

HOW IT'S DONE

- some examples of interpretative freedom in practice

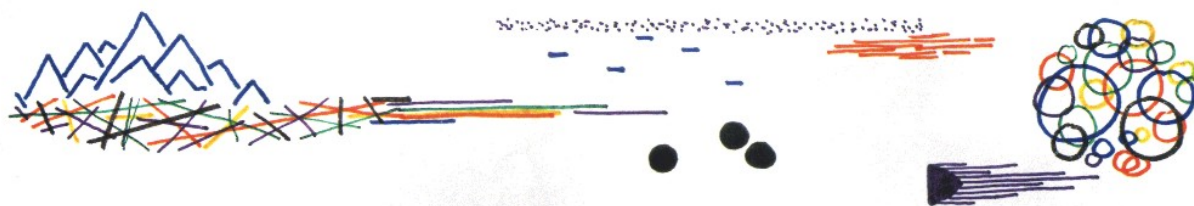
1. Jørgen Lekfeldt: AUDITIO (1980) from Music for Three or More (cat. no. T.0034)



The extract shows two numbered melodies. The melodies are played by at least three musicians at optional octave intervals according to a system that establishes the possible choices and their order, but prescribes no form of coordination. It is essential to be able to vary what the notes say so that the individual musician, as required by the composer, can link his or her playing with that of the other - for example by playing extremely fast or slow or using *accelerando/ritardando*. Each note can have its own volume (inspired for example by the impression gained from listening to the pauses in No.1. The attacks could perhaps be varied between soft and stressed. The timbre can be changed in some of the notes - that depends a lot on the instrument (string sounds can be varied between *sul tasto* and *sul ponticello*, can change to *col legno* or *pizzicato* or harmonics; brass can use muting; woodwind can be given more or less breath on the notes; some of the notes of the piano can be carefully prepared etc.)

The variations in the melodies and their individual parts as well as the choice of the moment they are played, are thus improvised by the individual musician. That certain small note sequences are to be played does however provide a point of reference. Since the players have to be fully conversant with music reading, the work is aimed at musicians who have this kind of training; but advanced music school pupils will also have a chance.

2. Henrik Colding-Jørgensen: MUSEIC (1979) (cat. nr. T.0031)



This extract from the beginning of the score shows some 'classic' graphical elements: dots (short single notes), lines (sustained notes) and something that becomes 'surfaces'. Up/down for pitches and left-right reading for temporal sequence are kept, although the notes have been abolished. 'The mountain landscape' is richer in meanings - you could play either rising or steeply falling figures of different lengths, or you could play it according to your impression of it - airy, spacious sounds, or whatever it could become.

The 'score', with the many large and smaller episodes, was first performed by a group of older children, with the different textures distributed among different groups, and a conductor showed when they were to start and finish. It was preceded by a thorough rehearsal process where each kind of graphical element was studied separately and practiced and developed at an easy, calm pace - for that purpose there are nine sheets of 'perfections'. Without a

conductor I myself have participated in a performance by the Intuitive Music Group - we agreed on a few places where certain players were to give signals.

The work consists of elements that are universal and simple enough not to lead to technical instrumental problems with groups of pupils. They should simply be kept to a disciplined rehearsal process and a playing-through. However it involves enough complexity to match the 'grown-up' contemporary music.

3. Jørgen Plaetner: 7. JANUAR (1996) from IMPROVISATION CALENDAR (cat.nr. T.0030)

hold dig til fire

“gode”

toner

(stick to four

“good”

notes)

The whole work, or perhaps we should say the improvisation basis, is reproduced here. The instructions say that the material should be limited to four notes per musician. Solo is thus also a possibility.

As far as I can see, it can be perceived in two ways. One is that the limitations make their full impact, so that the soundscape is manageable. The performers can then better hear what is happening and react musically to one another. They also have a reference point in the small universe of four notes whose possibilities they can then explore with all the more freedom.

A slightly different interpretation, which is presumably more likely to appeal to professionals, could have the four notes become even clearer and more manifest in the soundscape that is formed, like a monumental architecture, or another shade of the suggestively minimalistic.

But the second mode of interpretation is to allow oneself to be provoked by the limitations and the arbitrariness - why just four notes and why only notes and not other kinds of sounds? In this case I myself would make an effort to make the notes very different in register, volume etc. and thus force freedom of movement for myself. The struggle could lead to new provocations and inspirations. Nor is it even certain that everyone in an ensemble would interpret the basis in the same way.

By Carl Bergstrøm-Nielsen