

'1,2,1-2-3-4'

For instrumentalists (/vocalists), each wearing a headset connected to either a portable tape-recorder or a cassette machine (stereo or mono). The performer's 'part' ranges from an acquaintance with the sort of thing that is played in the headset prior to performance, to a careful practice of several weeks with the headset ('woodshedding'). Each performer hears a selection of familiar music, ranging from any given speed to the slowest of the selection and eventually to a single organ chord. The rate at which the music heard in the headset becomes the organ chord varies from performer to performer and, though each performer begins with the same piece or type of music, and though he is heard to play the same chord, the notes which he plays in that last chord are related to the chord he hears in his headset (which gives a different chord to the one acoustically available) with the curious intonation due to the enharmonic difference between what the performer believes he plays and what he is heard to play. Each performer plays the 'part' that corresponds to his instrument: thus a bassist is likely, if the music is jazz, to be playing more than a violinist. In the case of a base-player hearing jazz (and, hence, usually a double-bass) on his headset, he would attempt as best he can to play the bass-line that he can hear on the headset such that there is an intended 1 to 1 relationship between what he hears himself play and what he hears pre-recorded. He may try his part beforehand as frequently and as diligently as possible or he may choose to 'busk' 'on the night', like the accompanist in cabaret who is told, in the middle of the act on stage, that there is no part for the next number but that it is 'Happy Streets and Paper Rainbows in D flat 1,2,1-2-3-4' (and his entry must be prompt, even to the extent of 'inventing' in this case an 8-bar introduction!).

Tapes/cassettes of any agreed-upon length may be used pre-recorded in the following manner: all recordings begin with the same piece, or type of piece, and after one playing of that they diverge one by one, such that the second piece, or type of piece, would have one less person playing it. That person would be joined in his second piece-type by a 3rd person, after that 3rd person's second piece.

The choice of pieces is made such that each subsequent one is slower than the one before and, eventually, one by one, the performers have only an organ chord left, which is sustained until all the performers have organ chords in their headsets.

So, the sequence may be illustrated graphically thus, where A-E are performers and 1 etc and a etc give the different types of piece and O gives the organ chords

A labcde00000
B 12bcdef0000
C 123cdefg000
D 1234defgh00
E 12345efghi0 etc.

It should be pointed out that the vertical arrangement does not give simultaneity (i.e. not in any sense 'vertical' or 'harmonic' time).

The organ chords are chosen from the following lists with the attendant played note in parentheses. In selecting the chords there should be a balance such that there is a preponderance of B's (at least one of which should be lowest), followed by F sharps, then D sharps, then G sharps, and C sharps (least). The last 3 notes should never be lower than G sharp below middle C (bearing in mind the parenthetical control of the B, mentioned above), and should generally be the higher notes. Notes may be omitted). Thus the final chord may be (e.g.)

B, F sharp, B, D sharp, F sharp, G sharp, E, C sharp... or B, F sharp, B, D sharp, F sharp, G sharp... or B, F sharp, B, D sharp, F sharp, B... or B, F sharp, B... or B.... or combinations within these.

Organ Chords in Readsets

(b)...G major, A flat minor, E major, E minor, E flat major with augmented 5th, A flat diminished 7th, C sharp 7th, D major added 6th, D minor with added 6th etc. etc.

(F sharp)... F sharp major, F sharp minor, D major, A major added 6th, B flat augmented 5th, E flat diminished 7th, A flat 7th etc. etc.

(D sharp)... E flat major, E flat minor, C minor, A flat major, A flat minor, F 7th, G major augmented 5th, C diminished 7th, F sharp major added 6th, F sharp minor added 6th etc. etc.

(G sharp)... A flat major, A flat minor, E major, F minor, C major with augmented 5th, D flat major, D flat minor, F diminished 7th etc. etc.

(C sharp)... C sharp major, C sharp minor, A major, B flat minor, E flat 7th, F sharp major, F sharp minor, E major added 6th, F major augmented 5th, B flat diminished 7th etc. etc.

The piece begins with a 'conductor' (who may be a performer) tapping his feet to '1,2,1-2-3-4'; then everyone switches on his tape/cassette and begins.

For John White who, while not a busker, does swing.