

in memoriam Victoris Borgei .
for Dan Wolf's piano anthology

88 more, more or less

4 players or more, up to a dozen or so

1 piano

Player 1 approaches spine side of piano,¹ keyboard end, and begins from one of the lowest notes a long "scale," legato, that proceeds to the other end of the keyboard, or near it, always going in the same direction, at an even speed, and having finished this succession,² retreats in the same direction from the instrument.

Shortly after player 1 begins this action, player 2 approaches in the same way and performs a similar "scale," but at a somewhat different speed,³ and with different pitches,⁴ exiting similarly. Likewise with player 3, 4 and so on; 4 or 5 players could be at the keyboard at once.

A scale can be preconceived mentally or improvised, and can include any interval;⁵ the only "scale" that isn't suitable material is an uninterrupted chromatic — semitone — succession, though parts of a player's scale could be successive semitones.

Players would need to plan ahead⁶ (or on the spot) to avoid "passing," which is not practical (though could be if there were more pianos; but that is a different conception): each player can try this out separately, in advance, if desired.

A decision should be made beforehand on dynamics — I think they should be uniform, and would prefer that the individual notes be as loud as possible — but as soft as possible is another extreme choice. The dampers may be, on common consent, all open, or not.⁷

Bhishma Xenotechnites • Corvallis, Oregon • 21.xii.2007

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BB more, more or less

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Four different versions are suggested here, all *molto legato*, smooth and even.

- The original basic version (asynchronous).
- The same, but all starting from the same agreed-on low note.
- All notes played simultaneously at an agreed-on steady tempo (synchronous).
- The same, but the tempo will change with each new player to that player's steady tempo.

1. Players obviously are standing; no bench at piano. Player walks parallel to scale performance. Waiting players could queue.

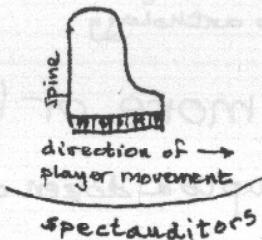
2. The "scale," which spans the range of the keyboard, is to be constituted of at least two sizes of interval, but smaller than an octave. Intervals can be consistent, or change arbitrarily as one goes along. Both hands may be used, but maintaining smooth legato.

3. Tempo range from very slow to moderate speed, being careful, through interval choice as well as speed, not to run into or over the player ahead.

4. "Different pitches": a scale with somewhat or very different interval and pitch choices.

5. "Any interval": smaller than an octave (see above).

6. Each player may wish to try out the procedure separately. Players may decide to have an ensemble practice run before a performance or not, but in the latter case should think through the sequence of actions.



7. The dampers may be dropped open with a weight on the damper pedal, or not (my preference at present); the players may wish to try both and decide.

Players may find it interesting to listen to the performance when not playing, or even while at the keyboard.

The duration of the performance is up to the players, who may take as many turns at the keyboard as collectively agreed on. Different versions (loud)soft, slow/fast, damped/undamped strings, asynchronous/synchronous) may constitute a multi-movement performance.

Charles Shere has offered the excellent suggestion that to make the piece more wintery the players can don winter gloves or mittens; I would add, and adopt a slow, quiet style. Other seasons can be suggested by tempo (Lage and Vivaldi come to mind), chosen dynamic level, and possibly the players' attire.

Thanks to Charles and to Dan Wolf, and to Owen and Lynn Daly for their spirited help with a premiere trial run.

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