sumtone

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michael edwards

snow shoes, maupin,
air conditioners, mother's,
fleas, satyricon, and you
(la cucaracha)

for bass clarinet
and computer or tape
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st2.1.35

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snow shoes, maupin, air conditioners, mother’s, fleas, satyricon, and you (la cucaracha) was written for Fritz Kronthalier. He generously provided many insights and sounds at the original sampling session and gave the first performance of the piece at the Toihaus Theatre in Salzburg, Austria, on the 17th May 2001.
the droll noon
where squadrons of worms creep up like stripteasers
to be raped by blackbirds.

Charles Bukowski
sometimes you’ve got to kill 4 or 5 thousand men before you somehow get to believe that the sparrow is immortal, money is piss and that you’ve been wasting your time.

C.B.

Karine Pichon

[ No, don’t laugh: when you’ve burned yourself and your skin is ruined, hop, you put some egg yolk on it and it heals perfectly, nice and quick. It’s a cookery thing. So why shouldn’t I try it with my zits? After all, I’ve already got the face of a sick martian, it won’t be any more shocking. ]
the war came running in and next I knew
I was in New Orleans
walking into a bar drunk
after falling down in the mud on a rainy night.
I saw one man stab another and I walked over and
put a nickel in the juke box.
it was a beginning. San
Francisco and New Orleans were two of my
favorite towns.

C.B.
by noon I have eaten and am asleep
dreaming of paying the rent
with numbered chunks of plastic
issued by a better
world.

C.B.
For some reason, the composition of this piece was dominated by my recollections of living in New Orleans, Summer 1993

lying on the couch drinking snow shoes, a disgusting-sounding but rather tasty little cocktail of Wild Turkey and peppermint schnapps; reading maupin’s “Tales of the City,” a famously-funny novel about San Francisco, which is very near to where I was living at the time when not in New Orleans; complaining about air conditioners, both their overuse in general and our lack thereof in particular; escaping every now and then to eat collard greens cooked with a whole pig’s foot at mother’s restaurant; scratching in the apartment of a partially-lobotomised cat crawling with ravenous fleas; watching Fellini’s satyricon with Ludi and Sarah, Sarah being the you of (la cucaracha) fame, the memorably efficacious killer of cockroaches pressed into duty when yours truly didn’t have the guts to deal with the 10cm-long flying, biting beasts. Michael John. Dead. Underwater. On the other side of the world.

“the war came running in and next I knew
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(Charles Bukowski)

Breath and breathing were main concerns and sound sources for the piece, hence extended periods of playing without the mouthpiece and an overall high noise content. The main processing techniques were: sound granulation/time-stretching/-scattering/-splintering using custom algorithms developed with CLM (thanks to CLM’s author Bill Schottstaedt of CCRMA, Stanford University); convolution, to meld bass clarinet and ambient sounds, including a recording of a steam organ from a Mississippi river boat—thanks Roland!; and my slippery chicken algorithmic composition software for the overall structuring of the instrumental and electronic parts. The piece consists in the main of long, continuous stretches of sound and focuses hardly at all (on the audible level at least) upon structures made up of “note events.”

This composition was made possible by the kind support of the “.KUNST Bundeskanzleramt” of the Austrian government.
The pre-prepared digital sound material for this piece comes in the form of either six stereo sound files to be mixed live, one 4-channel pre-mixed file, or one stereo pre-mixed file. All versions also need one extra (mono) click track. Ideally, a multi-channel sound system will be available for the performance, and the diffusion of the six pre-prepared sound files will be performed in real-time. The stereo and 4-channel mixes are available for when this is not possible. The click track is almost certainly necessary in all cases however, so at least a three-track playback system is required, with a minimum of two tracks for the stereo mix and a third for the sending of the click track to the performer on stage.

An ADAT tape is available which has the 4-channel and stereo mixes plus the click track. The tracks are distributed as follows:

- Track 1: 4-channel mix: Front Left
- Track 2: 4-channel mix: Front Right
- Track 3: 4-channel mix: Back Left
- Track 4: 4-channel mix: Back Right
- Track 5: stereo mix: (Front) Left
- Track 6: stereo mix: (Front) Right
- Track 7: click track
- Track 8: blank

For the diffusion of the six stereo sound files during the performance, computer software in the form of a PD patch (“Pure Data,” by Miller Puckette) is available. This runs on Linux computer systems with a multi-channel sound card and interface. The patch allows the placement of stereo sound files (and two microphone inputs for the clarinet) in a “speaker tunnel,” i.e. the left-right information of the sound files remains, but the sound can be moved from the front to the back of the hall. To aid in a live mix, hints are given in the score (above the tape line, e.g. “2: crickets”) as to what sound is playing in which of the six sound files. Using MIDI faders, the placement (depth) and amplitude of the six sound files (and clarinet) are controlled independently of each other and in real time. The realisation of this diffusion is, however, left to the discretion of the performers and is dependent on the amount of speakers available and the acoustic of the performance space.

Also available is a PD patch that translates the incoming mono click-track into a visual bar- and beat-counting cue. This obviates the need for the player to wear headphones in order to hear the click track during the performance but of course requires the on-stage installation of a computer running PD.

It is absolutely essential to the piece that the bass clarinet is amplified. Two or three microphones are necessary, one which the player inserts into the bell of the clarinet, the other either an overhead mike, or/and one pointing horizontally towards the middle of the clarinet. Quite extreme compression of the clarinet signal is also required to make certain passages audible (this is built into the PD patch). However many channels are used for playback, the live clarinet signal should come from the front centre of the stage or from wherever the clarinettist is sitting.
key to symbols

#

Quarter-tone sharp.

|

Quarter-tone flat.

\[\uparrow\]

Eighth tone: Accidentals with an arrow pointing either up or down indicate microtonal inflections of approximately an eighth-tone (in any case, considerably less than a quarter-tone) in the given direction.

Breathe in through the instrument.

\[\downarrow\]

Breathe out through instrument (as normal).

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{\textit{Fast random fingering. Move the fingers of both hands as fast as possible}}}
\text{\textbf{\textit{over the keys creating (when blown normally) random notes and squeaks.}}}
\text{\textbf{\textit{It is not intended that orthodox fingerings are produced rapidly one after}}}
\text{\textbf{\textit{the other, rather that the fingers of the two hands move independently,}}}
\text{\textbf{\textit{randomly creating unorthodox fingerings.}}}
\end{array}\]

Breath: When the note heads under this sign are normal, then this means that a more diffuse tone with a considerable amount of audible breath should be produced. Cross note heads indicate that only breath is to be audible: no tone (or very little tone) is to be produced. When cross note heads make the rhythmic duration of a note ambiguous, the correct rhythm is indicated above the note in square brackets.

In the case of breath only, the higher the written note, the more closed the oral cavity should be. This creates a noise spectrum with more energy in the higher frequencies. In general, a change of note implies that the shape of the oral cavity may also be changed ad libitum to produce audible pitch differences in the otherwise uniform frequency content of the breath stream.

Applicable to all such signs in boxes: the indicated method of playing continues until either the word “END” is written, or another, contradictory sign is given.

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{\textit{Molto vibrato.}}}
\end{array}\]

G

Growl: Growl or sing into the instrument whilst playing, causing a wild, rough tone.

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{\textit{Remove the mouthpiece from the clarinet and blow directly into the barrel.}}}
\text{\textbf{\textit{When played in this manner, a microphone should be inserted into the bell}}}
\text{\textbf{\textit{of the clarinet.}}}
\end{array}\]
Replace the mouthpiece. Remove the microphone from the bell.

Trumpet tone: With the mouthpiece removed, blow into the barrel of the clarinet using a technique similar to that of brass players, i.e. a tone is produced by blowing through pursed lips, causing them to vibrate.

Multiphonic. Create a multiphonic by overblowing on the indicated (low) pitch.

When playing without the mouthpiece, close the barrel of the clarinet with the mouth (lips) so that the clarinet is completely sealed at the top end. Keep the clarinet sealed in this way when subsequently blowing through it. The effect of this is particularly pronounced in conjunction with a written low C which, with the microphone in the bell, creates a rather loud thud or pop—this is the intention.

Produce the indicated syllable, word, or sound when blowing into the clarinet.

Accents on tied notes indicate a diaphragm accent—no tongue attack!

Flutter tongue (unmeasured).

Colour trill. The trill note in parentheses is the same as the main note. Sometimes the fingering of the trill note is given above the staff. In any case, this is a trill between the indicated note in its normal fingering and the same note in an alternative fingering. It often suffices to trill using one or more keys lower down on the instrument.

Growl glissando: In combination with the growl (or trumpet) sign, this means that the pitch of the growl or sung tone is to be raised and lowered as indicated by the direction and length of the glissando lines. Its effect is comparable to a very wide, exaggerated, slow vibrato.

The tape is notated in the score by a simple loudness curve. The only pitch information given is the 12-minute long chromatic scale notated on a separate staff below the loudness curve. The starting point of these notes is approximate as they most often start with a fade-in. The point at which they are notated then, is the point at which they become clearly audible. The numbers above the tape followed by a brief descriptive term indicate the current sound playing on the indicated track (1-5, the chromatic scale being the only sound which occurs on track 6). Indications in square brackets are a reminder of information previously given, i.e. a continuing track, that perhaps comes again to the fore.
snow shoes, maupin, air conditioners, mother's, fleas, satyricon, and
you (la cucaracha)

\( J = 21 \)

[Optional start of click track]

Bass Clarinet in B♭

1: clarinet breath, keys
2: crickets
3: boomy ambience
4: rain stick
5: falling objects

Tape

(until bar 80) (mike in bell)

* Breathe in and out ad lib as necessary.

(\( \vee \mid \))

4: glissando

4: breathy held tone
3: cymbal noise
3: breath noise

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(Three sharp inhalations without exhalation)

Speak into clarinet

2: dreamy held tones 5: breathy clarinet

3: accordion "my way" 3: clarinet

[5: clarinet sequences]
3: ambient crescendo 2: clarinet flutter
3: bottle, voices 1,2: clarinet tones


49


56

4:30 4:32 4:34.285 4:38.571 4:42.857 4:47.142

61

4:51.428 4:54 4:55.714 4:58 5:00 5:02 5:04.285
Whistle the two upper notes into the clarinet whilst trilling on the lower notes (very fast). The upper notes are sounding pitches but most important is the interval of a fourth.

**CLOSE BARREL**

END

[5: breathy clarinet, runs]
5:03.428
7:07.714
7:10
7:12
7:16.285
7:20.571

1: loops   3: muezzin 5,4: rattling 4: sirens

2: clarinet

93
1: held multiphonics 2: breathy clarinet, key clicks

87

(Tape alone)(circa 36 secs)
Click restarts

3: aggressive clarinet
4,5: sirens

(growl + flt)
1: clarinet breath attack
2: held tones
3: high strings

** Always the same multiphonic until bar 169
Ad lib spectral changes during the multiphonic desirable.

* Attack without tongue
2: held tones

5: cymbal noise
4: low clarinet breath

espressivo
5: steam organ  [2: clarinet sequences]
Begin growl subtly so that a transition from pure tone to wild growl is accomplished between now and bar 244.
(d = 53)

203

[2: low clarinet]

(d = 54)

207

1: high held tones

(d = 56)

(d = 57)

(f)

212

(d = 59)

(d = 61)

(d = 62)

4: held tones mid high
5: clicks, heavy bass

215


14:06.853 14:09.075 14:10.742 14:12.884 14:15.027

13:57.154 13:58 13:59.462 14:01.192 14:03.457 14:05

207


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* Close C# key a little to flatten

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1: clarinet breath
3: low tones
5: held tones mid high, cymbal noise

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(E = 28)
1: applause, instrument noises
3: bass cresc
5: cymbal noise
C\h
(mp ppp
(no trill)
