

Cornelius Cardew - Third Orchestral Piece 1960

Interpretation.

1. Play each section over & over. Progress among the sections in any way. Refer back to sections.
2. No beat should be twice as long or short or more than those on either side of it. No beat should be subdivided by the conductor.
3. Any note may be played or not. Generally speaking, this decision rests with the instrumentalists. Hollow notes ($\dot{\cdot}$, $\dot{\cdot}$, $\dot{\cdot}$, $\dot{\cdot}$) are on the borderline between being played or not.
4. There are four rhythmic entrances or positions in the beat:
 $\dot{\cdot}$ on the beat, $\dot{\cdot}$ just after the beat, $\dot{\cdot}$ between beats, $\dot{\cdot}$ just before the beat.
5. Dynamics & durations are free.
6. All indications are relative to the instrument concerned. No indication is valid for more than one rhythmic entrance. No indication is binding; the indications are suggestions.
7. The given notes, when played, are binding. The four positions in the beat are binding. The conductor's beat is binding. The conductor's word is not necessarily binding.

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The rules for interpretation are appreciable separately or as a whole. The various rules interact with one another & imply certain procedures.

The four signs for rhythmic entrances or positions in the beat say nothing about the durations of the sounds. There are occasional suggestions for durations in the score: staccato, ∇ portato, \curvearrowright longer.

In rehearsal, perhaps it will be best to start by having all the musicians play all their notes, & hold them for a long time, over a slow beat that is regular. In the course of playing any ~~group~~ ^{section} over & over, all these conditions may be relaxed. Thus, all subsequent versions of a ~~group~~ ^{section} will appear as aspects of this densest sound that you have encouraged at the outset. And all rhythmic irregularities will appear as deviations from the clear rhythmic profile that you have encouraged at the outset. This rhythmic profile should never disappear altogether (see rule 2).

Of the 4 positions in the beat, only J is synchronised, since the conductor may not sub-divide the beat. ∇F & ∇F will be approximately synchronised, but ∇F allows considerable latitude, depending on the tempo. But, if desired, the musicians may be encouraged to synchronise their entries amongst each other.

The opportunities for melodic articulation are not profuse, but they may be exploited.

Dynamics are free, but here also there are suggestions in the score. I imagine ff & pp as the extreme dynamics, and f & p between them as accounting for the whole intervening range. Or perhaps f & p can mean louder or softer than the context.

Rule 5 is the natural consequence of rule 3; together with the freedom either to play or not, must come the freedom to play more or less, i.e. softer or louder, & shorter or longer. The occasional hollow notes stand for the critical point - the sort of sound that leaves you in doubt as to whether it was there or not, & if it was there, as to whether it was by accident or intent. Thus the hollow notes are either extremely soft or extremely short or both. Untongued attacks & imperceptible entries may also be used to this end.

Two sweeping conclusions can be drawn from rule 3. Firstly, a smaller orchestra may be used than that indicated; but remember that it is a piece for orchestra (the numbers should not be reduced by more than half, I should think). Secondly, no ~~group~~ ^{section} has to be played: the conductor may omit any ~~group~~ ^{section} that embarrasses him, or which he has no feeling to interpret.

For the orientation of the players as to which ~~group~~ ^{section} you will conduct next, I suggest the following procedure: Cut out each separate ~~group~~ ^{section} & paste it onto a page of its own (2 copies of the score & a lot of blank pages will be necessary for this). It will then be necessary to turn a page to get to the next ~~group~~ ^{section}, & the players can observe this. They can also observe it when you turn back 3 pages, or 5 pages, do not turn at all, etc., etc. This is only one of many possible solutions to this slight problem.

Progress among the sections may be random, or dependent on any internal characteristics of the sections themselves - many of the sections have features in common or in contrast. The piece may be played for any length of time.

About rule 6. It is not necessary (e.g.) to wait for the indication Mute before using one. Nor is it necessary to use always the same mute, where Mute is indicated. The same applies to pizz & arco; harmonics, Flz (flutter-tonguing) etc.

It is desirable that the musicians look after their own balance. Thus, any performance should include a multiplicity of viewpoints as to what is appropriate, etc. The musicians should take care of the sounds, & this will colour the conductor's job, which is to take care of the form (of the house that Jack built).

In playing sections over & over, & leading from one section to another, the final beat may also be the first beat of the repetition or of the next section as the case may be. Or there may be pauses between sections & between repetitions. Sounds may be held through these pauses into the next section or repetition, or as long as desired. Uniformity of interpretation is not required.

All instruments are written in the score at actual pitch.
An accidental applies only to the note it decorates.

The parts will contain no rules for interpretation; I leave to the conductor the ticklish business of pointing out their freedom to the musicians themselves. Thus, the parts will look perfectly normal, & I think it should be possible to introduce the various points in such a way that the musicians do not lose this faint feeling of familiarity.

Notes for individual sections.

B The first chord can be used as an object lesson about what can be discovered in any complex sound. You can isolate any group of instruments, any register, people who play tremolo, who play Flz, who play harmonics, who play pizz, etc., etc.; or all can play, but only one (any) of these isolated groups should sustain, or play loud, or make a crescendo, or play staccato, etc., etc. This can be applied to any complex sound in any section. A rehearsal should take the musicians on a guided tour of the sounds. This implies that the guide has already covered the ground, but in the course of the tour he may discover new things. Any indication applies to both instruments written on the stave, unless otherwise indicated (e.g. Vlns. I, '3. trem').
Vlns. I, $\text{9}^{\text{th}}\text{10}^{\text{th}}$ means 2 octaves higher.
The third 'cello should use his right thumb to make the artificial harmonic in the second bar.

P If the bass clarinet does not have this low Bb on his instrument, he of course plays nothing.

Q The glissando in the violins is free in duration, speed, & extent, and it can be free for each violinist individually, or the conductor can make it collective.

N **Q** **P** **A** These 4 sections can build up a total sound. For example, all the sounds of **N** & **Q** can be sustained, & then **P** & **A** can occur inside this total sound. All sustained sounds can make crescendi & diminuendi, etc.
These sections need not necessarily end the piece.

B

C

Piccolo
 Flutes
 Alto Flute
 Oboes
 Cor Anglais
 Eb Clarinet
 Clari
 Bass Clar.
 Alto Sax.
 Soprano Sax.
 Baritone
 Bassoon
 Double Bassoon
 Trumpet
 Trombone (normal)
 Alto
 Tenor Trombone
 Bass
 Tuba
 Horns
 Violins I
 Violins II
 Violas
 Cellos
 Double Basses

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D

E

FLTs 1, 2

Alto Flt

Clones 1, 2

Cor Anglais

E♭ Clarinet

Clarinets 1, 2

Bass Clarinet

Saxophones A, B

Bassoon 1, 2

Double Bassoon

Trumps 1, 2, 3, 4

Trumps A, B

Tuba

Horns 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Violins I 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Violins II 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Violas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Cellos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Basses 1, 2, 3, 4

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Mutes

col legno battuto

pizz

sul ponticello