A Scratch Orchestra: Draft Constitution

Cornelius Cardew

The Musical Times is currently published by Musical Times Publications Ltd..

Ex. 2 LENTO MOLTO ESPRESSIVO · con 8ve

Ex.3

middle and later works, without key signature—is concerned with C major and minor, and the first of its three movements opens boldly with a theme in C minor. This movement is a passionate Allegro in which two main ideas are presented. Both the first and the second (a broad lyrical theme in G major) are recapitulated in C major, thus providing a conventional tonal framework. But during the re-capitulation a lightly accompanied cadenza-like section occurs, at the end of which the orchestra recalls the opening of the movement and very gently and quietly expounds an unexpected theme in E flat (ex 1). The soloist takes it up in canon with the orchestra and leads eventually to the second subject, after which the movement ends, without a coda, combining in its last phrase references to both main themes.

The second movement, marked Lento, is a passa-caglia beginning as in ex 2. The motives of any composer who uses academic devices of this kind may well be called in question, particularly when the composer is, like Brian, virtually self-taught. Brian's use of fugue, canon and passacaglia is a frequent feature of the music composed during the 1920s and 30s. It leads him to write some of his simplest yet most dissonant music, and in this movement the soloist, having played the passacaglia theme in bars 9-16, abandons it to comment in various ways on the ingenuity of the orchestral music. Four simple orchestral chords serve as coda.

The finale, spirited in character, presents a strongly rhythmic first subject (ex 3) and keeps to a sonata-form pattern. The second subject, originally introduced in the mediant, is folk-like in feeling. There is a long cadenza and the work ends, brightly, in C, though (characteristically) the final chord has no third in it.

Perhaps the performance of the Violin Concerto will help in the wider recognition of one of the most original men of our time.

A Scratch Orchestra: draft constitution

Cornelius Cardew

Definition: A Scratch Orchestra is a large number of enthusiasts pooling their resources (not primarily material resources) and assembling for action (music-making, performance, edification).

Note: The word music and its derivatives are here not understood to refer exclusively to sound and related phenomena (hearing, *etc*). What they do refer to is flexible and depends entirely on the members of the Scratch Orchestra.

The Scratch Orchestra intends to function in the public sphere, and this function will be expressed in the form of—for lack of a better word—concerts. In rotation (starting with the youngest) each member will have the option of designing a concert. If the option is taken up, all details of that concert are in the hands of that person or his delegates; if the option is waived the details of the concert will be determined by random methods, or by voting (a vote determines which of these two). The material of these concerts may be drawn, in part or wholly, from the basic repertory categories outlined below.

1 Scratch music
Each member of the orchestra provides himself with a notebook (or Scratchbook) in which he notates a number of accompaniments, performable con-tinuously for indefinite periods. The number of accompaniments in each book should be equal to or greater than the current number of members of the orchestra. An accompaniment is defined as music that allows a solo (in the event of one occurring) to be appreciated as such. The notation may be accom-plished using any means—verbal, graphic, musical, collage, *etc*—and should be regarded as a period of training: never notate more than one accompani-ment in a day. If many ideas arise on one day they may all be incorporated in one accompaniment. The last accompaniment in the list has the status of a solo and if used should only be used as such. On the addition of further items, what was previously a solo is relegated to the status of an accompani-ment, so that at any time each player has only one solo and that his most recent. The sole differentia-tion between a solo and an accompaniment is in the mode of playing.

The performance of this music can be entitled *Scratch Overture*, *Scratch Interlude* or *Scratch Finale* depending on its position in the concert.

2 Popular Classics
Only such works as are familiar to several members are eligible for this category. Particles of the selected works will be gathered in Appendix 1. A particle could be: a page of score, a page or more of the part for one instrument or voice, a page of an arrangement, a thematic analysis, a gramophone record, *etc*.

The technique of performance is as follows: a qualified member plays the given particle, while the remaining players join in as best they can, playing along, contributing whatever they can recall of the work in question, filling the gaps of memory with improvised variational material.

As is appropriate to the classics, avoid losing touch with the reading player (who may terminate the piece at his discretion), and strive to act concertedly rather than independently. These works should be programmed under their original titles.

3 Improvisation Rites
A selection of the rites in *Nature Study Notes* will be available in Appendix 2. Members should constantly bear in mind the possibility of contributing new rites. An improvisation rite is not a musical composition; it does not attempt to influence the music that will be played; at most it may establish a community of feeling, or a communal starting-point, through ritual. Any suggested rite will be given a trial run and thereafter left to look after itself. Successful rites may well take on aspects of folklore, acquire nicknames, *etc*.

Free improvisation may also be indulged in from time to time.

4 Compositions
Appendix 3 will contain a list of compositions performable by the orchestra. Any composition submitted by a member of the orchestra will be given a trial run in which all terms of the composition will be adhered to as closely as possible. Unless emphatically rejected, such compositions will probably remain as compositions in Appendix 3. If such a composition is repeatedly acclaimed it may qualify for inclusion in the Popular Classics, where it would be represented by a particle only, and adherence to the original terms of the composition would be waived.

5 Research Project
A fifth repertory category may be evolved through the Research Project, an activity obligatory for all members of the Scratch Orchestra, to ensure its cultural expansion.

The Research Project. The universe is regarded from the viewpoint of travel. This means that an infinite number of research vectors are regarded as hypothetically travellable. Travels may be undertaken in many dimensions, *eg* temporal, spatial, intellectual, spiritual, emotional. I imagine any vector will be found to impinge on all these dimensions at some point or other. For instance, if your research vector is the *Tiger*, you could be involved in time (since the tiger represents an evolving species), space (a trip to the zoo), intellect (the tiger's biology), spirit (the symbolic values acquired by the tiger) and emotion (your subjective relation to the animal).

The above is an intellectual structure, so for a start let's make the research vector a word or group of words rather than an object or an impression *etc*. A record of research is kept in the Scratchbook and this record may be made available to all.

From time to time a journey will be proposed (Journey to Mars, Journey to the Court of Wu Ti, Journey to the Unconscious, Journey to West Ham, *etc*). A discussion will suffice to provide a rough itinerary (*eg* embarkation at Cape Kennedy, type of vehicle to be used, number of hours in space, choice of a landing site, return to earth or not, *etc*).

Members whose vectors are relevant to this journey can pursue the relevance and consider the musical application of their research; members whose vectors are irrelevant (research on rocket fuels won't help with a journey to the Court of Wu Ti) can put themselves at the disposal of the others for the musical realization of their research.

A date can be fixed for the journey, which will take the form of a performance.

Conduct of research. Research should be through direct experience rather than academic; neglect no channels. The aim is: by direct contact, imagination, identification and study to get as close as possible to the object of your research. Avoid the mechanical accumulation of data; be constantly awake to the possibility of inventing new research techniques. The record in the Scratchbook should be a record of your activity rather than an accumulation of data. That means: the results of your research are in you, not in the book.

Example

Research vector	Research record
The Sun	29.vi. Looked up astronomical data in *EB* & made notes to the accpt of dustmotes (symbol of *EB*) and sunbeams
	1-28. viii. Holiday in the Bahamas to expose myself to the sun.
	29.vii. Saw 'the Sun' as a collection of 6 letters and wrote out the 720 combinations of them.
	1.viii. Got interested in Sun's m. or f. gender in different languages, and thence to historical personages regarded as the Sun (like Mao Tse-tung). Sought an astrological link between them.
Astrology	3.viii. Had my horoscope cast by Mme Jonesky of Gee's Court. *etc*

(note that several vectors can run together)
(the facing page should be left blank for notes on eventual musical realizations)

Spare time activity for orchestra members: each member should work on the construction of a unique mechanical, musical, electronic or other instrument.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 *Popular Classics*
Particles from: Beethoven, *Pastoral Symphony*
Mozart, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*
Rachmaninov, *Second Piano Concerto*
J. S. Bach, *Sheep may safely graze*
Cage, *Piano Concert*
Brahms, *Requiem*
Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire*
etc
(blank pages for additions)

Appendix 2 *Improvisation Rites from the book 'Nature Study Notes'* (two examples must suffice)
1 Initiation of the pulse
Continuation of the pulse
Deviation by means of accentuation, decoration, contradiction
HOWARD SKEMPTON
14 All seated loosely in a circle, each player shall write or draw on each of the ten fingernails of the player on his left.
No action or sound is to be made by a player after his fingernails have received this writing or drawing, other than music.
Closing rite: each player shall erase the marks from the fingernails of another player. Your participation in the music ceases when the marks have been erased from your fingernails.
(Groups of two or more late-comers may use the same rite to join in an improvisation that is already in progress.)
(blank pages for additions) RICHARD REASON

Appendix 3 *List of compositions*
Lamonte Young, *Poem*
Von Biel, *World II*
Terry Riley, *in C*
Christopher Hobbs, *Voicepiece*
Stockhausen, *Aus den Sieben Tagen*
Wolff, *Play*
Cage, *Variations VI*
etc
(blank pages for additions)

Appendix 4 *Special Projects and supplementary material*
(blank pages)

At time of going to press, the orchestra has 60 members. More are welcome. A meeting to confirm draft constitution and initiate training should precede the summer recess. Projected inaugural concert: November 1969. Interested parties should write to Cornelius Cardew, 112 Elm Grove Road, London SW13.