Peter Ablinger

NOTES & BLOC-NOTES

for orchestra
version for 28 performers
2018 (1980-2018)
30'

preliminary note:

theoretically the montage of the score is a version or a suggestion or a
starting point. theoretically everything could be re-arranged, shortened,
extended, while the general idea - density, horicontal and vertical
collage - remains similar.

practically one would probably work with this version but is always free
for changes in instrumentation.

the given instrumentation is for 28 performers:

2 clarinets in Bb
6 saxophones (2ss, 2as, ts, bs)
trumpet in Bb
euphonium
2 electronic performer
3 percussionists (instruments are variable, but at certain
    points certain suggestions are made in the score: vibraphone, small
    cymbal, big drum, tam-tam and various objects)
accordion
piano
2 electric guitars
violin
3 violas
3 violoncellos
2 contrabasses

the score consists of:
A) the tutti score, indicating the cues (On/Off of the 180 fragments) and
their suggested instrumentation
B) this description, which gives specifications to all fragments, and is
the main information for fragments without notation
C) the notated sections (plus transpositions and parts)
and
D) (maybe) some audio examples

fragments are either appearing once (like all the notated sections) or
repeatedly, but then with some variations.

characters which appear several times are the following:

talk (or whisper, or murmur) - (fragments 1, 12, 18, etc.):
a fabric of speaking noises in changing densities but continuous from the
1st to the last second. this is the only character which is always
present in the piece although usually quite in the background. talk,
whisper (without voice) or murmur (with voice but under-articulated and
usually soft) is always improvisation of words in your own native
language. one might compare it with a bar atmosphere were the chat of
people is the background for the music. individual parts are usually not
understandable allthough individual sentences are nothing but normal
language (no experimental poetry, no experiments with your voice, no
singing etc). the general mode is as if speaking to yourself. don't speak
to others - not your collegues, not to the audience - both would feel too
theatrically. you can talk about anything. you may comment the situation,
if you like, or you may just tell yourself what is to do next etc. of
course you choose your natural tempo of speach but - if not other
indicated - there are no pauses within a section in order to create a
continuous fabric! one word follows the other! for all talks, whispers or
murmurs take care that beginnings and especially endings are very
precisely togehter. more specifications below.

lines - (fragments 2, 8, 17, etc.):
slow scales for solo instruments, sometimes 2 or 3 instruments are
performing scales independently. choose one tempo between 3 and 15
seconds per tone, then go with your choice. tones are always soft in
character and mostly midground. rather short but not staccato. halftone-
and wholetone steps irregularly (no specific harmony other than for a few
moments). no effects. very simple. just tones.

it is prefered that you will perform only one scale in one direction (up
or down) within the given time window. but if you reach the end of your
ambitus before the end of your time window, don't just turn, but start
another line in another tempo with slightly different character.

example scale:

improv - (fragments 3, 16, 19, etc.):
improvisations. usually more specification is given below. but in general
the improvisations are not forming the foreground - except some very
short ones - and are rather merging with what is happening at the time.

sometimes they are imitations of other simultaneous events. often they add a sort of an inner grain to things happening already. note, that there is a difference wheter one improv starts and ends with more than one instrument, or, 2 improvs start and end at a different time. the earlier are "one" homogenious ensemble, the later can have completely independent characters.

objects - only percussion - (fragments 4, 13, 39, etc.):
objects:
- a number of plastic or paper bags from high, delicate plastic to low, stiff paper. sounds are a continuous rustling always.
- fork on plate, continuous sound via rotation. try different plates/forks until you achieve portions of a very high sound, like 7Khz or higher.
- aluminium cans in a cardboard box (in my example 6 peanut cans à 200g in a box 30x30x30cm), stir the cans in the box with your arm and create a continous rumble.
- balloon, filled with air, different textures and rhythms with wet fingers rubbing its surface.
all these characters can be replaced by other materials that can create adequate qualities!

colours - (fragments 5, 44, 101, 137 and 160):
played à 4, 5 or 6. create an even surface of constantly changing colours. always dealing with mixtures of tones and noises. usually the sounds are almost inaudible conciously, but of course they are changing something: often is there a clear difference when they stop (take care of precise endings). despite its silent character try to hear the ones who are playing "colours" with you, try to be an ensemble, try to create one (constantly changing) colour, and not 4, 5 or 6 parallel ones.

para ... - (fragments 6, 43, 50, etc.):
all fragments that start with "para" are "paraphrasing" something, usually a notated part in the first 3 examples called "verses", "Freude!", "cant du singe, h?". the paraphrase is usually creating a distorted version of the original. as the "para-s" often start before the "original" they need to be prepared and cannot just react on what is heard.

noise lists - (fragments 9, 46, 76, 95, 139 and 166):
always duos. always alternating. creating a catalogue of fine nuanced plane even noises. try to make sequences that proceed in small steps and in one direction (high to low).
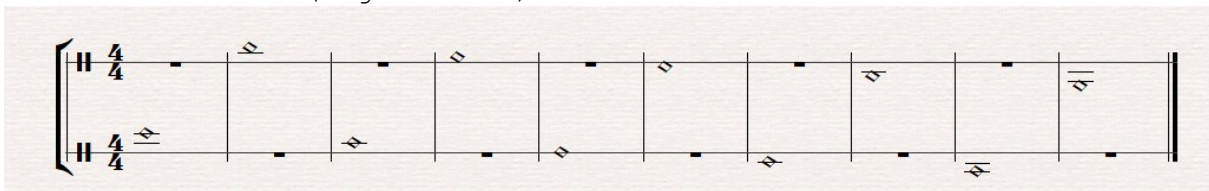
about 4 seconds per sound.

all notated parts
need to be rehearsed/prepared in a way so that they fit the given time window - except they are loops anyway.

<u>masking and un-masking - a general note on balances:</u>

all fragments have only one even and flat dynamic level.

few exeptions from the even-dynamic rule are:
"135 piano concerto" where the dynamic is very individual, while the
general level remains similar;
"68 Tam-Tam role", which fades in and out;
and maybe the white noise scales, "28 noise scale", "107 white noise
scale", "165 white noise scale", where the noise doubles the dynamic
level while climbing upwards one octave (this is just due to the "nature"
of white noise while no extra crescendo is intended!).

a typical strategy of the piece is, that entering fragments are somehow
unclear or masked or completely hidden, and are appearing only later when
other layers have stopped. but sometimes also the ending of a detail is
masked again. anyhow it is important that you dont adapt the dynamic of a
detail in moments when other layers are added or fall away. or, in other
words, the difference of beeing heard or unheard is always created by
others and not by yourself.

<u>coordination:</u>

the piece should not be conducted from a central conductor. but of
course, some of the ensemble fragments should be conducted from someone
within such ensemble. as for the general coordination there should be a
digital counter, showing minutes and seconds, coming from a single
computer but beeing seen on more than one screen or display.

All fragments from 1 to 180

1 murmur
dont start on a given cue. start individually between 0:00 and 0:03. just
talk to yourself. it should not be obvious and a bit erratic what's going
on.

2 lines
and
3 improv start directly at 0:00.

3 improv:
similar as the murmur.
slightlly foreground.
masking the murmur a bit.

4 objects:
plastic bag or silver paper (alu foil).
continuous whisper.

5 colours
as always: very descrete when entering

6
para verses
and
7
verses (see score)
both slightly in the foreground
verses is played as notated, para verses is a caricature of this (visit
the score for this as well).
for verses choose the pauses in a way so that the piece lasts the given
time (shorter pauses after each line, longer pause for empty lines)!

8 lines: see general note

9 noise lists, always duo, see general note

10 12-tone scale: see score, midground

11 cymbal role, rather a small, high cymbal.
very smooth, very plane. start and end abruptly. midground.

12 whisper, only a duo. therfore a relatively loud whisper to make a
difference. but in every case avoid any kind of acting towards the
audience.

13 objects, fork on plate. always as a continuous rotation.
relatively soft, or at maximum in mid ground when it starts.

14 narrow noise high: artificial and plane or with a bit of structure and
from other sources, ca. 4000-4500 Hz. more or less completely masked when
entering.
starts similtaneously with:

15 chords for 6: see score.
(cymbal role ends here)

16 improv, trio, mid ground, colour and texture somewhere between the fork's sound and the speaking people

17 lines (another instrument starts lines)

18 talk, 5 people, medium dynamic level

19 improv solo, more background, very vage, undefined, hardly recognisable

20 improv, short miniature à 6, foreground, a bit tumultuous, hiding the entries of "etwas schleichend" and "colours"

21 colours, à 5
starts at the same time as

22 etwas schleichend, for 3 va: see score
"etwas schleichend" is a Mahler expression for "somewhat lingering", dynamic is soft, but, except the first notes, the melodic line remains always clearly audible

23 talk, à 4, relatively loud without loosing the character of not-addressing your language (except to yourself)

24 para schleichend, a paraphrase with distortion of "etwas schleichend", working with and against its tonality round g-minor, with and against it's even ryhythm, same register

25 lines (another instrument starts lines)

26 triad gliss 1, 3 strings, see score. take care of intonation

27 thumb, finger & foot, simple rhythmic loop:
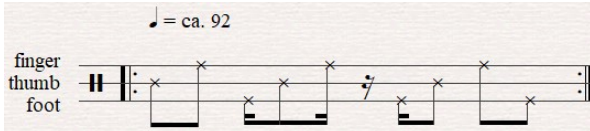
or for any other 3 percussive sounds, not very obvious, not very audible, a bit like unconcious nervous finger drumming

28 white noise scale, limited band-with of 2 octaves, climbing upwards as a scale of diatonic steps also for 2 octaves, 4 seconds per step: starting band-with 250-1000Hz, ending band-with: 1000-4000Hz, not too audible when starting

29 improv, solo, rather in the background, merging with everything else, taking material from everything else

30 lines (another instrument starts lines)

31 talk, à 8, quite lively

32 objects, crumpling plastic, e.g. a semi-stiff plastic envelop (for documents), continuos crackle

33 improv, solo, short miniature, work with or against all simultanious materials, almost foreground

34 dots, à 4, see score and description here:
instructions:
each line lasts about 15-18 seconds
read spacially (also the silences)
choose a line spontaneously (2 or more performers might choose the same
line; in such case don't try to be in snyc)
play it
after one line follows a pause of minimum 10 seconds
choose again a line (another/the same)
play it
10 seconds pause afterwards
etc.
continue like this
character:
tones (no noises), soft and tender, simple, no advanced technics, short
but not staccato
choose any comfortable range of your instrument, avoid extremes
use diatonic, chromatic pitches (microtonal deviations are fine as long
they do not appear as "experimental/extended technics")
raising or falling sequences are more or less equvidistant but never
strictly:
seconds (mix minor and major or with microtonal deviations)
thirds (mix minor and major or with microtonal deviations)
fourths (mix diminished, perfect, augmented or with microtonal
deviations)
etc.

35 talk, à 6, quite reserved/holding back, just the slightest grain in
the background (after white noise (28) has stopped)

36 lines (another instrument starts lines)

37 mid noise, narrow, round 550 Hz, compare fragment 14

38 lines (another instrument starts lines)

39 objects, alu cans, stiring the cans in the box, sort of continuous
rumor, midground, like amplifying the talk

40 improv, solo, mid- to sub-ground, somewhat between the rumble of alu
cans and the creaking balloon

41 objects, balloon, single longer scratches, 0,5 to 2 seconds, short
pauses after each, a nasty child or animal, dynamic level of "dots" (34)

42 Freude!, short trumpet solo, see score, foreground

43 para freude, caricature and distorted imitation of "Freude!". a bit
under its dynamic level. same register

44 colours, à 4

45 lines (another instrument starts lines)

46 noise lists (duo)

47 lines (another instrument starts lines)

48 murmur, à 5, not too soft

49 objects, fork on plate, midground

50 para cant, caricature of "cant du singe, h?" (detail 52, see score), distortion of its rhythmic regularity and tempered intonation, softer than the "original" (which starts later), similar register

51 triad gliss 2, 3 strings, see score
take care of intonation

52 cant du singe, h?, solo, see score, not loud but always audible

53 short loop, piano, see score, not loud but always audible, similar dynamic level than "cant du singe, h?"

54 talk, à 9, quite rumoruous, almost midground

55 improv, solo, almost foreground, each attack is a different sound or noise in one strict rhythmic pattern:
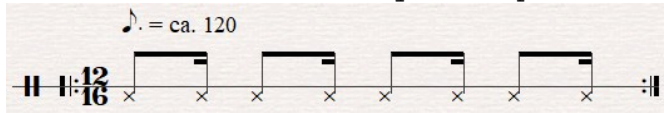
56 lines (another instrument starts lines)

57 lines (another instrument starts lines)

58 4 tone canon, here for 4 voices and 3 instruments, rather foreground, see score

59 whisper, à 14 and relatively "loud"

60 a minor riff, short loop, see score, more or less un-audible when entering, but clearly heard after the canon (58) has ended

61 talk, à 4, quite dynamic

62 "A" noise, a static white noise in the colour of a spoken "A", background, audible more or less only as it stopps

63 lines (another instrument starts lines)

64 improv, solo, merge with the talk, but dynamically slightly above it

65 talk, à 8, dense fabric, not soft, but keep the voices in a deeper register (without acting something or becoming artificial)

66 C Major Canon, see score, foreground – while everything else in the mid- or background is still somehow "there"

67 lines (another instrument starts lines)

68 Tam-Tam role, start with 10" crescendo, then keep the dynamic even, end with 10" decrescendo. maximum level is relatively loud and just slightly below "C Major Canon" (66)

69 objects, plastic bag, crackle and crumple it for a continous texture, choose a loud bag but remain midground

70 talk, à 4, not too energetic, choose the dynamic for the situation after "C Major Canon" (66), therefore the beginning might be completely hidden

71 improv, solo, use "C Major Canon" (66) as accompaniment for a grotesque, screetchy, non-C-major excess - but at the same time remaining in the midground. dynamically clearly below "C Major Canon" (- rebellion under the surface)!

72 improv, solo, almost unrelated to everything else, especially unrelated to "C Major Canon" (66); situated in the lower mid ground but with frequent short accents sticking out

73 Kanon (Octaves), this is the beginning of a relatively long fragment for 5 low strings performing glissandos in octaves. as it is a canon the entries and ends are in 48 seconds intervalls. speed of glissando: 4 seconds per chromatic step

74 murmur, à 5, medium density, crucial level after 12:21, few individual words might be recognisable here

75 lines (another instrument starts lines)

76 noise lists (duo)

77 Kanon (Octaves), next entry, see score 73 and remark 73

78 low rumble, noise below 120Hz, not very obvious, or: the most obvious moment should be the moment when it stops

79 improv solo, singular short sounds, not dense, irregular, back- to mid-ground

80 Kanon (Octaves), next entry, see score 73 and remark 73

81 objects, fork on plate, midground: always "there"

82 fifths, for 4 saxophones, see score, soft but always clearly audible

83 talk, à 5, not soft, but slowly speaking (if this is not artificial) or a bit 'word by word'

84 Kanon (Octaves), next entry, see score 73 and remark 73

85 improv, duo, sort of try to glue the gap between the fork sound and the 5 low strings, mid-ground

86 lines (another instrument starts lines)

87 para broken harmonies, solo, caricature of "broken harmonies" (which starts later), mimiking it in a distorted way, like trying to irritate it, both in rhythm and intonation; dynamically slightly below it like its shadow

88 improv, duo, short erruption, hiding the entry of "broken harmonies" (90)

89 broken harmonies, octet, see score, well balanced foreground

90 Kanon (Octaves), last entry, see score 73 and remark 73

91 "E" noise, a static white noise in the colour of a spoken "E", grounding/coloring sound, not obvious

92 murmur, à 3, not too soft

93 mambo gliss, solo. repeat the following figure for the given time, while constantly lowering its intonation, but so slow that this change remains quite undetected: about a semi-tone in a minute.

maybe use a soft creaking or tender-noisy bow technic, also singing is possible (the notation here is in cb transposition, an octave higher). silent - like unconcious nervous singing.

94 viola solo, see score, con tutta la sforza: on top of "broken harmonies" (90)

95 noise lists (duo)

96 improv duo, merge with the murmur, also dynamically

97 Griffa 5, va solo, see score, audible but not the foreground

98 lines (another instrument starts lines)

99 objects, balloon, rub it in an irregular rhythmic way, imitating speach (chat)

100 lines (another instrument starts lines)

101 colours, à 5

102 para blues, à 4, a sort of mocking of "103 blues", a short improvisation arround the pitch b1 (b1, c2, few bb1), similar dyn. level, same register

103 blues, muted trumpet solo, see score, foreground but not more than neccessary

104 talk, à 8, rather descrete and slow or with frequent short pauses

105 lines (another instrument starts lines)

106 objects, plastic bag, fine smooth and light texture, decent background colour, obvious only when it stops

107 white noise scale, limited band-with of 2 octaves, climbing upwards as a scale of diatonic steps also for 2 octaves, 4 seconds per step: starting band-with 500-2000Hz, ending band-with: 2000-8000Hz, mid- to fore-ground

108 lines (another instrument starts lines)

109 improv, solo: improvise short staccato-noises with constantly changing technics in a strict unvaried rhythm:
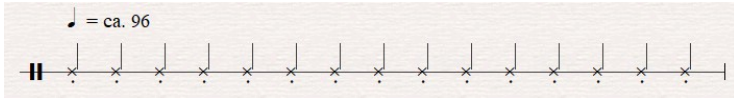
110 talk, à 6, dense and relatively loud

111 objects, alu cans, short miniature, foreground, masking the entry of "Eb flat minor riff"

112 Eb flat minor riff, piano, see score, midground, not obvious on start, becoming audible later

113 improv, solo, almost background-improv, merging with talk, hardly ever obvious but always adding something

114 lines (another instrument starts lines)

115 objects, balloon, short pinched soft staccato scratches, continuous but always a bit irregular (a bird?), midground
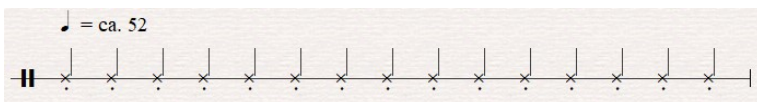
116 noise lists (duo)

117 talk, à 8, dense, avoid low register (without artificiality); after 20:17 few single words might be recognisable

118 lines (another instrument starts lines)

119 objects, fork on plate, midground

120 lines (another instrument starts lines)

121 improv, solo. midground. improvise short staccato-noises with different technics for each single sound while the rhythm remains strictly unvaried and slow:

122 noise lists (duo)

123 talk, à 4, not soft, not dense, with many individual short pauses. note that the moment between 22:03 - 22:08 might be the one of the minimum density in the entire piece. individual words might be audible here.

124 lines (another instrument starts lines)

125 "I" noise, a static white noise in the colour of a spoken "I", background, inaudible on start

126 gran cassa, big drum, or something similar, very soft, starts almost imperceptable but is quite obvious when it stops

127 intervalls, sextet, see score, soft but very clear audible

128 fragment, à 5, see score, soft but clearly appearing

129 improv, solo, a sort of whisper. compare next entry (130), but much softer than this. background.

130 whisper, à 11, dense, relatively loud but still voiceless whisper

131 improv, solo. trembling. something like invironmental sounds: short tremblings of wine-glasses in the cupboard, or other loose little things trembling on a table ("caused by the sub-way underneath"). background.

132 lines (another instrument starts lines)

133 para fugue 1, à 4. upwards scales, distorted. a caricature of "134 the art of fugue 1", but while this is playing downwards scales the caricature is playing upwards. compare the score of "134" and see the diagram for 133, where the 4 instruments are represented as beginning more or less at the same time but ending differently. dynamic similar to 134, but not louder than this.

134 the art of fugue 1, à 4, see score. foreground.

135 piano concerto, pno and 11 instruments, see score. foreground. piano allways *ff*. the other instruments should be aware that a single chord can have very different dynamics from *pp* to *ff*. the wind instruments need to be careful with *f* and *ff*, especially in the higher register.

136 lines (another instrument starts lines)

137 colours, à 6, here stronger than usually to create the right colouring degree in relation with the "piano concerto" (136).

138 objects, paper bag, thick paper, the "bass drum" amongst the bag sortiment, midground

139 noise lists (duo), a bit louder than otherwise

140 whisper, à 4, strong whisper with a bit of voice

141 parlando, solo, see score. midground.

142 lines (another instrument starts lines)

143 improv, solo. some midground rumor. dense, more in the lower register (like large tom or cardboard box etc.)

144 improv, solo, slightly below midground, midium dense, a sort of down transposed imitation of whispering

145 lines (another instrument starts lines)

146 Marie, weine nicht!, à 5, see score. foreground.

(a fragment that is more or less a quotation, "Mary, don`t cry!",
probably Brecht/Eisler)

147 6 pieces, piano and ringmodulation, see score. free and continuous
change of ring modulating frequency. piano preparation could be another
option to achieve a related result. (but as preparation would have to be
'prepared' this would conflict with the "piano concerto". one could try
with preparing only black notes. or use a kind of preparation that can be
quickly set and removed - like putting a heavy iron chain on the
strings). foreground, but not louder than beeing clearly audible.

148 chords mirror, à 4, see score. foreground.

149 "O" noise. unaudible when entering.

150 lines (another instrument starts lines)

151 objects, balloon, tiny little mice chatting. unaudible on start,
unconciously present after "148 chords mirror" has ended. midground:
clearly only in the end.

152 soft talk, à 11. background. clearly audible only betwen 25:52 and
25:57 (but not understandable)

153 nichts, e.g. 2 small drums played with hands or fingers, or other
related sounds (not too low in register, no sustaining sounds like
cymbals etc.). simple ryhthmic structure, see score example.

154 lines (another instrument starts lines)

155 noise lists (duo)

156 objects (fork on plate). midground. relatively delicate within the
actual mixture.

157 improv, solo. below midground. not very audible. fast synthetic
"horse ride" or digital "rain-showers" or electric discharges...

158 nice chords, 4 strings, see score. (tempo M.M. 15: 4 seconds per note
- or slower.) semi-audible on start. later very clear but not fully in
the foreground. can end anywhere (does not need to be completed if you
take the tempo very slow, or can be continued *da capo* if you are finished
before the end of the time frame.

159 whisper, à 5, relatively strong, with a little addition of voice

160 colours, à 5

161 improv, solo, softer than midground, barely audible, but relatively
dense like lively chatting

162 lines (another instrument starts lines)

163 talk, à 6, soft voices, but dense

164 para fugue 2, à 4. simlar than 133, also upwards scales, also
distorted, but now (more or less) ending together. see graphic score. (in

the score-overview the entries are divided into 164a, b, c and d.) play
perfectly until 28:39

165 white noise scale, limited band-with of 2 octaves, climbing upwards
as a scale of diatonic steps also for 2 octaves, 4 seconds per step:
starting band-with 125-500Hz, ending band-with: 500-2000Hz

166 the art of fugue 2, à 4, see score, very audible. play perfectly
until 28:39

167 talk, à 3, quite loud

168 pas de seul, solo, see score. "the art of fugue" and "para fugue" are
both ending right when "pas de seul" starts. foreground.

169 improv, solo, background improvisation, hardly ever audible except in
the end. vage instable almost toneless glissandi, a shadow of "speaking"
or "gesturing"

170 noise lists (duo)

171 objects, plastic bag, a large one, stronger material, continuous
"rain", midground

172 Karl Marx, solo, see score, foreground

173 improv, solo, various diverse inhomogenious sounds and noises in one
strict rhythmic pattern:
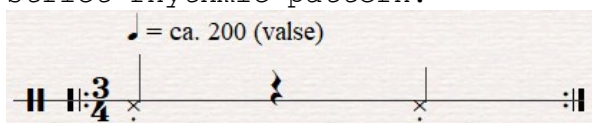
174 para Marx, solo, paraphrase/caricature/mocking of "Karl Marx",
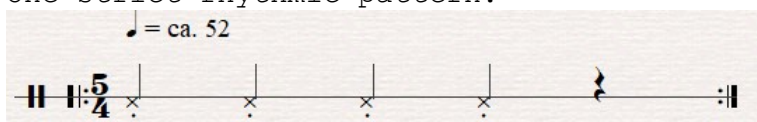slightly below the "original

175 triangle, even, tremolo or fast regular repetion, very soft

176 lines (another instrument starts lines)

177 talk, à 14, soft, rather more a murmur, not very obvious

178 little mirror, pno solo, see score, clearly audible but not loud

179 improv, solo, very different and diverse short percussive noises in
one strict rhythmic pattern:

180 talk, à 5, more articulated (than 177), almost understandable

FIN: the end is like the beginning without any sign. endings are
graduated in groups. solos (176, 179) and the last noise-list duo (170)
go more or less until 30:36