

# Microworks

a collection of five-second works  
mostly involving a solo percussionist

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# Thoughts on Duration

Conceptual art can be an eager vessel for the "immediate." When I set out to write this collection of works, I started with the idea of making the pieces each no longer than five seconds. I began to consider what a musical engagement in this small space could mean and what sorts of directions my compositional style would be lead.

Consider the microchip; it works in much the same way as a collection of electrical components that are soldered together do (capacitors, resistors, transistors, etc.) except that it compacts all of those component functions into a singular, smaller unit; essentially a reduction of larger, more unyieldingly-complex schematics. Much in the same way as a microchip, I consider these compositions complete works by themselves, just smaller. Our adaptive facilities allow us to make great leaps in perceptual magnitudes. I've tried to reduce the footprint, not the content.

**THESE WORKS WERE COMMISSIONED BY DUSTIN DONAHUE.**

# Collection List:

74C14

for six beer bottles and six brass mallets

**Ah, yes**

for mouth sounds

**Anna, watching couple eating bagel together while he reads**

***The Speed of Trust* and she reads *The Sex Lives of Animals***

for mixed axillary percussion

**Arem**

for a six pack of cheap beer

**bangs anecdote**

for solo bongo player and one bongo

**(EXAMPLE OF BLURT):**

**MIKE -> NERD -> [BLURT] -> MIKE IS A NERD**

for laptop operator

**Crabbingoff Kingstreet**

for wire-bound steel frame

**while the dog meat's cookin'**

for a hungry knife-wielding person,

3 red potatoes and a stalk of celery

**(-\*)**

for your left and right eyelids

**on going on a diet devoid of**

**high-fructose corn syrup and foxconn...**

for a large pad of paper (multiple pages)

**Gazebo, Gazelle, zilch.**

for heterogeneous pitched instrument

**Jew-Goldberg, the accountant,**

**skips town and orders some cotton candy.**

for rube-goldberg device operator

**meeting Dostoevsky on the I-95**

5 suspension cords from a large bass drum (still attached)

**informationgrantedto happenperceptualinterfacedisregarded**

wooden chair, always *fff*

**Obligatory Introductory Phrase**

for xylophone

**merry-marie**

for green frog squeaky dog toy

**[=+\**

for various metals

**True minimalism, that is, work conceived of singularized and essentialized performance is never actually achievable, since there are always complex systems of culture, language and phenomenology at work.**

(breath)

**Good for you for putting old heads on young shoulders!**

(sword and shield)

**SHOT HIMSELF DEAD**

snaredrum

**staring at a corner that turns to beige.**

for woodblocks (5)

**Bring me the head of Stewart Beach on a platter.**

spoon, fork, knife

**wear hats, switch gears, wear gears, switch hats, witch hears, swear gats**

5 pitched wrenches and fedora

**symmetry-is-boring**

wineglass, mokubio, log drum, muted cowbell and taut rope

**tweeting bird**

(lg. metal bowl and sweaty palms)



# 74C14

for six beer bottles, hit with six brass mallets

bottle 1 (10% empty)

bottle 2 (15% full)

bottle 3 (40% empty)

bottle 2 (50% full)

bottle 2 (25% empty)

bottle 2 (10% full)

# Ah, yes

for mouth sounds

(tongue-taps) *pp*

"ss" *p*

"tuh" "ss" *f*

(squish-growlsounds) *ppp*

5:3 *mf*

(quick inhale with teeth) *mf*

"op" "ah" *f*

(blown air) *mf*

(closed-mouth fast air through nose) *f*

"ee" "aa" "oo" - "ii" *fff*

(like a pig squeal)

"tus" "tes" *pp*

(squishy) *mf*

(tongue-ram)

(inhaled low growl)

Anna, watching couple eating bagel together while he reads *The Speed of Trust* and she reads *The Sex Lives of Animals*

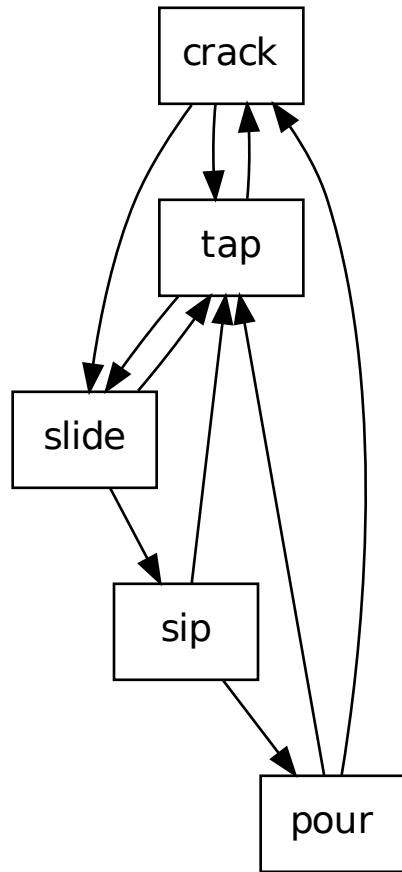
(bongo)  
(low timbale)  
(conga)  
(triangle)  
(cuiica)

♩ = 120

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is a single melodic line with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a half rest, followed by a sequence of eighth notes: Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The lower staff is a bass line with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It starts with a half rest, followed by a series of eighth notes: Bb3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The bass line features several rhythmic patterns: a triplet of eighth notes (Bb3, A3, G3), another triplet (F3, E3, D3), a quintuplet of eighth notes (C3, Bb2, A2, G2, F2), and two final triplets (E2, D2, C2). The piece concludes with a final quarter note (Bb3) and a quarter rest.

# Arem

for a six pack of cheap beer



can list:

- 1) unopened
- 2) unopened
- 3) opened, full
- 4) unopened
- 5) opened, half-full/half-empty
- 6) opened, empty

start anywhere in the chain of actions.  
perform the indicated action as quickly as possible on one of the six cans.  
follow the arrows to another box.  
repeat process for 5 seconds total.

# bangs anecdote

for solo bongo player and one bongo

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a tempo marking of quarter note = 96. It begins with two eighth notes, followed by a half note marked *p*. The melody then consists of five groups of eighth notes, each beamed together and marked with a '3' above them, indicating triplets. The bottom staff is a bongo line with 'x' marks representing hits. It features a dotted quarter note followed by a quarter note, then a dotted quarter note followed by a quarter note, and finally a dotted quarter note followed by a quarter note. The lyrics 'a wo-man walks to a win-dow, sun-ny bangs.' are written below the bongo line, with hyphens under 'wo-man', 'win-dow', and 'sun-ny'.

♩ = 96

*p*

3 3 3 3 3

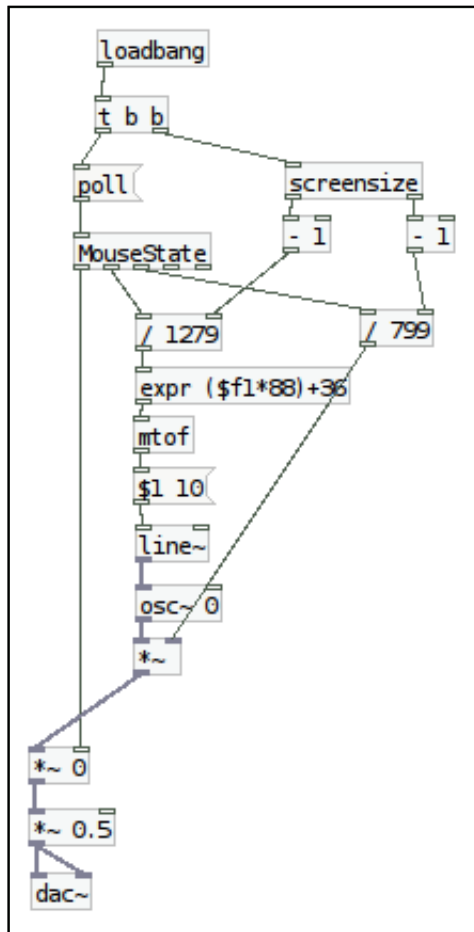
a wo-man walks to a win-dow, sun-ny bangs.



# (EXAMPLE OF BLURT)

MIKE-> NERD->[BLURT]->MIKE IS A NERD

for laptop operator



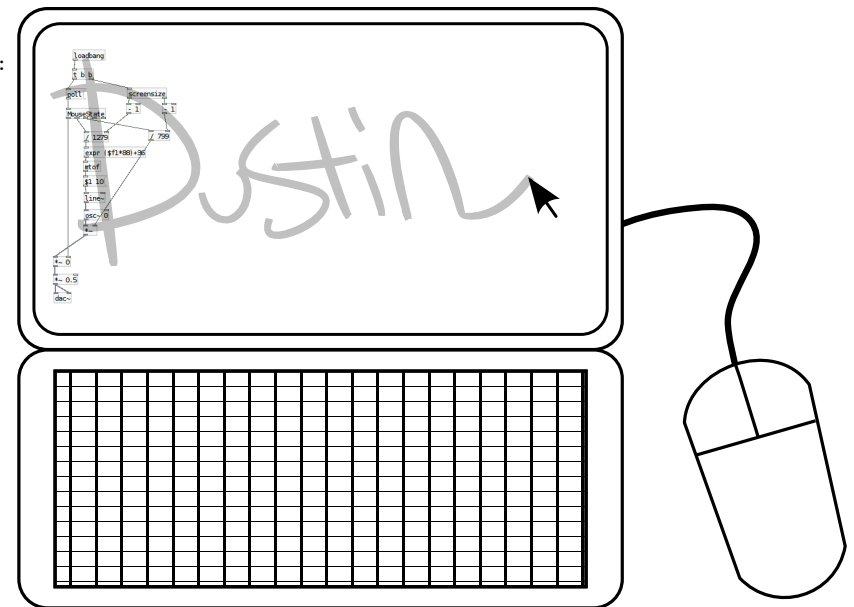
Before the concert:

1. Download PD-extended or compile it from source.
2. Re-create the patch on the left.
3. Maximize the patch window on the laptop computer you will performing from on the concert.
4. Leave edit mode (Ctrl+E)
4. Save the file.

At the concert:

0. Open the patch, compute audio. Hook up the computer's audio output to something audible to an audience.
1. Using the mouse, "sign" your name over the space of the entire screen.  
(Pen down = left mouse button down, Pen up - left mouse button up)

example:





# while the dog meat's cookin'

for a hungry knife-wielding person, 3 red potatoes and a stalk of celery

A musical score on a single staff with a 5/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 60. The score consists of several measures of music with various annotations:

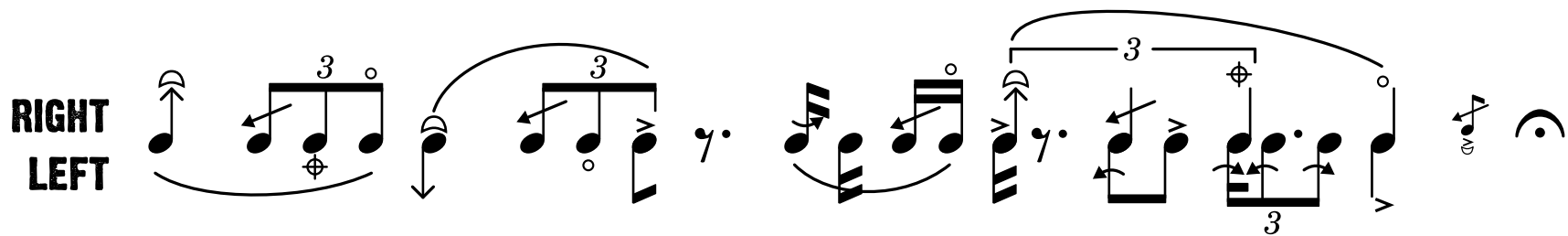
- At the beginning, there is a measure with a whole note on the fifth line, marked with a cross (X) above it. Below this measure is the instruction "SWIRL KNIFE AROUND".
- The next measure contains three quarter notes, with a bracket above them labeled "3". Above this measure is the instruction "SLICE EACH POTATO IN HALF".
- The following measure contains five eighth notes, with a bracket above them labeled "5". Below this measure is the instruction "CHOP CELERY STALK".
- The final measure contains a whole note on the fifth line, marked with a cross (X) above it. Above this measure is the instruction "CRUNCH SOMETHING BETWEEN YOUR TEETH".

The score ends with a double bar line. To the right of the double bar line, the text "YOU MAY EAT NOW" is written.



# on going on a diet devoid of high-fructose corn syrup and foxconn...

for a large pad of paper (multiple pages)



- ☺ = USE NAIL
- ↑ = SLIDE UP SIDE OF PAPER
- > = TAP CORNER
- ↙ = TURN PAGE / FOLDER CORNER
- ⊕ = HOLD PAGE CORNER DOWN
- = WHIP BACK TO NEXT PAGE (SINGLE MOTION)
- ↔ = SWIPE ACROSS PAGE IN INDICATED DIRECTION WITH BACK OF FINGER

STEMS UP = RIGHT HAND  
STEMS DOWN = LEFT HAND

The image shows a musical score for a heterogeneous pitched instrument, consisting of three staves. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 96$ . The first staff is in treble clef and contains four measures with dynamics *p*, *fff*, and *ppp*. It features triplets and a quintuplet. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and contains four measures with dynamics *ppp*, *f*, and *p*. It includes a quintuplet and a triplet. The third staff is in treble clef and contains four measures with dynamics *pp*, *ff*, and *p*. It features a quintuplet. The score uses various articulations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins.

for a heterogeneous pitched instrument  
Gazebo, Gazelle, zilch.

# Jew-Goldberg, the accountant, skips town and orders some cotton candy. for rube-goldberg device operator

## KEY:

1 = operator picks up golf club, swings it at the first book and begins the sequence.

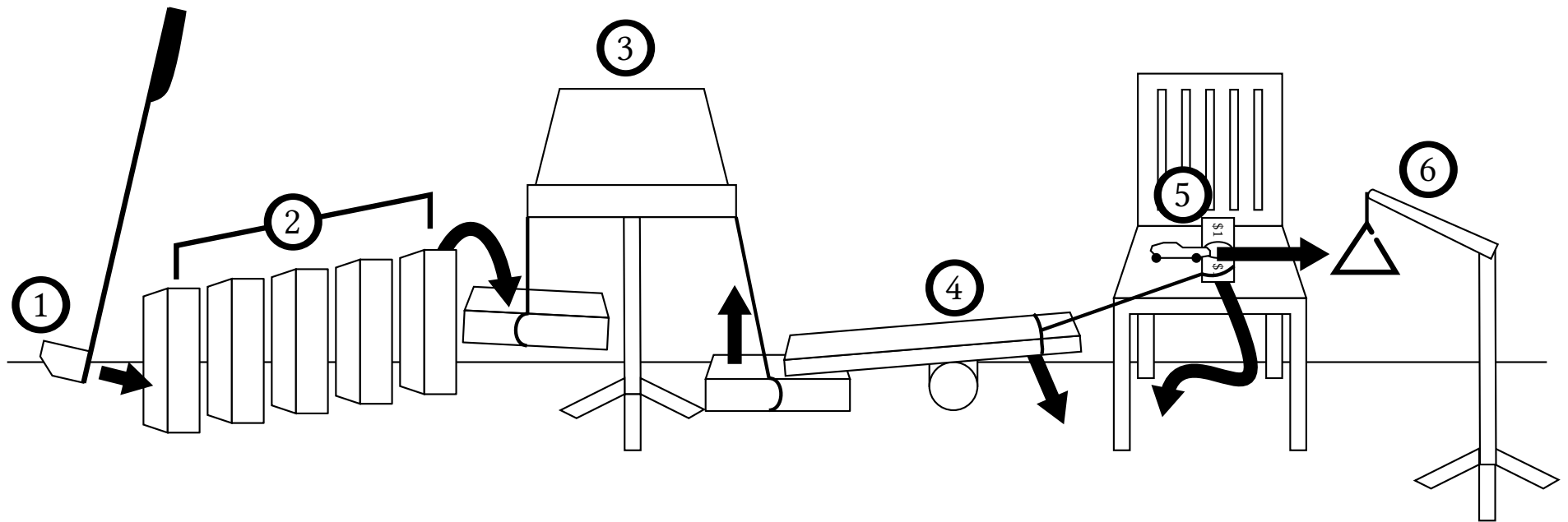
2 = 5 books of scores (dominos): Buxtehude Organ Works , Bach Mass in B Minor, Beethoven Symphony No. 3, Berlioz Requiem and Brahms Hungarian Dances

3 = music stand used as pulley, (books are tied to each other and strung over the stand) book on left is suspended in air (Berio Sequenza for Piano), book on right is on ground (Boulez Structures)

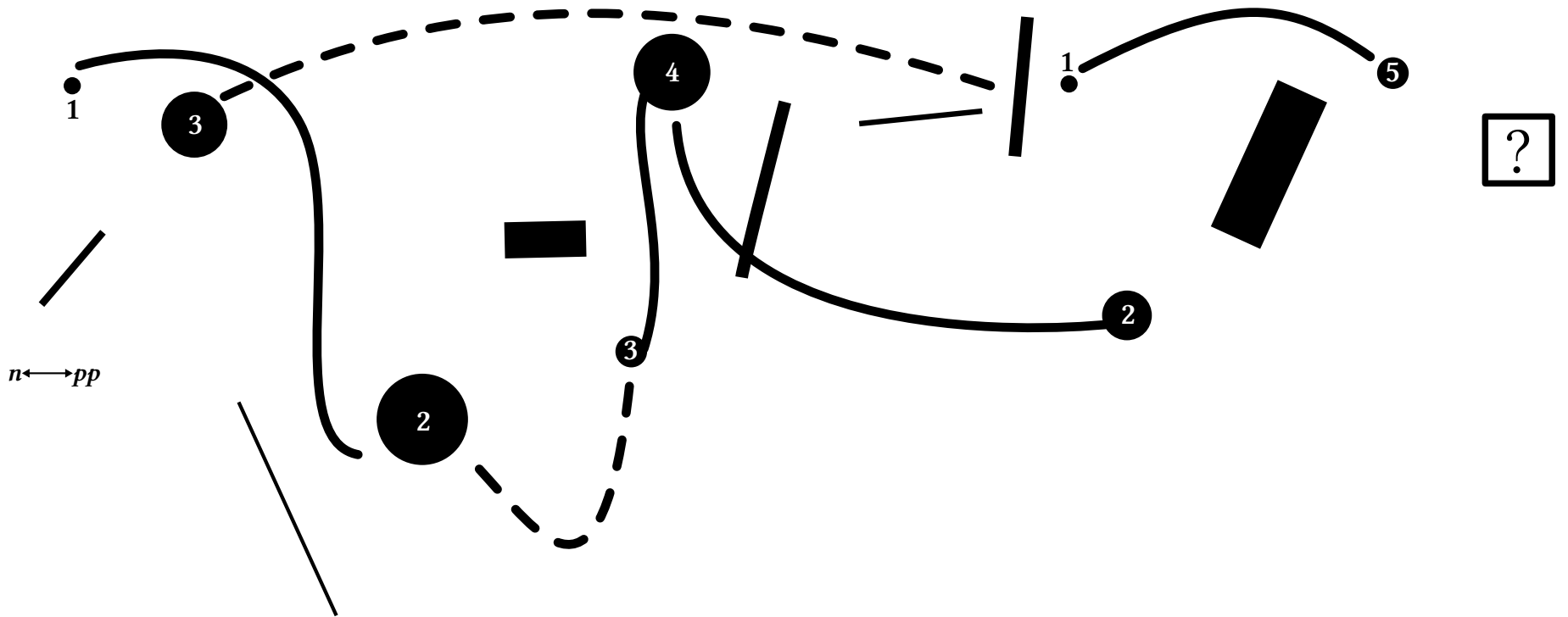
4 = plank of wood on a can of mushroom soup, tied to 5's dollar bill

5 = toy race car with mechanical wheels (pull-back to make car move), car wheels are wond back and the car is held in place with a dollar bill.

6 = a large triangle, the car must fly through the triangle and ting it on its exit sequence (but still must completely go through it).



5 suspension cords from a large bass drum (still attached)



meeting Dostoevsky on the I-95



# information granted to happen perceptual interface disregarded

The image shows a musical score for a wooden chair performance. It consists of three staves. The top staff has a 7:5 ratio annotation above it and a 3-measure triplet annotation. The middle staff has a 5-measure annotation, a 7-measure annotation, and a 5:6 ratio annotation. The bottom staff has a 3-measure triplet annotation. The text 'wooden chair always *fff*' is written to the left of the staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

perform one staff, accompanied by playback of a precording of the other 2 staves  
the volume of the recording should match the sound of the live chair

# Obligatory Introductory Phrase

for xylophone

5" total

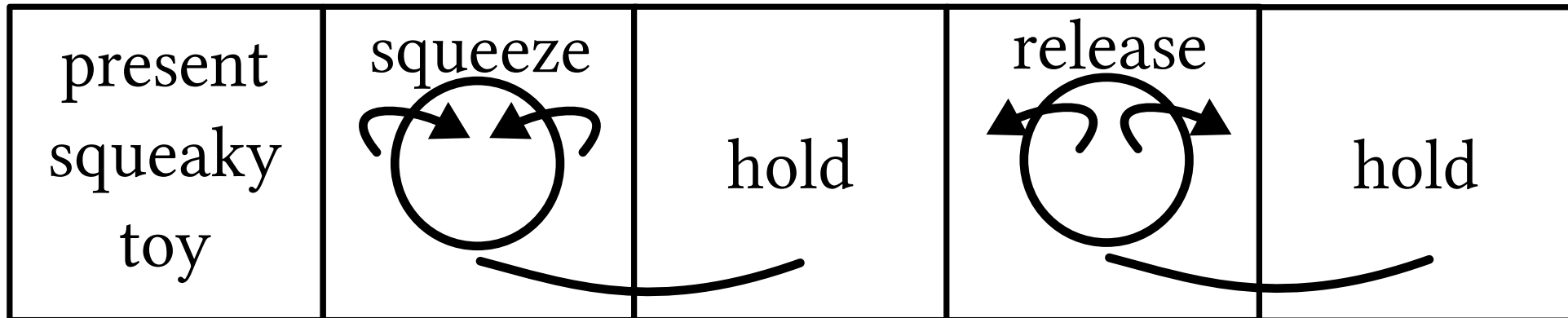
hum along as you play

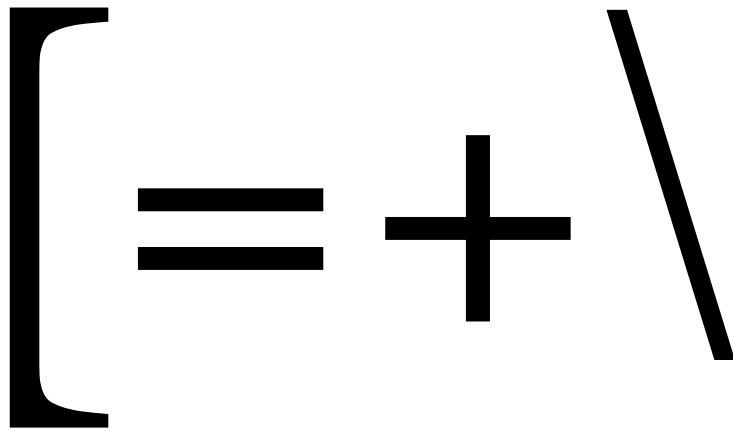
choose a path

The score consists of a single melodic line in treble clef with a common time signature. The melody is composed of eighth notes, with the first note being a half-flat. The piece is divided into three sections by large, curved lines that branch from a single starting point on the left to multiple paths on the right. Each path is a variation of the same melodic line, with dynamic markings *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) indicating volume changes. The first section has a *p* marking at the start and an *mf* marking at the end. The second section has *p* markings at the start and end of each of its three paths, with an *mf* marking at the end of the middle path. The third section has *p* markings at the start and end of each of its six paths, with *mf* markings at the end of the second, fourth, and sixth paths. The notation includes slurs, triplets, and accents. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final note.

# merry-marie

for green frog squeaky dog toy





for various metals

$\text{♩} = 72$

(complex metal) (4 almglocken)  
BOWED HARD MALLETS

*p* *f* *ff* *mp*

SOFT MALLETT

slowly rise out of water

A musical score for percussion on a single staff. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 72. The first measure is a single note marked *p* (piano) with the instruction "(complex metal) BOWED". A crescendo hairpin leads to a second measure marked *f* (forte). This is followed by a section of sixteenth-note patterns marked *ff* (fortissimo) with the instruction "(4 almglocken) HARD MALLETS". This section includes a quintuplet of five notes and a triplet of three notes. The piece concludes with a single note marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) with the instruction "SOFT MALLETT" and the performance instruction "slowly rise out of water" with an arrow pointing to the note.

True minimalism, that is, work conceived of singularized and essentialized performance is never actually achievable, since there are always complex systems of culture, language and phenomenology at work.

♩ = 60

upbow = breath in  
downbow = breath out

make no additional movements or sounds

# Good for you for putting old heads on young shoulders!

## instructions:

weild a sword (empty glass soda bottle) and a shield (a flexible "NO TRESSPASSING" or "BEWARE OF DOG" sign) in your left and right hands respectively.

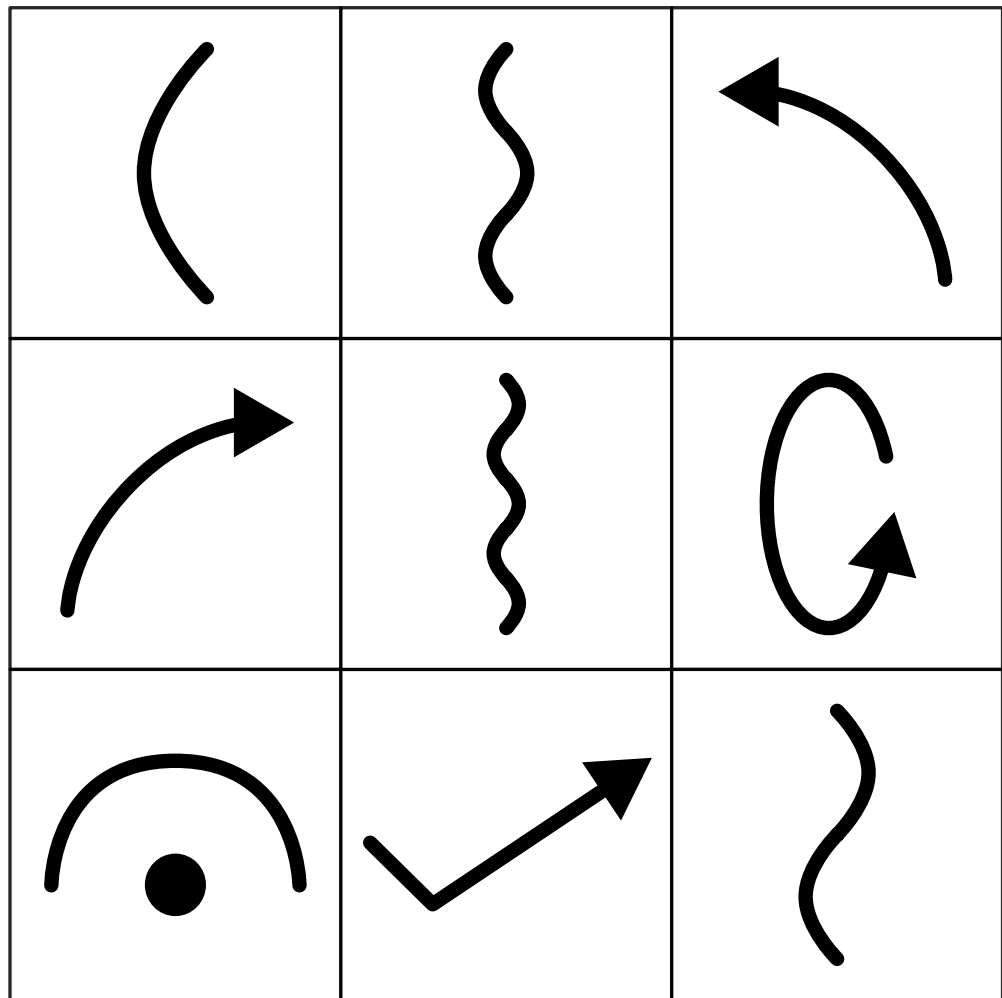
pick any square to begin in. from this start point, plan a path through the grid that passes through each square exactly one time.

for each square, play the indicated passage and then immediately move to the next square.

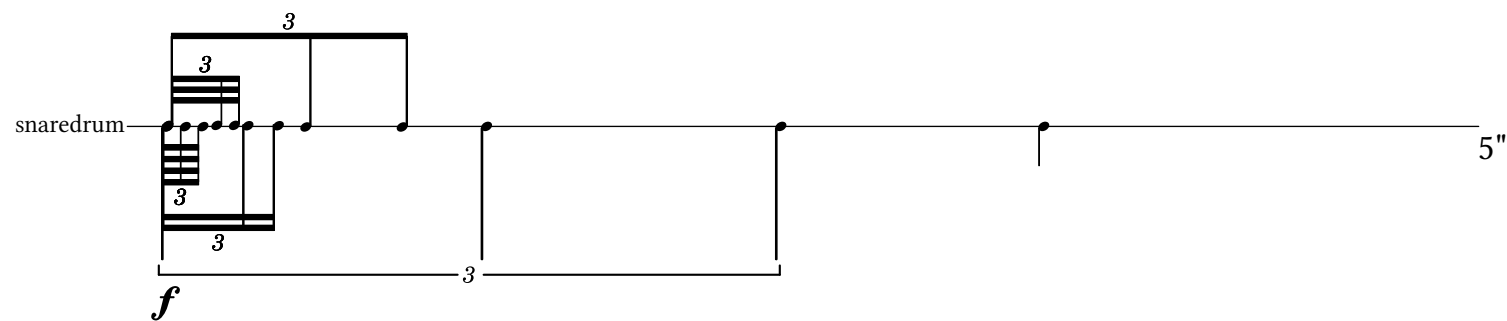
curved lines with arrows indicate to swing your sword left or right.  
the arrowed line with a bend indicates to blow gently over the bottle's top.  
curved lines with no arrows indicate to bend/shake the shield.  
the number of bends indicates how many times to bend/shake the sheild.

all actions should be forceful and fast  
yet produce very quiet, gentle sounds.

each square should last slightly over half a second.  
total duration: 5 seconds.



# SHOT HIMSELF DEAD



staring at a corner  
that turns to beige.

for woodblocks (5)

♩ = 48

THREADED METAL ROD  
FELT MALLET

*ppp* *ppp*

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'THREADED METAL ROD' and the bottom staff is labeled 'FELT MALLET'. The time signature is 12/8. The tempo is indicated as ♩ = 48. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat). The notation includes a series of notes and rests, with a dynamic marking of *ppp* (pianissimo) at the beginning and end of the phrase, connected by a hairpin.



Bring me  
the head  
of Stewart  
Beach on  
a platter.

♩ = 156

spoon

fork

knife

**instructions:**

scrape a large trash can lid with indicated utensils.  
the sound should be piercing and unstable throughout.

wear hats,  
switch gears,  
wear gears,  
switch hats, witch hears, swear gats

5 pitched  
wrenches

$\text{♩} = 60$

1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 5 4 2 1 5 3 4 2 5 1 4 3 5 2 4 1 3

**instructions:**

before piece begins, don a fedora.

notehead size indicates relative loudness

number above note indicates type of mallet to use (1 = cloth, 2 = yarn, 3 = rubber, 4 = wood, 5 = metal)

# symmetry-is-boring

5 seconds (2in = 1sec)

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff, labeled 'wineglass', has a single note on the first line with a dynamic marking of *f*. The second and third staves, labeled 'mokubio and lg. log drum', each have a series of 15 notes on the first line, with a dynamic marking of *f*. The fourth and fifth staves, labeled 'muted cowbell', each have a series of 15 notes on the first line, with a dynamic marking of *f*. The sixth staff, labeled 'taut rope', has a single note on the first line with a dynamic marking of *f*. A double-headed arrow above the staves indicates a duration of 5 seconds, with a scale of 2 inches = 1 second.

## Instructions:

- Shatter the wineglass in one strike, drop or break with metal rod.
- For muted cowbell lines, play both staves on a single muted cowbell, medium mallets.
- For mokubio / log drum lines, play both staves simultaneously on a single mokubio and a single log drum, hard mallets.
- Pluck the taut rope, it should be very long (>10 ft.) and made of a fibrous material, producing a low but still audible pitch.

# tweeting bird

