin, sand or paper. Hair texture can be 'sarasara' when it is dry and smooth like a silk. The opposite of 'sarasara' is 'zarazara' which indicates a rough texture or one with very small bumps. 'Sarasara' or 'zarazara' are at once language, phe-nomena and sound, mediating the signifier and the signified, where the musicality of the word is the phenomenon itself, despite the fact that the signified may contain no sound.

 PPM book starts with a page of several instruction lines, creating a platform for performers to explore individual decisions to choose and play sounds. It is important for me to neglect certain amount of rules in my score to enjoy the experimental void space. PPMs de-scribe a non-audible event with an aural description and are already music(al) in themselves. The score investigates this peculiar relation-ship between the aural content of PPM; text (signifying), situation (signified) and sound of text (the abstract).

PPM book

for more than 3 performers

38   a schematic revised from Lucier's original score

Music On Long Thin Wire

細長いワイヤーの音楽

Alvin Lucier (1977)

アルヴィン・ルシエ

pa

oscillator

mixer

+ −

wooden bridge+screw

piano wire

contact mic 1

contact mic 2

clamp

table

table

headphone

mixer

speaker L

speaker R