

battle pieces

for saxophone and drumset
(or any two instruments)

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AB(B)A

Both performers begin freely improvising. During this section the performers try to develop and discover a musical “game” using only musical communication. This exploration should not be overt, and should emerge naturally. This is the “A” section of the piece. Once the game is discovered the performers transition to an unrelated “B” section.

After an appropriate amount of time, return to the “A” section, but using a different kind of sonic material, so the only thing that survives is the “game” itself.

eat, eat everything

eat, eat everything is all about trying to create 'event pairs' out of 'special events' which are scored by executing 'punctuation events'.

These are all defined as follows:

- **Special event** - a sound that stands out from the improv backdrop in a remarkable way
- **Punctuation event** - a clearly identifiable sound that will be repeated throughout the piece
- **Event pairs** - when two *special events* are played: the first *special event* opens the pair, and the second *special event* closes it: there can be multiple open *event pairs* at once.

Both performers begin the piece by performing a *punctuation event* which is repeated every time a performer closes an *event pair*. After the opening *punctuation event*, the performers begin improvising in a quiet, textural manner. At this point they can begin introducing *special events*. It is possible to seed/open many *event pairs* at the same time. When a performer closes an *event pair* they perform their *punctuation event*. If the other performer does not join in the *punctuation event*, the performer who performed the *punctuation event* scores a point. If the other performer does join in, then no point is scored. The first to 3 points wins the game. When a tie occurs (1-1 or 2-2) then the B section of the piece takes place. If no tie occurs the B section does not happen.

eat, eat cont...

The B section takes all of the *special events* that have happened, including open pairs, and plays them on their own, without accompaniment, in a sped up manner (10-15 seconds). Once the B section is completed, the performers return to A section behavior, with the open *event pairs* still available for closure.

Once 3 points have been scored by one player the C section takes place. The C section takes the last *special event* and freezes it (ala spectral freeze) for the full duration of the previous A section. The piece is over once the C section is complete.

elbows

The piece begins with both performers playing. The objective of the game is to force/create/steal/engineer a new section of material. This must happen naturally, emergent from where the material currently is.

When a performer creates a new section they make a 'thumbs up' gesture to themselves, indicating claim to the transition. In the case of both performers calling the point the first performer to call the point gets priority.

New sections of material may be blocked or refused, in which case, the previous material is returned to. With that being said, the performers must be very sensitive and sympathetic to shifts in material, while aggressively pushing for new ideas.

The game continues until one player scores 5 points and is ahead by a margin of 2.

flurries

flurries is broken into three sections: A, B, and A₁. During the beginning A section, both performers use a variety of quiet sound sources to navigate the following sound quadrants.

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Dark Fast | Bright Fast |
| Dark Slow | Bright Slow |

Each performer picks an area to occupy in quadrants. This area can have a variable size and shape. So it can be a pinpoint, or it can be a large oblong shape, spanning multiple quadrants. Whenever there is a perceived 'flam', each performer (independently) transitions to a new area in the quadrant grid. This change can happen instantly, or gradually.

When a unison happens during the A section, this signals the change to the B section. The B section is made up of sustained/textured sounds AND whatever sound event happened in the unison. Each performer uses metal implements to rub their instruments, creating the sustained/textured sound, and to cue each other to create unison events. This section ends when either player cues one final unison together.

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flurries cont...

After the final unison of the B section, the players return to the A section.

The two A sections (A and A₁) do not happen on either side of the B section. There is an independent transition between them (the 'pregnant pause' described below), so that A₁ can happen *before* the B section. Once the change to A₁ takes place, the piece stays in that section until the ending of the piece.

The transition to the A₁ section is the emergence of a 'pregnant pause', which is relative to the general activity and density level in the piece. After this pause, the quadrant grid turns into a three-dimensional space, with duration occupying the new axis. Flams continue to signify a transition to a new area.

During A₁, when there is another unison sound, this signifies the change to the ending of the piece. A short metal scrape sound is made by both performers, in unison. Then, one performer makes stream of short, evenly-spaced events, while the other performer plays an irregular gesture over the top of it. The piece ends with these two streams of events fall on a unison.

glitch beat

Both performers begin by playing a busy/defined material. When one performer's variations are exhausted and/or no longer interesting, they stop playing.

The other performer carries on playing. They cannot stop.

The performer who stopped composes a rhythm/phrase/melody/figure in their head and then begins playing it loudly/confidently. The other performer must immediately join in trying to play it in perfect unison. The moment that both performers have phased into they unison immediately start playing a new busy/defined material.

Repeat this cycle (busy/defined -> one performer stops -> unison rhythm) two more times, except, on the last repeat rather than trying to join in in unison immediately, internalize the rhythm/phrase/melody/figure and only begin playing it once you can do it perfectly.

Play the unison figure 50 times and stop. If the other performer stops first, carry on until you reach what you count as 50.

pop song

Both performers begin by creating a relatively short phrase that they exactly repeat, while in sync, 8 times. This represents the 'verse' of the song. A 'pre-chorus' is then created, which is repeated 4 times. Following this is 8 repetitions of a 'chorus'.

This whole cycle (verse, pre-chorus, chorus) is repeated twice, using the same material both times.

After this follows an unrelated 'bridge' of unidentified length.

After the bridge, the original chorus is repeated 16 times.

After the final 'double chorus' an outro is performed.

Entire structure:

Verse (x8), Pre-Chorus (x4), Chorus (x8)

Verse (x8), Pre-Chorus (x4), Chorus (x8)

—Bridge—

Chorus (x16)

—Outro—

sausage fest

sausage fest is all about keeping track of two separate sausages: the sausage of *sound* and the sausage of *silence*.

Throughout the piece both performers improvise material that is relatively static in density and dynamic, and collectively play *sound sausages*. These *sound sausages* can get shorter or longer as the piece progresses. At the same time, the gaps between the *sound sausages* (*silence sausages*) can also get longer or shorter. You must keep track of both of these trajectories. If you think the other performer does not know the current trajectories you can *call out* the performer by performing an opening gesture, which the other performer must immediately join in with. If they do know what the trajectories are, they can respond with a *tick tick boom* gesture, which you must immediately join in with. Every *call out* scores a point one way or another. All gestures are played collectively, with special attention paid to creating a unified gesture and sound.

The game is over once three points have been scored. So, the actual ending of the piece comes from an unanswered *call out* gesture or a closing *tick tick boom* gesture.

In the event of a double *call out*, no point is scored, unless the score is tied at 2-2. In this case a double death occurs and two *tick tick boom* closing gestures are played.

strains

strains is broken into two sections. During the first section of the piece the performers play a musical version of “rock, paper, scissors” with predefined low/mid/high sounds. The drummer counts in the first round and then both performers play their chosen low/mid/high sounds at the tempo established by the count in with the 7th note determining who wins the round. The winner counts in the next round which is played at that new tempo but is only 6 notes long. This pattern continues until only one note is heard. The winner of the final round begins the second section.

The second section begins with free improvisation. The loser of the first section can interrupt at any point by playing a repeating rhythmic cycle. The winner then interrupts that cycle with one of his own (at a new tempo) and finally the loser interrupts one more time. This forms a rhythmic phrase consistent of 3 tempos. The rhythmic phrase is then repeated in unison before going back to the free improvisation. At any point during the improvisation a performer may cue to play the previous rhythmic sentence in unison.

The following cycle forms the remainder of the piece with the performers choosing to end after any unison rhythmic sentence.

free improv -> (last rhythmic sentence in unison) -> building a new 3-section rhythmic sentence by interrupting each other -> unison rhythmic sentence -> free improv

switches

Both performers begin by playing six unpitched events in unison. They can choose to play a short sound or a long sound, but must begin with each other regardless of the duration of their chosen event. The combination of the first three events determines the interaction modes used later in the piece and the duration of time between the last three events determines the dynamics of those sections (long = loud, short = soft).

The recipes for the first three events and subsequent modes of interaction are:

| Player 1 | Player 2 | mode of interaction |
|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| short | short | unison stabs (stabs) |
| short | long | stabs + alternating stab/sustain (switches) |
| long | long | trading stab/sustain (trades) |

After the opening six events there are three block sections which adhere to the modes of interaction and dynamics determined in the introduction.

yo momma

yo momma is a competitive music game. The objective of the game is to steal an 'ending' from the other player. You accomplish this by recontextualizing what the other player is doing as a possible end to the piece.

When you catch the other player in an ending you make a 'thumbs up' gesture to yourself, indicating your claim to the ending. If both players claim the point, no point is scored.

You may 'escape' an ending by skillfully negotiating a context to continue. If the player attempting to create the end feels you egregiously played through an attempted ending, they may make a claim for a point, which the escaping player may concede or refute (using facial gestures).

The game continues until one player scores two points.

When the winner has scored their second point the losing player begins a solo, which continues until the winner 'ends' it, by creating an ending for their solo.