

Southern Excursions

12 Amateur Found Object Percussionists, South and Southwest China Field Recordings

Jeff Roberts

Instrumentation

CD Track of Field Recordings

12 Wine Glasses

6 Wine Bottles

12 Drinking Glasses

3 Ceramic Plates

4 Small Ceramic Bowls

4 Ceramic Soup Bowls

2 Tibetan Prayer Bowls

16 Plastic Bottles

7 Tin Cans

6 Baroque Recorders (Soprano or Alto)

24 Metal Beaters (sections of coat hangers

* Various found objects for players 1-4
used for Group Improvisation sections

12 Timers

Performance Notes

Introduction

This piece represents a synthesis between live found object sound and field recordings made in Southern China and ethnic minority villages in the southwest Chinese provinces of Guizhou, Guangxi and Yunnan. The intention of this piece is to allow a group of performers to interact using live acoustic sound with the sounds of the village and surrounding natural environments of a variety of different cultures and locations.

This field recording/live performance interaction is meant to form a concrete composition with structural and aesthetic meaning on its own, but the underlying goal is to allow the performers to develop a more intimate listening experience with the everyday sounds of village life by using their found object sound worlds to creatively interact with these local sound worlds.

Anyone can perform this piece, but it is written for people not trained in music or not familiar with new or experimental music. Thus the piece can also be thought of as platform for an introduction or teaching through active participation. Techniques are simple and but should be rehearsed. Performance of each part is flexible and need not stay exactly within the designated playing times. But some accuracy should be developed in the performers in performing their parts. As well, performers should be rehearsed enough so that they are able to spend more time listening to each other and especially the field recording part as a way to create dialogue with other performers and to integrate their sounds into the village soundscapes.

Performing the Piece

Timers are synchronized to start together (and to start playback of the CD) with a cue from a central person at the beginning of the piece. Performers read from parts with starting and stopping times for each event to be performed.

Spatial Organization

Performers 1-4 should remain together as a group, preferably in front of the audience on a stage. Performers 5-12 can circle the audience from the sides and behind. If possible, place CD playback speakers both in front of and behind the audience. The overall goal is to blend the live sound (both in volume level and spatial location) with the recorded sound.

Performance Techniques

Wine Bottle

blow gently blow across the lip of the bottle to produce a pitch

Wine Glass, Drinking Glass, Plates, Small Bowl, Soup Bowl

chimes using two hand and two metal beaters, gently and spontaneously dangle them in and around the collection of glasses, bowls, etc to produce a wind chime effect.

Prayer Bowl

rub using a wood prayer bowl beater, rub the lip or side of the bowl continuously to eventually produce a sustained pitch

Performance Notes

Plastic Bottles

random use two empty plastic water bottles to spontaneously bounce them on a table surface to produce different spontaneous rhythms.

Tin Can

tap even rhythm the performer should choose a tempo of his/her own choice that is also different from any even rhythm tapping by other performers or in the field recordings

tap and count the performer will be given a ratio (e.g. 3:7) in his/her part. A tap on the can should occur on the first of each count. For example:

tap tap
1 2 3 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

repeat continuously for the time duration indicated.

Recorder

Chirp make short bird like chirps with one or two notes on the recorder. Use a light but spiked breath attack.

Trill rapidly move back and forth between 2 notes.

Various found objects

Performers 1-4 form a quartet where there are many instances of group improvisation. During these times, performers should interact using a collection of self-selected found objects that are unique to their own setup but that also blend well with the other found objects used by the ensemble.

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