Peter Ablinger

ORACLE PIECES

4 Instruments, language, objects, microphones

from: "Instruments &"

for "Polwechsel"

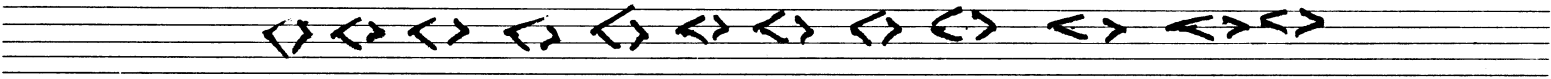(1994-)2022

ca. 20'

Prologue/Epilogue:

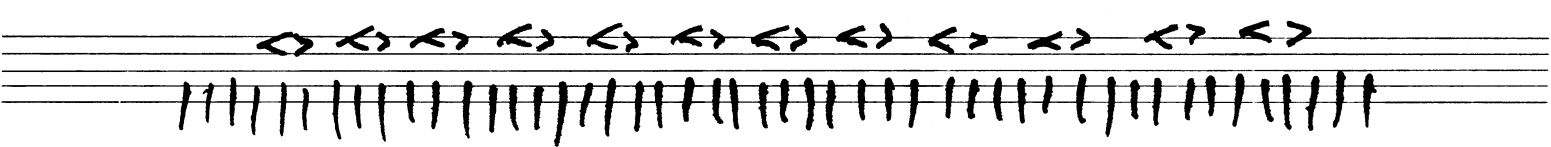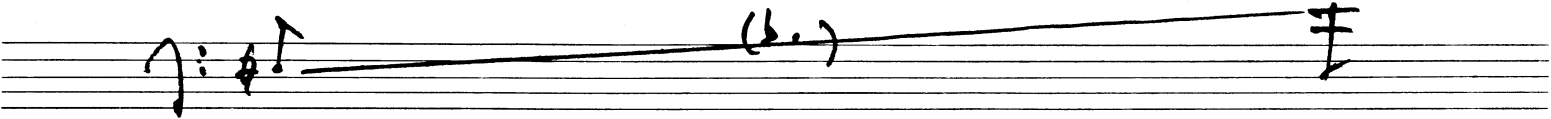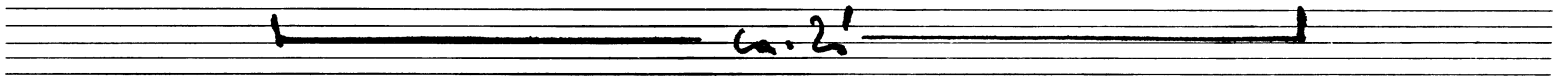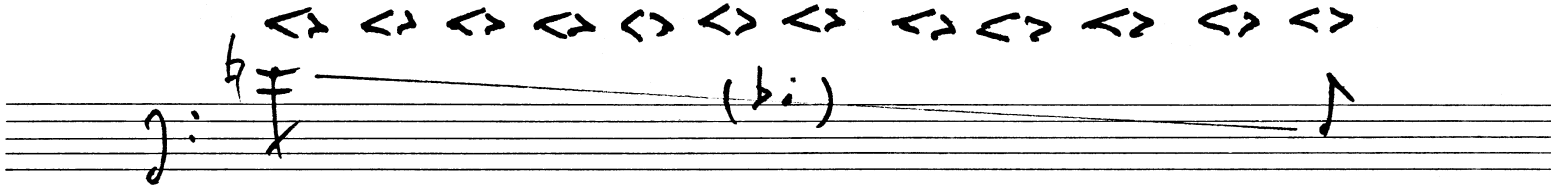Feedback (Burkhard)
Fork on plate and towel (Martin)
Cello (Michael)
Double bass (Werner)

Ht (towel) starts/ends alone
    hits the floor with wet Ht (towel),
    or use other resonant spot in the room;
    strong, regular, approx. every 2"

after the 2nd/3rd beat, all the others join in
    led by Fb (feedback), after which the strings
    and G/T (fork on plate) follow;
    1 single <> lasts about 5",
    pause between 2 <> also 5" - irregular!

Towel, details:
    wet towel, folded 1x, held like a stick; (not
    hitting an instrument, but something that is
    part of the room); also at the end, 2-3 hits
    remain alone.

Fork on plate, details:
    Ordinary dinner fork on flat dinner plate:
    squeaking, screeching noise due to circular
    movement (independent of the regular beating
    of the towel). Audio example:
    ablinger.mur.at/hiddenaudio/turner1.mp3

Feedback, details:
    one hand holds a microphone, the other
    the volume control; this controls the <>;
    choose a different microphone position
    for each <>. The irregularities resulting
    from the unpredictability are desired:
    the others follow suit. (Fb-player also
    indicates the end in each case).

Strings, details:
    Vc and Kb perform a glissando which
    pauses when the FB pauses; in the
    prologue the glissando begins in unison
    and ends in the double octave; vice versa
    in the epilogue: ending in unison;
    Theoretically, if the tempo were precise,
    this should result in about 12 <>:
    1 per semitone, or a semitone gliss =
    approx. 10 seconds.

After the last towel stroke, short pause for
approx. 2 seconds, then immediately go into
the main section; similar between the end of
the main section and the epilogue.

MAIN PART (3 sections)
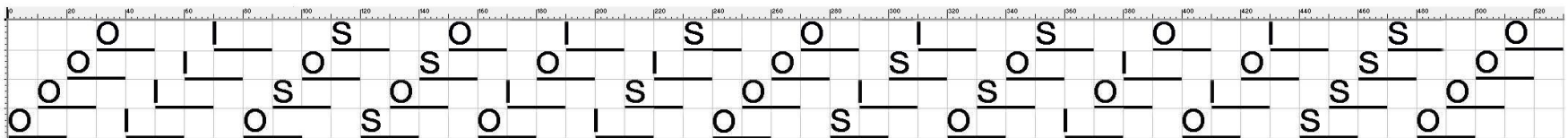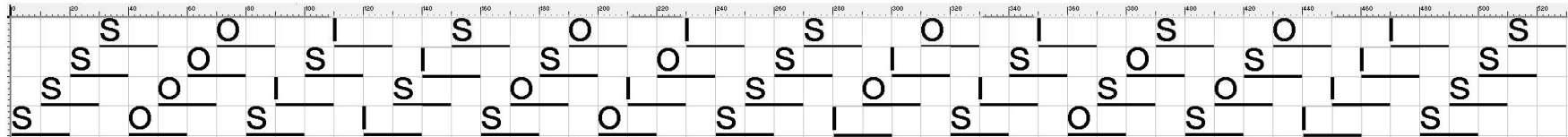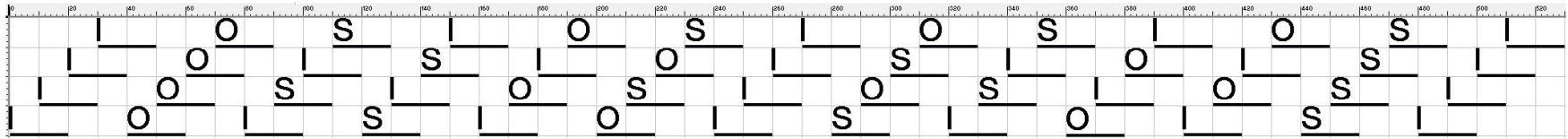
MAIN PART, Description:

Percussion 1 (Burkhard) Percussion 2 (Martin) Cello (Michael) Double bass (Werner) The score page for the main part lists 3 different materials: I = instrument O = oracle S = voice I = instrument: Percussion 1: self-made, microtonal "glockenspiel" (description below); Percussion 2: vibraphone; Strings: arco All play exclusively upward scales (vib. see below), microtonal (out of tune), irregular, single notes short but no staccato, rather soft, breathy, and always a short pause after each note (or perhaps better: "before each" note – like a short hesitation, or: like "enumerating"); strings: each note on a different string! (this could encourage both "hesitation" and irregular intonation, or conversely hinder overly mechanical playing). Vib. with 4 mallets improvises something like: etc. all about **p/mp**	in section 1 (1st line): low register; section 2: middle register, section 3: high register – overlapping, i.e. in Vib. e.g./about 1: f-f2, 2: c1-c3, 3: f1-f3 (c3 = high soprano c); all the others divide up their own registers, and the strings decide for themselves what their lowest and highest notes are. O = oracle: Hammer handles, flints, ceramic bird whistles, different sized glass marbles, each instrument chooses one of the materials, a handful each, or as many as can be held and manipulated well with 2 hands: by rubbing or kneading or mixing (in terms of movement, perhaps like kneading dough) a continuous "murmur" is created. S = voice: improvised text carpet – without pauses; text template (see last page) is not read off, but individual words or word combinations are continuously taken from it and woven into the text impro. The improvised, spontaneously invented words and sentences are most likely to be self-referential and relate to the current situation, the current place and what is happening right now...

S = voice (cont.):
The character of the speach is most likely to be
a soliloquy - under no circumstances directed at
anyone (neither the audience nor the other
players); no theater; nevertheless more than a
mumble, text comprehensibility should be
partially given, but under no circumstances
should be comprehensiv for longer streches;
perhaps about 30% of what is spoken should reach
the audience.

No pauses, and preferably no 'uhs':
if you can't think of a continuation at the
moment, insert repetitions.

Timing:
1 box = ø 6" (2"-10")
1 section = approx. 5'
short fermata after each section

whereby the next insertion determines the
duration of the previous one (2"-10"); from the
third insertion onwards, through the insertion,
also the performer which is 2 squares earlier is
stopped. The penultimate (Martin) and last
(Burkhard) players in each line must stop by
themselves.

Setup for main part:
Oracle and voice are miked; possibly with the
same microphone; the oracle materials are placed
on a soft surface on a high desk, just below head
height (see drawing on the left).

For double bass, on the other hand, the oracle
materials are hanging in a (non-rustling) (fruit)
net, possibly from the microphone stand (also
just below head height) (see drawing on the
right).

The self-built, microtonal "glockenspiel"

consisting of a chromatic metallophone, sounding g2 to g4;
plus a diatonic children's metallophone, c3 to g4, in which all sound plates
were filed about a 1/4 tone higher;
and individual metal plates, partly sawn into even smaller plates,
the 2 lowest plates still below the g2, and the highest in irregular
steps (sometimes much smaller than 1/4 tone) up to about a5;
(neither the range, number of notes nor the material used are binding:
completely different combinations could lead to a suitable microtonal mallet instrument)

So if saying "I" has no place, we could try to think of a differenceless observation that manages without an "I". So also without the distinction between 'I' and other observers. That is probably the biggest hurdle. Where can we feel - whatever - a pain that does not belong to us alone, that does not distinguish us from others?

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