

For 3, 7, 15, 31 63, or 127 performers using the equipment specified.

For 127 performers the piece is performed with the performers' roles hierarchically arranged as in appendix 1. There is a 'back row' of 64 performers, followed by a 'second row' of 32 performers, a 'third row' of 16 and so on until a 'front row' of 1 performer. The 'back row' of performers each has a stereo tape-recorder loaded with identical stereo tapes. They listen to these tapes through stereo headsets and, following instructions exemplified in appendix 2, speak into close microphones. These microphones, via stereo amplifiers (pre-amps are sufficient), feed the stereo headsets of the 32 'second row' performers - each 'back row' performer corresponding to an 'ear' of the next row. In the same way, these 32 feed the headsets of the next 16, and so on until the front row has no headset to feed. He performs the same tasks as the other 126 (or 62, 30,14,6,2; see next paragraph) performers except that he is heard by non-performers. The diagram in appendix 1 makes this clear.

The piece may be performed in any number of clear arrangements that make visually apparent the organisation of the piece. The network of performers is, in this case, the score ('score' being here defined as the means whereby a non-performer may deductively comprehend the logic of the piece's construction). Performers have 'instructions' (as distinct from 'scores') for tasks to be performed which fix their relationships with the performers with whom they are most closely connected. Self-evidently the simplest visual arrangement is the symmetrical 'F.A. Cup' reduction from 3rd round (64 clubs) to winner of final (1 club). Many other, equally Busby Berkeley-like, solutions are possible, though all should tend towards symmetry. A 'non-cable' performance (using radio mikes, hence available to moving performers e.g. dance) should preserve the network intact to prevent confusion to the listener. The piece may be performed by the numbers given at the head of this page corresponding, in reverse, to back rows of 64,32, 16,8, 4, and 2; the latter being the minimum. When only a solo performer is used, the piece becomes a version of 'Private Music' (see this collection).

Each performer 'shadows', according to instructions exemplified in appendix 2, part of what he hears. 'Shadowing' is, here, defined as "hearing and repeating what you hear as you hear it". In addition, each performer may, on changing shadowing instructions (see appendix 2), alter the 'normal' or 'reverse' stereo arrangement on the amplifier to which his microphone is attached (affecting the listening of the performer in the next row). Performers shadow constantly as long as there is material on their headset.

The material on the tapes consists of readings of the poetry of Patience Strong recorded by at least 2 differentiated voices on separate channels. The voices read the poems continuously and, during recording, panning and volume changes should take place constantly. Mono tapes may be used if stereo equipment is not available, though in recording the voices should be constantly modified by recording levels. In this case (lack of stereo equipment) a 'proto-model' performance may be better in which only the back row have headsets (whether to stereo or mono tapes fulfilling the stated requirements) and each performer speaks at a very low level directly into the ears of the next row performers. Visually, this may, of necessity, be performed by a 'human pyramid' acrobatic team.

The title of the piece is taken from Miss Strong's collection "The Quiet Hour" (published by Frederick Muller, copyright Patience Strong 1966). The piece is in no sense a 'guying' of Miss Strong's work, for which I have a profound admiration and I recall, with pleasure, an enlightening hour spent over coffee with Miss Strong at the Charing Cross Hotel, London, one winter morning in 1970, when we discussed, among many other things, the piece here described.

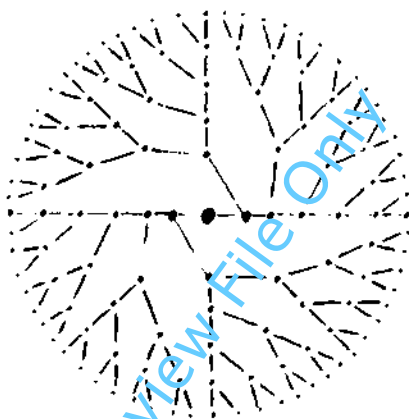
The 'back row' tapes may be made by the performers prior to performance or obtained direct from EMC at cost.

fig.A



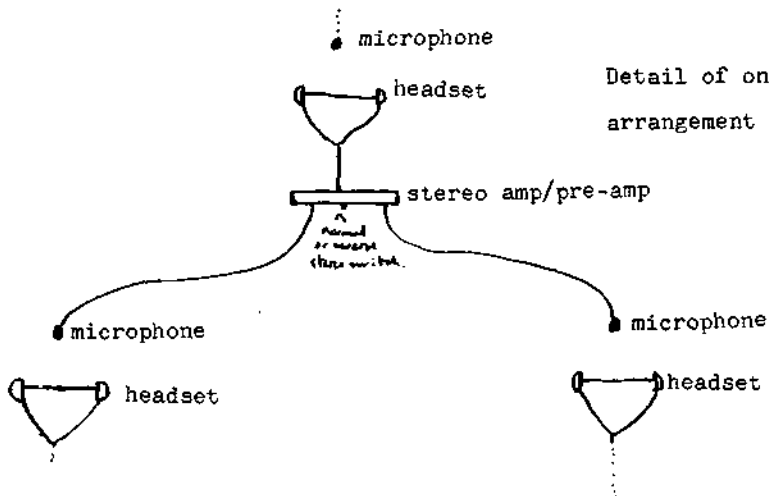
each dot = one performer
in figs. A and B

fig.B



Preview File Only

fig.C



Detail of one triangular
arrangement from above

Leaning on a Five-barred Gate

Track the right ear

Track the left ear

Track the female voice

Track the loudest voice

Track the voice in the centre of the stereo picture

Track the male voice with the closest resemblance to your own regional dialect

Track the voice that is in motion

Track the softest voice

Track the softest male voice

Track the most familiar-sounding voice

Track alternating voices in the sequence male-female-male-female etc. for one phrase each

Track the loudest male voice

Track the highest pitched male voice

Track the most unfamiliar-sounding voice

Track the deepest pitched voice

Movement from one instruction to another should be smooth and there should be no point at which the tracker is silent except in the situation where it is impossible to perform the instructions (e.g. the left ear may temporarily contain no voices).