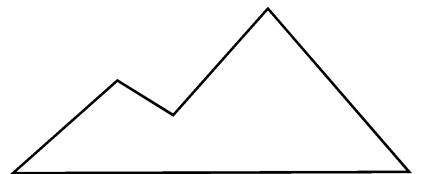


Prose Collection

Christian Wolff



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© by Christian Wolff 1969 (*Crazy Mad Love, Song, Double Song for JRN and CMAW, For Jill, Play, Play (Color Version), and Stones*); 1971 (*Sticks, You Blew It, Fits and Starts, Groundspace or Large Groundspace, Looking North, and Pit Music*); and 1985 (*X for Peace Marches*).

Crazy Mad Love

Number of articulations (of any kind) per word, using any of the three title words, in any sequence and freely repeated:

5 2 1 2 11 2 1 3 3 1 2

“1” articulation must be managed as far as possible, particularly with the two syllable word; observe the numbers in the sequence given, which can be repeated as often as desired and cut off at any point; spaces, pauses between numbers (articulations of single words) are free.

The same numbers and requirements apply to each non-vocal production of a sound. Include at least one vocal and one non-vocal playing in any performance.

From one to six people can play.

Song

One singer, any number accompanying.

The singer should choose a name she likes. If it is the name of someone you yourself know, then use the full first name. If not, use the first, middle (if usual) and surname. Make one sound on each syllable of the name or for each letter or combination of letters not exceeding a syllable in length; and once make three sounds on a syllable or letter or combination of letters. Do not repeat the name more than once, if that.

The accompaniment should be made up of chords of at least five sounds (one sound may sustain through from one chord to another, but not through more than two subsequent chords). Once use four sounds for a chord. Play each chord simultaneously with a sound of the singer. If there is only one name, the singer should at some point make one of his sounds without accompaniment; if more than one, two sounds without accompaniment.

Double Song for JRN and CMAW

No more beer: sing lightly or speak with lilt (something like a sigh without the final downward fall) each word, beginning with the first repeated as often as desired, then the second as often as desired, then likewise the third, all in approximately the rhythm of your respiration.

Fee fie fo fum: at the same time, in the same way, but only on every second or third or sixth or seventh breath.

At least two singers, in any case a more or less equal number doing each of the texts, each singer using the rhythms of his own breathing.

Optional accompaniment: no more than one for every five singing (one may accompany fewer than five) independently playing continuous melodies (not necessarily characterized outstandingly by pitch, having four or more alterations of sound, generally quiet) at any time, with any amount of pause between them, but always beginning together with one of the singer's sounds.

For Jill

At least several players. Instructions are for each player, except possibly for playing some of the chords (several could combine to play a chord).

Construct an instrument, or find something, or use an instrument as part of a construction which can make 5 different pitches, or 11 or 3 different pitches; 6 different qualities of sound (they can be made to depend on the manner of performance), or 2; and which can sustain sounds at least somewhat before they begin to fade.

Play melodies of 5 notes (no more than 11 times); melodies of 2 notes (no more than 4 times); a melody of 31 notes (optional for all but 1 player; but can be played any number of times by any number of players). Any of the above, except for the 1 melody, can be omitted by any of the players.

Play chords of 5 notes (no more than twice); a chord of 17 notes (at least once); chords of 4 notes (no more than a total of 1 less than the total numbers of players).

If chords are made by a combination of players they can be partly or entirely sung (on *o* as in open, on “b,” with minimum vocalization, on *oo*, as in cool, on *dj*, as in Jill). Any of the chords can be omitted.

Play

Play, make sounds, in short bursts, clear in outline for the most part; quiet; two or three times move towards as loud as possible, but as soon as you cannot hear yourself or another player stop directly. Allow various spaces between playing (2, 5 seconds, indefinite); sometimes overlap events. One, two, three, four or five times play a long sound or complex or sequence of sounds. Sometimes play independently, sometimes by coordinating; with other players (when they start or stop or while they play or when they move) or a player should play (start or, with long sounds, start and stop or just stop) at a signal (or within 2 or 5 seconds of a signal) over which he has no control (does not know when it will come). At some point or throughout use electricity.

Play

Color version

Play, make sounds,
etc.....

red; blue; white; green; yellow; black; silver; sharp, short sound; flat; silence;
simpler relationships (1:2, 2:3, 3:4) mixed with less simple (5:6, 7:8); with
breath or air; soft; long, thin, or flourished.

Variable shades.

Colors need not be symbols for sounds, nor sounds for colors.

Consider making, sometimes, a fabric with some design in it, but not in two
dimensions.

Or, allow for the possibility of periodicities appearing, and disappearing (for
instance, shortly on being identified, or immediately on being imitated, or
within 3 to 7 seconds of a signal).

At some point drop two of the colors and two of the descriptions listed
above; and shortly before finishing introduce five new ones.

Are musical sounds to other sounds as black and white is to color?

Are the colors necessary? Lights, painting, confetti, the colors already there.
What about texture? Smooth, lumpy, gritty; streaks, powdered, smeared,
even, edged, trailing.

Colors are not to objects one sees as a sound quality to sounds one hears. Or
are they?

Stones

Make sounds with stones, draw sounds out of stones, using a number of sizes and kinds (and colors); for the most part discretely; sometimes in rapid sequences. For the most part striking stones with stones, but also stones on other surfaces (inside the open head of a drum, for instance) or other than struck (bowed, for instance, or amplified). Do not break anything.

Sticks

Make sounds with sticks of various kinds, one stick alone, several together, on other instruments, sustained as well as short. Don't mutilate trees or shrubbery; don't break anything other than the sticks; avoid outright fires unless they serve a practical purpose.

You can begin when you have not heard a sound from a stick for a while; two or three can begin together. You may end when your sticks or one of them are broken small enough that a handful of the pieces in your hands cupped over each other are not, if shaken and unamplified, audible beyond your immediate vicinity. Or hum continuously on a low note; having started proceed with other sounds simultaneously (but not necessarily continuously); when you can hum no longer, continue with other sounds, then stop. With several players either only one should do this or two or two pairs together (on different notes) and any number individually.

You can also do without sticks but play the sounds and feelings you imagine a performance with sticks would have.

You Blew It

The letters stand for the sounds, as far as can be managed, which the letters in the above phrase stand for, except that “ou” stands for both the “ou” in “you” and the “ew” in “blew”.

y ou—b lou i t
t—you bl ou i
it—y ou blou
ou—it y ou—bl
lou t—y ou—b b l ou—i t—you
ou—blou it
bl ou—it

Inflections possible at line ends: ? (proper or rhetorical) or . (declarative or ironical) or ! (pleased, displeased or invoking).

Pauses of any lengths are represented by the spaces between letters or combinations of letters.

Durations of sounds may be long (ca. 3 seconds or longer) or free.

Where letters or combinations of letters are connected by a line:

- (a) those before the line (e.g. ou—) should be long and those after (—b) are free; then, at the next pair,
- (b) those before the line are free and those after long, then
- (c) both those before and those after are free.

Thereafter freely between (a), (b) and (c), and occasionally apply one of them to two successive sets of letters or combinations of letters connected by a line.

Each of any number of players may start at any line; repeat any line as often as desired before continuing to another, but do not return to it. Sing as many of the lines as desired.

When using pitches repeat no pitch on successive vocal articulations.

Fits and Starts

Four or five of the following sequences represented to start with.

Any number of players; any one player playing one or more of the sequences; any number of players playing the same sequence.

Each player follows her own pulse, generally within the limits of one beat per $\frac{5}{6}$ of a second to one beat per $1\frac{1}{3}$. Generally, though without straining to, avoid another's pulse.

The duration of a sound, unless some further articulation of it (which may include its stopping) is used to mark a rhythm, should not exceed about $2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds (and may be any shorter length).

1. 1 sound or articulation of a sound underway: every 21 beats, omitted every 6th time the 21st beat comes round.
2. 1 sound or articulation: at the 11th beat, then at the 12th, then 13th,, etc., always adding one.
3. 1 sound or articulation: at the 10th beat, the 29th, 60th, then 10th, 29th, 60th, etc., always repeating.
4. 1 sound or articulation: at the 120th beat; 2 sounds or articulations at the next 100th; 1 at next 90th; 2 at next 80th; 1 at next 70th; 2 at next 60th; 1 at next 50th; 1 at next 40th; 2 at next 30th; 1 at next 20th; 2 at next 10th; then 1 at next 20th; 2 at next 10th; then 1 at next 20th; 2 at next 30th; 1 at next 40th; 1 at next 50th; 2 at next 60th, etc., back to 1 at next 120th, then forward again, and back, etc.
5. 1 sound or articulation: 15 beats after 4 sounds or articulations heard; then 4 beats after 4 sounds or articulations heard; then 15 beats after 4 sounds, etc., heard, then 4 beats after 4, etc., always alternating; or (freely changing back and forth): 2 sounds or articulations: 21 beats, then 3 beats, then 50, then 21, 3, 50 always repeating, after 3 sounds or articulations.
6. 1 sound or articulation every 42 beats; or (alternating freely) 2 sounds or articulations every 29th or 58th beat.

Players may shift from one sequence to another at any point within a sequence.

When a player has a sense of the music of his rhythm(s) he may proceed simply on the basis of that sense, and hence to her own rhythms.

Groundspace or Large Groundspace

1. Make single sounds, occasionally very long: very soft to mf. Play melodies or flourishes of about 4 notes or changes of sound (or changes of aspects of a sound), of about 3, 8, 25 notes or changes. Allow spaces between playing, at least so that you may every now and again get a sense of the space in which you are playing, and at least once so that there is a point when no one appears to be playing.
2. Instruments or sound sources that carry well start in a middle distance of the space and then move off and away.
3. Instruments or sound sources that must be immobile can also use amplification and loudspeakers apart from themselves and possibly movable.
4. Instruments or sound sources that do not carry far start in the middle distance and approach potential listeners.
5. At some time a player may seek out another player and play a duet with him.

(Examples of (2): brass instruments, motors (at no more than medium loudness; if greater loudness inevitable, start at a remoter place and move still further away); of (3): piano, if there is no vehicle to move it or the terrain is bad; of (4): doublebass, electrically powered sound source with a weak battery.)

For various instruments and sound sources one will have to determine how well, in the circumstances, they carry, at no more than medium loudness. Borderline cases could move in directions other than those indicated for (2) and (4), e.g. on the pattern of a fan, for the most part away from the center (several centers are possible).

Movement and making sounds may coincide but neither should make the other obviously awkward or difficult, except very occasionally.

Each player should take the limits of the space to be wherever she is sometimes audible, at whatever loudness, to one other person and where he can sometimes hear one other person. If these limits are passed, she may consider the piece finished.

Looking North

Think of, imagine, devise, a pulse, any you choose, of any design.

When you hear a sound or see a movement or smell a smell or feel any sensation not seeming to emanate from yourself, whose location in time you can sense, and its occurrence coincides, at some point, with your pulse, make your pulse evident:

in some degree; for any duration.

- (a) Express all coincidences.
- (b) Express only every tenth one.
- (c) Forget your pulse and play as closely as you can to every second, fifth, twentieth and single expression of pulse of one other player (this can be repeated as in a loop).
- (d) Play a very long, generally low pitched and quiet melody without particular reference to a pulse (once only).
- (e) At any point stop.
- (f) At any point stop, think of another pulse, and proceed as above.

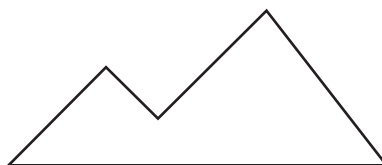
Or: think of, imagine, devise, any number of pulses. . . and so on, as above.

Pit Music

“A pit is dug [or discovered] to serve as a resonance cavity or sound bowl, and close to it a wand [or other flexible material] is stuck into the ground [or otherwise set firm] with a string tied to its free end. The other end of the string is knotted into a piece of bark or similar material, which is placed over the pit like a lid over a pot and is weighted down [or otherwise secured] by a ring of stones or earth. The wand and lid are then adjusted to create sufficient tension to keep the string taut. In playing, the musician’s [musicians’] interest in melody asserts [may assert] itself.”

X for Peace Marches

Any number can take part, for as long as it takes, thinking not so much of filling the space and time as indicating a purposeful presence (consider ways of conveying presence sometimes by doing less, even nothing, while maintaining alertness), whistling (a) and clapping hands (b): (a) with exactly two pitches (repeatable); one; four; five; three, not exactly in that order only, (b) with exactly two sounds (claps); three; five; four; one, not necessarily in that order only, any of the above collaboratively or cumulatively, that is, shared out (one pitch yours, the other two—if working with three—another's; one of you whistling, another clapping, etc.), or adding up or on (to another's playing, say, of five, you add two, for a new playing of seven; or play three with another's three; whistling and clapping at the same time by one or more persons, etc.), including, as possible or suitable, material relating to the title of this piece (posters, leaflets, information, slides, videos, etc.), and consider movement, for instance, to, from or between high, very high for a while, soft, low, very low, strong, and so on.



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