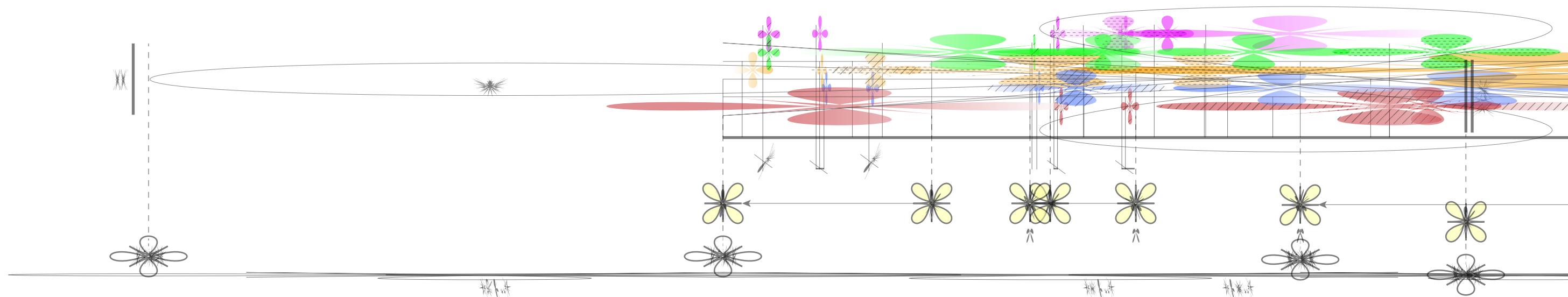


colors #2

a provoked improvisation for two voices [any voice types]

Ryan Carraher (2020)





The Score


The score presents two streams of information: (1) a grid containing color-coded blocks shows the raw materials currently available for use in the improvisation, the duration of the availability, and a suggested fore-/background scheme between materials [i.e. which materials are more prominent]; (2) above the grid, “levels of difference” describe the textural environment in which these materials are used [i.e. dynamic ranges] and how this usage shifts over time.


The “raw” materials for improvisation:


Improvise whilst considering the following:

 = **Unvoiced/unpitched sounds** [tongue motion, air-based events, plosives, teeth, clicks, fleshy sounds, salivic sounds, fricatives, dental sucks, horse clicks, snoring sounds, lip trills, etc.]; can be considered as a spectrum with “speech-like” [fricatives] on one end, and “noises” [clicks, sucks, etc.] on the other.

 = **Text events** (you may choose any text source(s) to pull from); any character-inflection may be imposed [i.e. robotic, sarcastic, fatigued, baby, angry, out-of-breath, drunk, academic, sprechstimme, whispering, alien, laughing, crying, etc.]; can be considered as a spectrum with “static character/linear” [speaking in an unchanging character for the duration of the event and speaking the text linearly] on one end, and “fluid character/non-linear” on the other [rapidly/randomly shifting between character inflections and reading the text out of order or repeating small sections of it.]

 = **Whistles and articulations** [fixed pitched whistle, glissando whistle, whistle full of air, quick whistle, growls, flutters, diaphragm pulses, etc.]

 = **Using the body** [i.e. cheek manipulation, body percussion, covering your mouth with your hand, finger snapping, clapping, stomping, rubbing hands together, rubbing palms against clothing, etc.]

 = **Pitched events**; use full range; any stylistic or timbral style may be imposed [i.e. Bel Canto, jazz, scat, vocal fry, senza-vib., nasalized, breathy, wild ululations, etc.]; can be considered as a spectrum with “narrow range/static timbre” [i.e. improvising within a narrow section of your range using a single unchanging timbre/style/technique] on one end, and “wide range/fluid timbre” [i.e. rapidly shifting between locations within your entire range without favoring one in particular while rapidly/randomly shifting between timbres/styles/techniques] on the other.

- Durations are approximate/suggestions; onset and termination points of the color-coded material are indicated graphically
- In the score, you may only improvise using the active elements [i.e. when the color is present in the score, you may improvise with its associated attributes, if it is absent you may not use those attributes]

*** N.B. a color-stream presented in a visually unbroken line *does not necessarily mean that the events must be continuous!* It simply means these events are *available* for use if you should so choose. You may improvise with phrase lengths, insertion of silences, etc. (see below) but the continual presence of a color-stream does not necessitate a continuous stream of sound ***

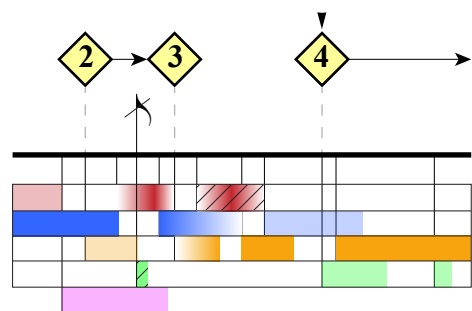
- The shading of the color reflects its grounding within the overall texture; if the color is lighter, the events occur less frequently and are relegated to the background, if the color is darker, these events occur most frequently and are foregrounded; transitions between these states can and do occur. [For context, the colors above in the instructions are shown at 100% opacity]

Difference - the manner in which the raw materials are used:

- The numbers in yellow diamonds refer to “level of differences”; “1” represents a high degree of similarity relative to the previous quality, “4” represents the highest degree of contrast relative to the previous quality. “Quality” references the density, dynamic range, phrase length, use of silence, and treatment of your available materials [see the considered spectrums above]. Below an example of each degree is applied to a sample referent:


REFERENT [the material in this example is: text]	1 maintain overall character of referent but with subtle differences	2 maintain overall character of referent but with noticeable, yet not jarring, differences	3 overall character of referent is destroyed but a subtle link is maintained	4 complete destruction of referent’s character; the complete opposite of the referent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sparse; - Dynamic range: ppp-p; - Short phrases; - Occasional silences; - Static character/linear treatment of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sparse; - Dynamic range: pp; - Slightly longer phrases; - Occasional silences; - Static character/linear treatment of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sparse; - Dynamic range: pp-f; - 50/50 mix of short and long phrases; - More frequent silences; - Static character/linear treatment of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sudden shifts between sparsity and density; - Dynamic range: ppp-fff; - Long phrases; - No silences; - Static character/non-linear treatment of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dense; - Dynamic range: mf-fff; - Long phrases; - No silences; - Fluid character/non-linear treatment of text.


Difference (cont.)




-Consider the example to the left: the first diamond contains a “2” which indicates to modify the overall quality so that it retains the character of the previous improvisation but has a minor noticeable difference (for example, if the previous texture was ppp/sparse/air-focused timbre then the next texture could be pp/denser (relative to previous)/air-focused). The arrow indicates a transition to a new quality which has a difference level of “3” indicating a more noticeable contrast. This quality then remains static. The diamond with a level “4” difference with an accent above it indicates a sudden, dramatic shift to a completely contrasting quality.

- Transitions between level of differences occur when an arrow links two yellow diamonds; when an accent is found above the yellow diamond this indicates a sudden shift to the new texture.
- Levels of difference are subjective and are based solely on the events you have performed in the past. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to interpret these. Their interpretation will naturally vary with each performance.

 if the color block is presented with a pattern of diagonal lines, this indicates that this material has a different quality relative to the current overall quality. For example, if your improvisation is currently characterized as quiet and sparse the orange material (pitch) will be loud and dense. All other colors/materials remain unaffected. You may freely choose which aspects of quality change.

 if a color block is presented with a pattern of parallel dashed lines this indicates regularity:

-If applied to **pitch material**: arrive at a single pitch and maintain this pitch; use only this pitch for the duration of the dashed-line overlay;

-If applied to **body material**: perform a repeating, rhythmically regular pattern for the duration (i.e.  chest thump pattern);

-If applied to **text material**: isolate a small fragment of text and repeat it. The text may vary rhythmically each repetition if desired.

- Events attached to grace notes indicate a quick, accented insertion of the indicated material(s).

“Telepathic” Improvisation

- In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on gatherings, this work is to be performed as a “telepathic” improvisation. In this situation both performers perform by themselves, within their own homes, and without hearing the actions of their partner. However, both commence performing at the same clock time thus technically “performing together” by inhabiting the same temporal space and interacting with a mutual score. Please follow these steps:

- 1) Both performers agree upon a date and time for performance;
- 2) Both performers need a means of recording (does not have to be high-tech) and a stopwatch;**
- 3) Immediately at the agreed upon time, start both the stopwatch and recording device (in the case of performer I a 10” buffer of silence is built into the score to facilitate this);
- 4) Perform a rendition of the piece. Attempt to aurally envisage what your partner is doing and interact with this imaginary performance (“telepathically”); seeing your partner’s part in the score can aid this process; it also helps if you are familiar with the improvisational language of your partner;
- 5) Stopwatch times and durations are suggestive and often left purposefully vague;
- 6) When you finish performing, remain still and silent for 10-15” before you move to stop the recording device;
- 7) Each performer will send their respective recordings to the composer who will superimpose one on top of the other to create the “duet”

- When/if “normal” concert procedures resume, this work can also be performed live with both performers in the same concert hall

- If you print the score, please print in color. It is also advised that the chosen text source(s) be visible during performance (unless the text is memorized)

- It is important that each performer take some time to experiment with the language of the score before attempting a realization. However, do not arrive at a concrete version of the piece; it should always remain fluid.

- If you have any questions or something is unclear please feel free to e-mail me: ryan@ryancarraher.com

In the end...

...feel free to adhere to and/or ignore any of the aforementioned instructions in order to facilitate a personally engaging performance experience! Have fun with it, explore new means of vocal production, and don’t hesitate to take risks if you feel so inclined!

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