

codex I

2001

for 6-12 improvising musicians

commissioned by the Bangor New Music Festival with funds from the Welsh Arts Council
for Chris Burn's Ensemble

duration: 10 minutes approximately

Performing notes:

- (1) *codex I* may be performed by between 6 and 12 performers on any kind of instruments or voices or electronic devices such that every sound-event may be adequately realised. Some events might be thought more appropriate to certain instruments than to others. This is *not* to be taken as a guiding principle when assigning instruments to events. (Choosing "unsuitable" instruments and combinations might well be preferable.)
- (2) The numbered markers along the top of each score system should in general be about 5" apart, but it is not intended that this should be metronomically precise.
- (3) Each rectangular box specifies, with a greater or lesser degree of exactitude, a sound-event of greater or lesser complexity. The number in the top left-hand corner indicates the *number of musicians taking part* in the event in question. T means "*tutti*", or *all* those not taking part in any other events simultaneously. +1, -1 etc. indicate that a player joins or leaves an ongoing event respectively.
- (4) The names of the players (for *each* event and *each* change of personnel within an event) should be placed in the score before or during the course of rehearsals. If *codex I* is to be played more than once in a concert, each version should allocate events to different performers with an eye to achieving the greatest potential for diversity in the results.
- (5) Arrows pointing from a box to the time-markers or to another box indicate that a cue will probably be required here. For each event involving more than one player, one should be designated "leader" for any cueing.
- (6) Many events specify one or more "sustained" pitches. These should never be transposed by octaves! (Players of transposing instruments should replace the notated pitches with their transposed versions.) Where no further indications occur, these may be sustained or otherwise continued in varying ways according to improvisational factors and/or the nature of the instrument(s) in question: sustained sound with or without small (microtonal) undulations, regular and/or irregular iterations, and/or tremoli, and/or gradual transitions between any or all of these possibilities... a simple *sostenuto* is not out of the question but the approach should leave sufficient space for improvisational reactivity to occur.
- (7) Dynamics should be treated as *average* values for a given event: nevertheless, extreme deviations should be comparatively rare.
- (8) Indications preceded by ⊙ are *optional*, for example "⊙ *multiphonics*" means that instruments taking part in this event *may* (or may not) use multiphonics (if they are wind instruments! although this

indication should in no way be taken to mean that *any* of the instruments in such an event should necessarily be winds). Also, the presence of some type of material or behaviour as an option somewhere in the score in no way precludes its appearance elsewhere (at points where it is not mentioned).

(9) One possible approach to interpretation would be to regard the score as a fragmentary relic of some unknown music, distant in history or geography, and on the basis of these fragments to make an intelligent and expressive "reconstruction" of what the "living tradition" in question might have been, analogously to contemporary approaches to troubadour songs, instrumentation and realisation of early baroque continuo parts, and so on. This doesn't imply that performers should be self-consciously "archaic" or "ethnic" of course, but that the attempt to adhere precisely to the score should not get in the way of imaginative spontaneity. An important aspect of performance technique should be the attention paid by each player (during the performance) to imagining and creating interrelationships between the sound-structures implied by the skeletal notated materials, and between the activities of the other players.

codex

Richard Barrett
2001

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12(1') 13 14 15

T *multi* * \odot vibrato at diverse widths & speeds -1 *harp*

PPP solo crescendo before each "exit" by the instrument about to leave this event

* glr: sustained sounds at opening (E-Bow)
* pc: marimba at opening

2 *rec harp* "points" in diverse registers, each sound different from the last in pitch, timbre etc.
 \odot longer sounds with diminuendo
 \odot repeat the same sound precisely a few times

low density, gradually increasing - - - - -

PP \leftrightarrow f \odot sfffz

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24(2') 25 26 27 28 29 30

-1 *viola*

ff

2 *rec* **-1 +1** **-1 +1** **-1 +1** **-1 +1**

begin sustained, then increasingly perturbed by regular iterations in diverse tempi
 \odot tremoli, microtonal melodic movements around B

each event in this sequence begins and ends abruptly

\odot + reverb

2 **2** **2** **2**

P P P P

(increasing density) - - - - - \rightarrow chaotic and precipitous

(pp \leftrightarrow f)

2 *free duo*

30 31 32 33 34 35 36(3') 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

(*musical notation*) (PP) (increasing perturbations) (moving towards rhythmic unison) (f=60)

(as before)

2 p 2 p 2 p 2 p 2 p

T single disconnected staccato sounds in rhythmic unison (cued by leader of this event) at highly irregular durations.
 all sounds to have little or no discernible pitch-content.
 ⊙ continue a sound until the next cue
 ⊙ occasional incongruent dynamic (mp ↔ ff)
 PPP sempre

(free duo)

45 46 47 48(4') 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60(5')

2 *fills & more complex microtonal "ornamentation" around the pitch-sequence*
 ⊙ pure sustained tones
 ⊙ <> sudden dynamic swells

musical notation
 mp

(tutti staccato) last sound -2

musical notation
 f

3 short melodies, each beginning on the indicated pitch
 ⊙ emphasise the stated pitches by duration and/or accentuation
 ⊙ sfz staccato

musical notation
 mf

60(5') 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72(6') 73 74 75

(micro-ornamentation)

pp

(melodies)

pp

1 +1 +1

rapid groups (mostly 5 sounds per group), wide-ranging in pitch, staccato ↔ legato, separated by silences of varying durations
 ○ incorporate pitches from the two previous events (starting at 48 & 54 resp.)

f pp

3 free trio

ppp ff

(silence)

3 dense chords beginning and ending together
 ○ multiphonics / double-stops

f sempre

each event in this sequence is a "solo" for a different instrument and/or with completely different material.

1

ff

75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84(7') 85 86 87 88 89 90

(chords)

f

(solos)

1

ff

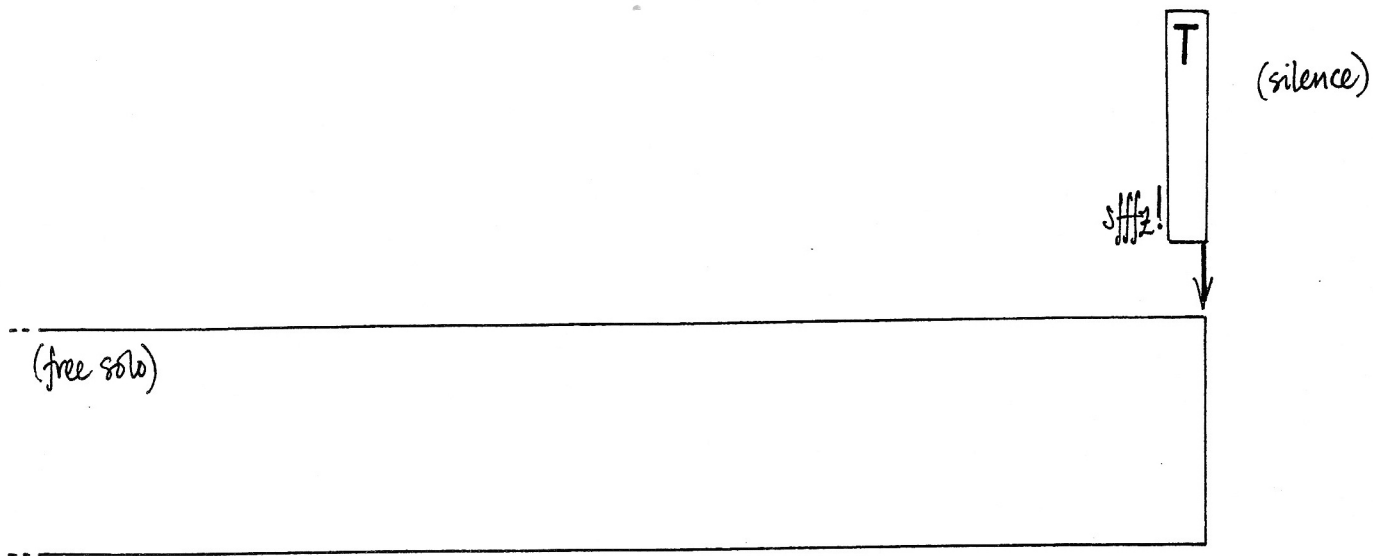
1 free solo

ff

1

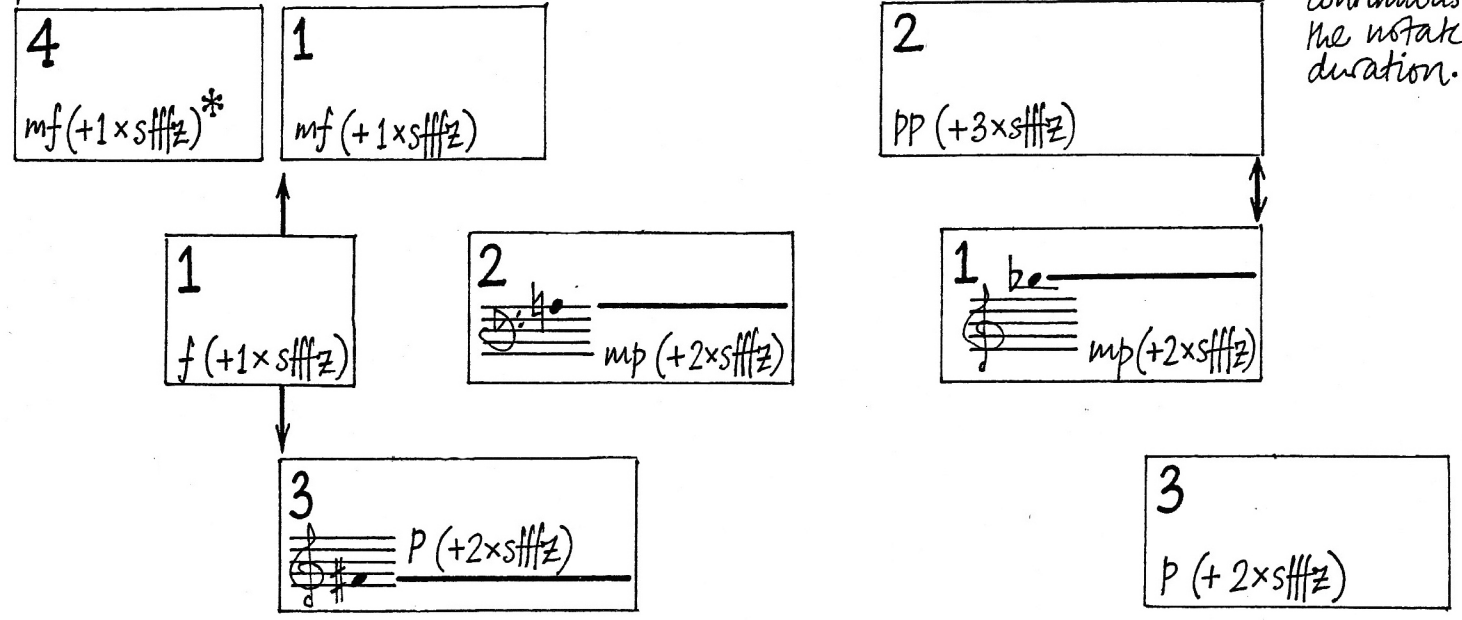
ff

90 91 92 93 94 95 96(8') 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105



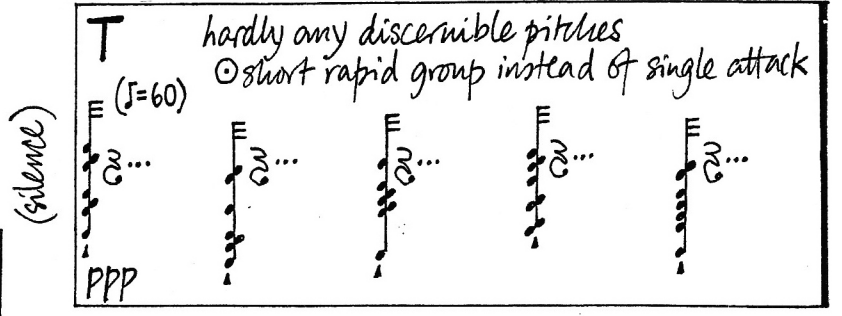
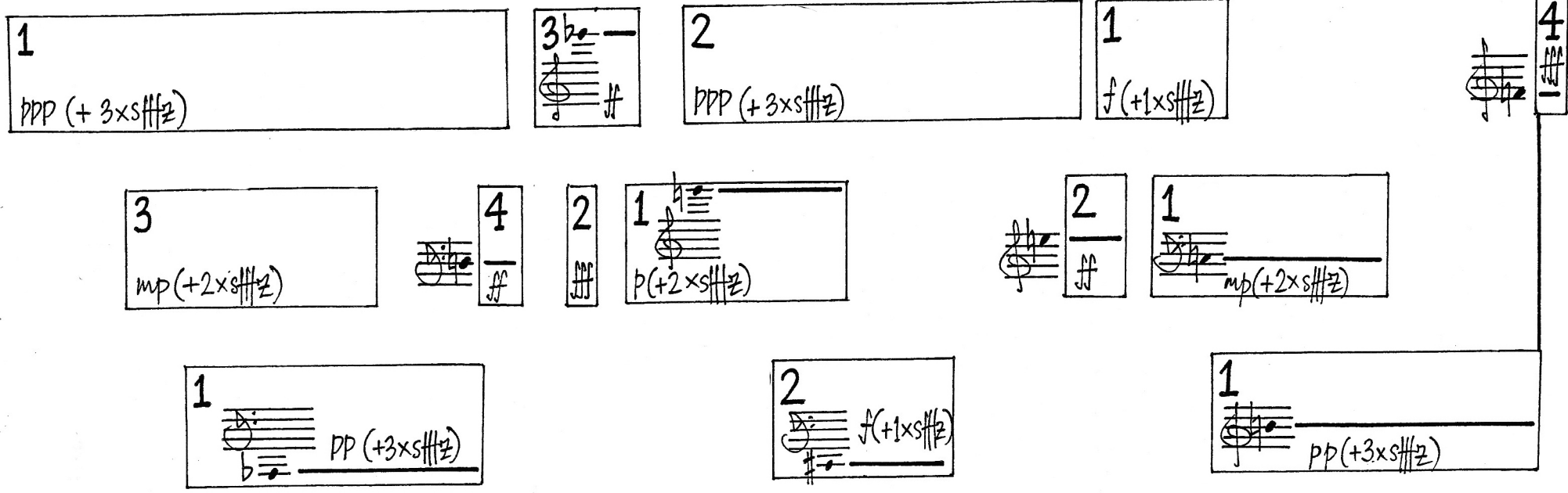
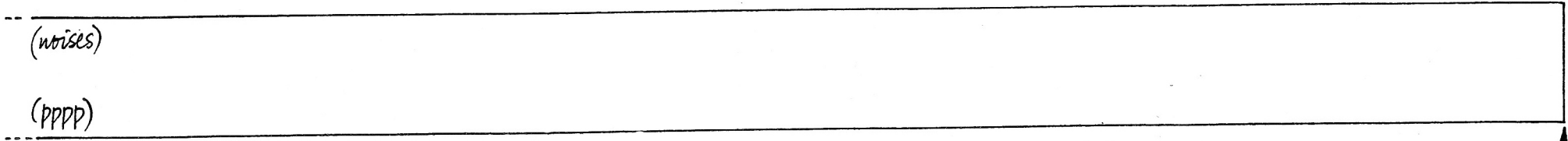
T almost continuous, very quiet pitchless noise (scraping/breathing/rattling etc.) by whichever instruments are not at a given time otherwise occupied - but giving the impression of a continuous background
 PPPP

↑ all events in this sequence should be maximally differentiated from one another! and not necessarily continuous for the stated duration.



*ie. 1 x sfffz per instrument and similarly for all events in this sequence - these sfffz sounds should all be very short!

105 106 107 108(9') 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120(10')



Berlin
 2 March 2001