

THE NUMBERS

a continuing series of self-imposed
compositional exercises

1. At chosen intervals over an extended period of time record moments of an environment whose sonic quality changes in time as a result of environmental processes (weather, erosion, flood, drought, animal activity, tides, seismic activity, fires).

May 1974

2. In an environment that changes through time perform activities that articulate some aspect of the change. Use sounds occurring naturally within the environment, processes utilizing those sounds, or sounds brought in from outside the environment.

May 1974

3. Use sound to map an environment. At each of several different locations within it record identifying sound or perform activities that articulate some distinguishing characteristic.

May 1974

4. Improve access to sonic environments that are either:
a) static, or changing at an imperceptible rate; or
b) extremely dense, too large to hear all at once.
Use any practical, non-destructive means: realtime listening; transformation in realtime or of pre-recorded

Numbers (2)

tape by electronic, acoustic, or mechanical devices.

May 1974

5. Find an environment whose daily or seasonal transformations are reflected in perceptible changes in some aspect of its sonic character. In realtime or using pre-recorded tape perform synthetic temporal alterations on the sounds of that environment: use ears or electronic, acoustic, or mechanical devices to modify one moment's sounds to resemble those of another time. Perform gradual or instantaneous transformations.

May 1974

6. Find an environment in which the sonic character changes from one location to another. In realtime or using pre-recorded tape perform synthetic geographical alterations on sounds of that environment: using ears or electronic, acoustic or mechanical devices modify the sounds of one location to resemble those of another. Perform gradual or instantaneous transformations.

May 1974

7. Carry the sounds of one environment through others. Distribute the sounds of one environment within another. Use electromagnetic, electronic, mechanical, or biologic recording and playback devices, or any other practical means.

May 1974

Numbers (3)

8. Explore the interface--the boundary between environments: listen to, perform in, or otherwise articulate border regions; move continuously or by discrete units of time and space across interfaces.

August 1974

9. Find and explore a sequence of environments that share a common audible, visual, or conceptual element. Perform several times within the same region; each time follow a different common element. Consider any form of output (tape, photographs, drawings, notes) as a map to be used by other persons.

September 1974

10. Complete the loop: rather than taking material out of the environment, enter it as fully as possible and perform within it; maintain as an objective minimal disturbance of the system that you have entered; using any means recycle energy within the system--take no more than is necessary and return no more than the balance plus the energy needed for the unification of performer and environment.

September 1974

11. Find or create a sonic situation. Construct a multi-perspective, multi-dimensional representation of that situation by assembling: audio and visual recordings made through the different elements and objects in contact

Numbers (4)

with it; descriptions of and reactions to the situation by people who have perceived it in some way. Record the unrecordable: assemble an image of a situation that cannot be recorded and reproduced by ordinary means.

September 1974

12. A piece whose performance begins as soon as you consider it.

November 1974

13. When sound production in a performance generates very little visual material, incorporate actions that relate visually, sonically, and conceptually to the original piece. Design a set of actions that serves both to focus and to give an additional dimension of thickness to the piece.

November 1974

14. From Lisa Siegman. A piece that initially is very direct and highly accessible, but in performance moves from here through regions of progressively increasing subtlety or complexity, by transitions so gradual that access by the audience is never lost.

January 1975

15. A piece that consists of an event of finite duration repeated several times, as exactly as possible, with the repetitions separated by performances of other pieces.

Numbers (5)

The repetitions should serve to:

- a) erode the event, expose different aspects each time;
- b) imply a piece that is something more than the sum of the repetitions.

February 1975

16. A simple action or set of actions performed sequentially, simultaneously, and/or repeatedly by a large number of people.

February 1975

17. From Laura Pawel. One initial concept realized in several ways; each realization should stress a different fundamental concern: sound, movement, verbal information, visual design, etc. An exploration of the distinctions and overlapping between different performance frameworks.

February 1975

18. In any piece of technological music consider substituting performers for any or all electronic devices. How do you change the piece in order to accommodate the substitutions? How does this consideration change the ways that you approach music for electronics, for performers, and for both together?

May 1975

19. When designing an electronic module or network consider two cases for its use:

Numbers (6)

- a) within a self-stabilizing feedback system;
- b) within a system that responds to performance activities.

How do these considerations affect your design?

May 1975

20. Replace an electronic connection with an electro-acoustic one. Make a chain: amplifier-speaker-air space-microphone-preamp. Use it instead of a patchcord between any two electronic modules or as a feedback path between the output and input of one module. Explore the effects on the modules of performance activities within the air space.

May 1975

21. A piece that cannot be understood but only enjoyed.

May 1975

22. Instead of designing a performance "task," consider a "pleasure."

October 1975

23. From Marty Plotkin. A piece for a group of people who, unknowingly, have something unusual in common. The piece should be designed to bring out that common thing, in any such group.

November 1975

Numbers (7)

24. From Ron Kuivila. A piece in which the performers are not allowed to do anything interesting, but what results is interesting.

February 1976

25. From Lisa Siegman. Find a way of making someone listen to something he or she does not want to hear.

February 1976