

CATALOGUE DE GRENOUILLES

CATALOGUE OF FROGS

by ANDREW HUGILL, 1988

Playing Instructions & programme

MATERIALS

The piece comprises the following elements:

- 1) Recordings of frog calls
- 2) Parts for bass-clarinet and tuba
- 3) Parts for string trio (string numbers may be increased)
- 4) Part for percussion trio (multiple trios may be used)
- 5) Part for piano solo

PERFORMANCE

1) FROGS

The number of frog tapes used is variable, depending upon availability of portable cassette playback facility. Performers may prefer to prepare their own tapes, but, if not, prepared tapes are available from the composer (20 Mountcastle Road, Leicester, England). These comprise the following recordings:

a) Solo Tape (or "diva") - 9 minutes of the best quality recordings, without a break. In performance these should be controlled by a single performer who should be ambulant. The solo tape performer has the right to rewind or pause the tape according to his or her discretion.

b) 8 "Foreground" tapes each of c.15 mins. duration. These separate individual frog calls with silences of variable duration. These recordings should be scattered around the auditorium and should be activated at or near the start of the performance either by the ambulant solo tape performer or by individual foreground tape performers (who may also walk around with their tape machines if they wish).

c) 5 "background" tapes. These are cassette loops. All five should be used, or they may be entirely omitted. The sounds on these loops are very quiet. In a performance which utilizes these background tapes, the playback should surround the auditorium and should remain static throughout the performance. Each loop should be faded in gradually (one by one) to start the piece and faded out at the end. They form a continuous, if, for the most part inaudible, backdrop to the performance.

Maximum volume is recommended for all playback. The portable cassette players ("ghetto-blasters") need not be of a high quality (nor even stereo of necessity) since the recordings are rather lo-fi.

2) HUMANS

The four instrumental groups should separate as much as possible. With the exception of the piano, the parts contain some sounds which

are intended to be imitations of frog calls and other sounds which are more obviously "human". The aim is to blur the distinction between frog and human musician. Therefore performers are encouraged to take note of the frog calls around them and respond accordingly. All instrumental groups may perform as much or as little of their given parts as they wish. Responsibility for deciding the amount to be played should be taken by the leader of each group, within the general guidelines laid down by the performance director. Instrumental groups should remain seated throughout, with the exception of the percussion trio(s) who are at liberty to move throughout the auditorium.

### 3) GENERAL NOTES

#### Title

Seasonal variants of this piece, entitled Spring/Summer/Autumn/Winter Catalogue of Frogs, are available. Since frogs make different calls depending upon the atmospheric conditions, these should strictly contain only those calls, but weather conditions vary across the globe, so the use of a seasonal title is acceptable under any circumstances if desired.

#### Aesthetic

There is no avoiding the fact that people find frogs funny, but, despite this, the aesthetic of this piece is delicate and perhaps somewhat melancholic. At the time of composition, I had learnt of a 35% drop in the world's frog population, thanks to deforestation and other destruction of habitat. The beauty of many of the frog calls thus struck me as poignant.

Performance of this piece should be undertaken in a serious (but not gloomy) manner. Some use of lighting will help (green would seem to be a sensible colour), but there should be no attempt to enhance (or, more cynically, send up) the performance with frog-type costumes, squeaky frog toys, or any other such devices. The intention is to create a sympathetic environment in which frogs (and humans) can call to one another.

#### Duration

This is not fixed, but experience has shown that c.12 mins. works well.

#### Order of events

Again, not fixed, although a clear structure should be understood by all before the performance begins (an overall director should determine this).

What follows is a formula which seems to have developed out of several performances of the piece and works well, but it should be viewed merely as a suggestion.

<u>EVENTS</u>	<u>TIME</u>
1) Background tapes fade in	0"
2) Solo tape begins/Foreground tapes on	1'0"
3) Strings enter at will	1'30"
4) Bass clarinet/ tuba enter at will	1'45"
5) Percussion enter at will	2'00"
6) Piano enters, plays through material without a break	4'00" 10'00"
7) Piano ends	
8) All other instruments end at will, foreground tapes are turned off one by one (in silences), solo tape is stopped	11'00"
9) Background tapes fade out	12'00"

## PROGRAMME NOTES

Catalogue de Grenouilles (Catalogue of Frogs), 1988      Andrew Hugill

The inspiration for this miniature amphibian opera comes from the writings of the French philologist and railway functionary Jean-Pierre Brisset, whom the Surrealists ironically dubbed "The Prince of Thinkers". Brisset's writings reinterpret Creation from a purely linguistic viewpoint and lead him to the firm conclusion that Mankind is descended from the Frog. Transcending the commonplace observation that tadpoles resemble spermatozoa, Brisset hears the Frog's interrogative croak as the French word "quoi?" (what?) - the first and fundamental question. Through an incredible network of puns, he develops this idea to incorporate the whole of evolution and God himself.

The piece presents an arbitrary environment in which actual frogs call and speak. There is a human presence, but the distinction between human and frog musicians is frequently blurred. The musical content of the work is not fixed, the performers choosing from a range of options. It is, however, derivative to a certain extent: the percussionists play a systemic pattern drawn from Beckett's Watt (!) in which the hero falls into a ditch and hears three frogs calling regularly this 120-beat pattern; the strings make a brief reference to John White's WUT; the piano part is built over a ground bass drawn from the Opening of Holst's Uranus, from The Planets Suite (Brisset makes much of the pun "ure anus", from the coincidental fact that frogs urinate through their anus and Uranus was the father of the Gods).

Catalogue de Grenouilles is the first of a set of three compositions which derive from Brisset. Kodok (also written for "George W. Welch) mixes gamelan with the purely human elements from the Catalogue. Brisset Rhythms, for solo female voice and medieval instruments (commissioned by Sara Stowe and Matthew Spring, with funds made available by East Midlands Arts), is a semi-theatrical setting of Brisset's texts. The first performance of Catalogue de Grenouilles was given by George W. Welch at Lauderdale House, Highgate on March 23rd, 1988.

The recordings of frogs used in all performances to date were made in the field by Dr. Rob Oldham of Leicester Polytechnic, to whom the piece is gratefully dedicated.

Andrew Hugill, 29.12.90

Piano

Catalogue de Grenouilles

Andrew Hugill

slow (♩ = 66)

*p* sempre

Ped.

\* Ped. simile

8

8

8

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8

Handwritten musical notation for the first system. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a complex melodic line with many accidentals (sharps and naturals) and slurs. The bass staff contains a simpler accompaniment with block chords and some moving lines. A bracket above the first measure is labeled with the number '8'. A 'Coda' symbol is present at the end of the system.

8

Handwritten musical notation for the second system. Similar to the first system, it features a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The treble staff has a highly decorated melodic line with numerous accidentals. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and some melodic fragments. A bracket above the first measure is labeled with the number '8'.

8

Handwritten musical notation for the third system. The grand staff continues the piece. The treble staff's melody is very intricate with many accidentals. The bass staff has a more active line with some triplets. A bracket above the first measure is labeled with the number '8'.

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system. The notation is dense with accidentals in both staves. The treble staff has a complex melodic pattern, while the bass staff has a more rhythmic accompaniment. A bracket above the first measure is labeled with the number '4'.

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system. The piece concludes with a 'Coda' symbol at the bottom. The treble staff has a melodic line with some slurs and accidentals. The bass staff has a few chords and a simple melodic line. A bracket above the first measure is labeled with the number '4'.

8

Handwritten musical notation for the first system, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom in bass clef. It features various notes, rests, and accidentals (sharps and flats). A bracket with the number '8' is positioned above the first measure. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system, consisting of two staves. It continues the piece with various notes and accidentals. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

Handwritten musical notation for the third system, consisting of two staves. It continues the piece with various notes and accidentals. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

8

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system, consisting of two staves. It continues the piece with various notes and accidentals. A bracket with the number '8' is positioned above the first measure. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

8

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system, consisting of two staves. It continues the piece with various notes and accidentals. A bracket with the number '8' is positioned above the first measure. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

8 - - - - -

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

8 - - - - -

10 11 12

15 8

This system contains three measures of music. The first measure is marked with a '15' above the staff and a 'C' time signature. The second measure is marked with a '2' above the staff. The third measure is marked with an '8' above the staff. The music is written for piano with treble and bass staves.

15 8

This system contains three measures of music. The first measure is marked with a '15' above the staff. The second measure is marked with a '2' above the staff. The third measure is marked with an '8' above the staff. The music is written for piano with treble and bass staves.

This system contains three measures of music. The first measure is marked with a 'C' time signature. The second measure is marked with a 'C' time signature. The third measure is marked with a 'C' time signature. The music is written for piano with treble and bass staves.



Bass Clarinet /  
Tuba

Catalogue de Grenouilles

André  
Hugill

① PLAY THESE SCALES IN ANY ORDER, AND ANY NUMBER OF TIMES

(♩=90) *f* *acc.* *lunga*

*Tempo I* *f* *acc.* *lunga*

(Sim.)

(Sim.)

② REPEAT AS MANY TIMES AS YOU WISH  
(♩=90)

*pp* *ff*

*pp* *ff*

③ IMITATE FRDG SOUNDS ON TAPES

A FEW SUGGESTIONS:

Rapid key clicks: High "cries"

"Pop" by crashing tubing: low "groans", sporadic: High two at the note reps.

④ REPEAT THESE 'CRIES' AT WILL

f urgent

f urgent

⑤ AS SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE.

f

f

⑥ REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES  
(1=90)

pp ff pp

pp ff pp

N.B. These six events may be performed in any order.  
Any of them may be omitted.  
Event 3 may be interspersed freely.

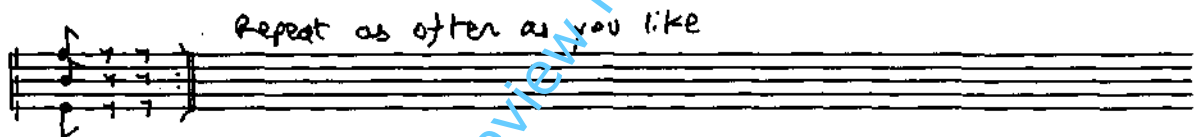
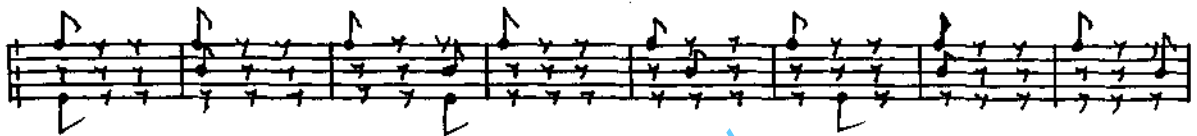
PERCUSSION

Catalogue de Grenouilles

Andrew  
Hugill

Any speed wished

High  
mid.  
Low



Repeat as often as you like

N.B. The pattern may be played by one, two, or three players.  
The three instruments should sound similar to one another.  
Different instruments may be used in a single performance.

In large-scale performances there may be multiple  
percussion groups, all playing this pattern in their  
own time.

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Double Bar = lengthy pause  
"white" notes last more than 15 secs.  
"black" notes last up to 15 secs.

flag. 8-7  
con sord. (sempre)

flag. 8-7  
con sord. (sempre)

trem.  
(norm) quasi gliss

slow gliss.  
behind bridge

behind bridge

behind bridge

f repeat ad lib.

gliss...

col legno

p behind bridge  
con sord (sempre)

Andante

mp

mf

mf

mf

gliss.

sfmp

p

mf

mf

sfmp

pulse gently

mp

mf

sfmp

rep. ad lib. vary no.

mf col legno

p

gliss.

sul pont.

norm.

regular pulse

behind bridge

behind bridge

behind bridge

mp

rep. ad lib. vary no.

mf col legno