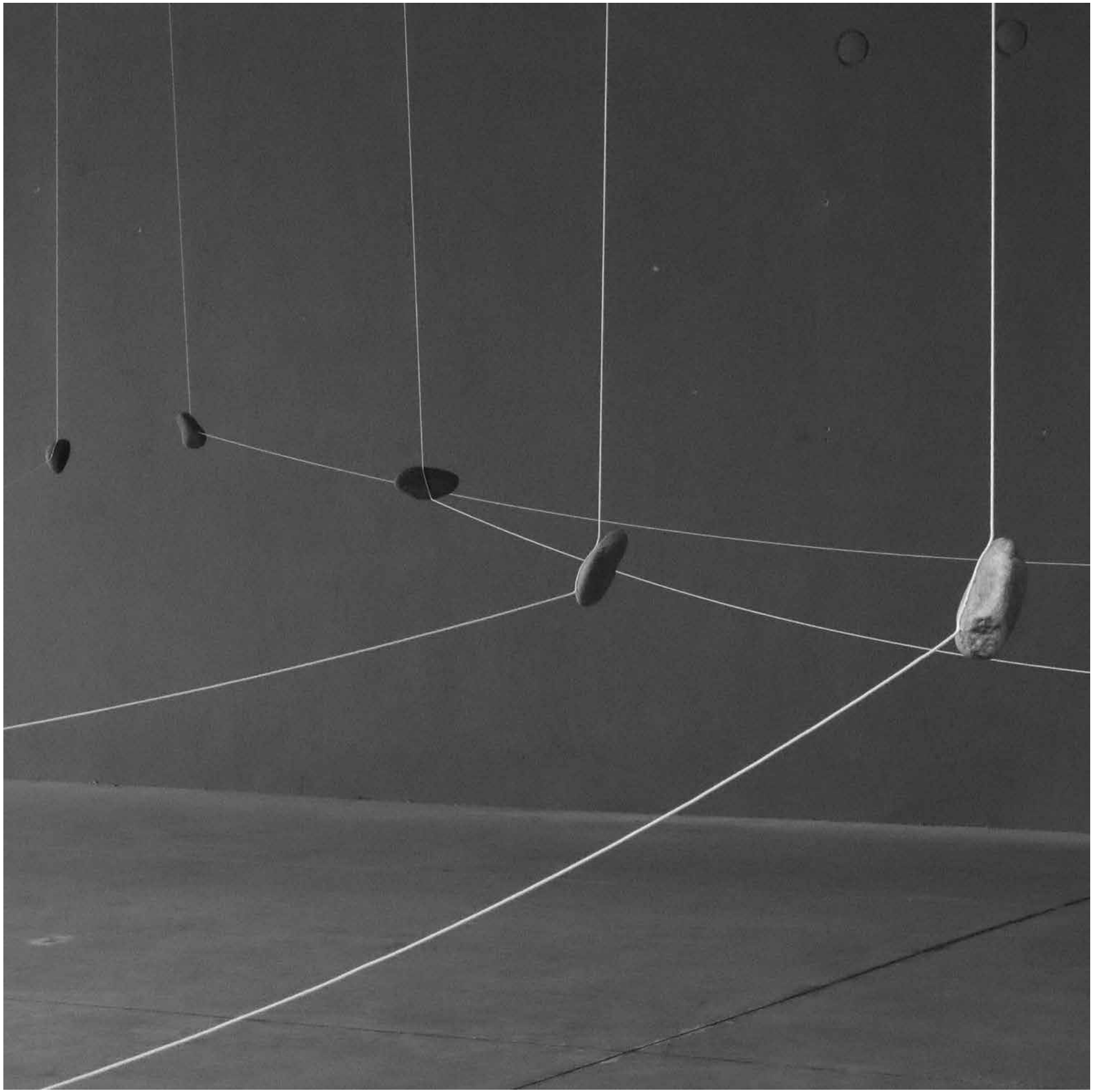
2017 – 2020



Germaine Sijstermans

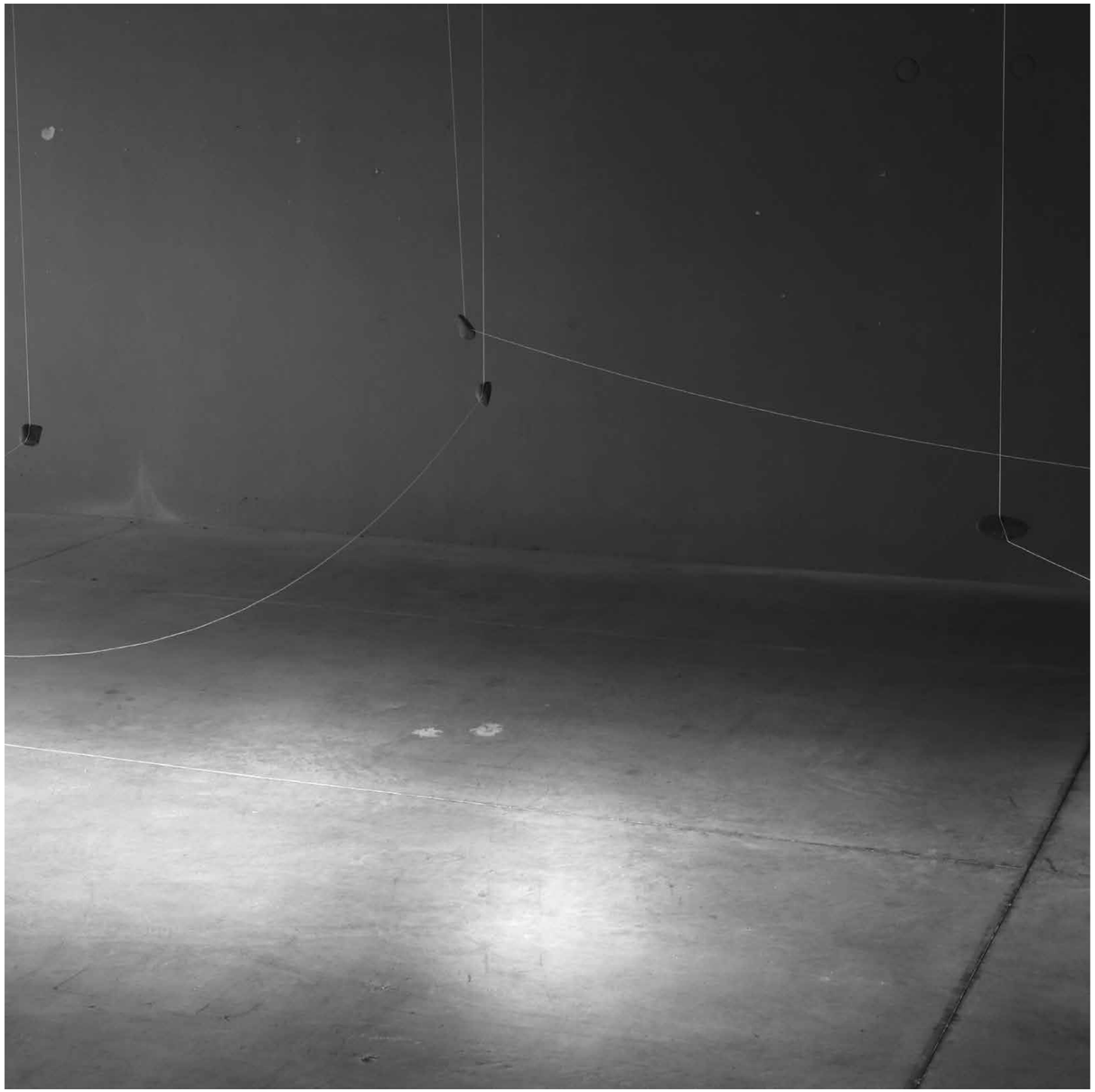
This catalogue was created for the occasion of the *Lagerhaussommer 2021* at the heim.art®-Station in Neufelden (AT): a week of daily concerts featuring the compositions herein.

Aside from two solo pieces, all of these pieces – composed between 2017 and 2020 – are ensemble works. Among the ensemble works are compositions that are part of site-specific works consisting of an installation and music: *Lavendula*, *Jasminum*, and *Elexen*. Other ensemble works have been performed in installations that were conceived for their performances: *Springwalk*, *A Song*, *N*, and *Linden*.

Regardless of the instrumentation or circumstances of the compositions, one could say that in all of them the musicians proceed with a certain attentive sensibility- leaving space for the environment and other musicians to contribute their part to the whole; creating space for awareness in the moment and reflection. In the ensemble pieces the music can only unfold if the musicians are attuned to each other, listening for their choices within the given circumstances.

The installations, created along with or for some of the compositions, were made with simple, recognisable materials and subtle lighting. They are site-specific, transparent environments. Visitors can walk through them and, during concerts, sit down wherever they choose.

Many thanks to *Intro in Situ*, *Performing Arts Fund NL*, and *heim.art®* for making this publication possible. Thanks also to my inspiring colleagues and mentors who were instrumental in the creation of this catalogue's content.



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Springwalk

2017
for flute, clarinet and accordion

We sat down on a wooden bench at an old crossroads, in the forest that he knew so well and I did not yet.
All around us was a soft haze of gentle ticking sounds. “What’s that sound?” “It’s the tree buds opening.”

a melody with accompaniment, played and sung

open notes are broad, long
black notes are shorter

Notes with an S above them are sung. If a singing note is out of a musician’s range or is uncomfortable to sing, it can be sung in another octave. They sing to themselves and the other players, gently, using a soft onset on the syllables aː, ɒ, ʌ, or e.

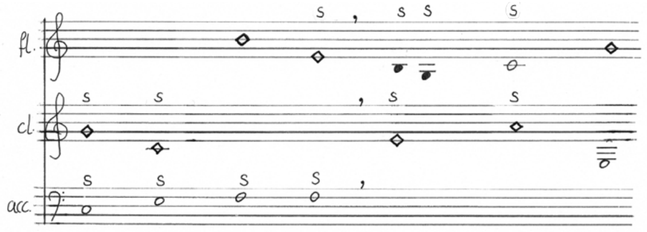
The diamond shaped notes, forming a composite melody, are played or sung considering the previous and next melody note, brightly. Together, bringing out the somewhat legato melody. Dynamics up to *mf*.
When not singing a melody note, accompanying. Dynamics up to *mp*.

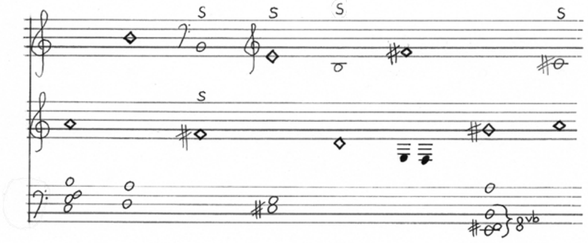
A pause after each line.
There are always two players per “chord”. These two players arrive at a chord somewhat simultaneously or a moment apart. Sometimes a player sounds alone for a while. There are occasionally overlaps or small gaps in the transition from one chord to the next.

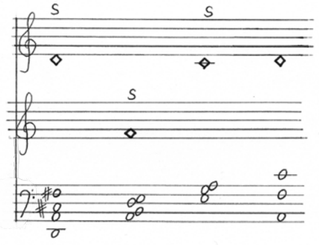
The accordion moves from one chord to the next changing, as far as possible, all of their notes at once.

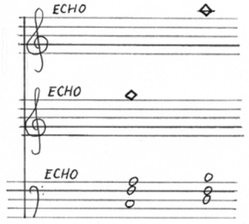
Where indicated, playing and singing like an echo in terms of timing and timbre.
Accidentals apply only to that specific note.

Installation for *Springwalk* & *Untitled*
2017, Intro in Situ, Maastricht NL
acrylic yarn
Space for being alone together or together alone, connected. Remembering and present.


fl.
cl.
acc.



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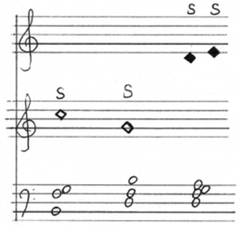

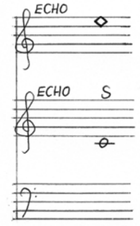
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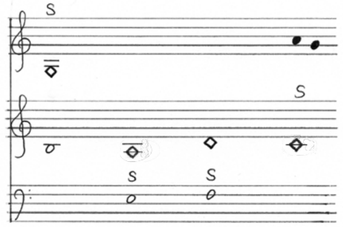
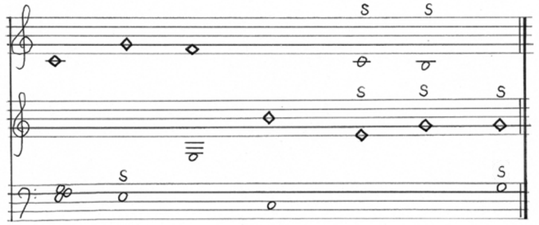




Untitled

2017
for flute, clarinet and another pitched instrument

Long tones, *pp-mp*, apostrophes indicate phrasing.

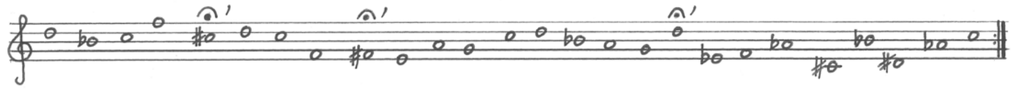
The flute and clarinet alternate playing the notes of the melody, e.g. clarinet plays the first note, flute the second, clarinet the third, etc..

The decision as to who begins is free. Whoever plays the last note in the first iteration of the melody also plays the first note of the repetition, without a pause between the notes.

In the first iteration there is space between the notes. These spaces may gradually become smaller towards the end of the melody, so as to connect seamlessly to the moment where one player plays two consecutive notes.

In the repetition overlaps are created between the notes; enjoying the sonic outcomes of this.

The third player is free to double notes of the melody, like a shadow. They start their note more or less at the same time as a note by the flute or clarinet or after it sounds. The third player may hold their notes for any duration, regardless of the flute and clarinet progressing in the melody.



call, there

2018
for three or more pitched instruments

One of the musicians plays a call, the others answer.
Any of the musicians can play the next call.
Duration of the piece is free.
The piece ends when there are no more calls to answer.

Call
One of the players plays one of the five options for calls.
Black notes are short(er), open notes are long(er), both played portato.
Octave is free, but the call interval is always ascending within an octave .

With each call, the musicians imagine themselves at a certain distance from the center of the room.
The greater the distance, the softer they play the call. They vary the distance with each call.

The timing of entrances for each call is free. A following call may overlap slightly with the answer
to the previous call.

The caller listens to the answers.

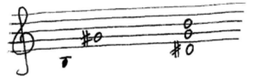
Answer
for any number of players

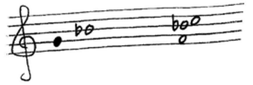
Listen to the call.
The other musicians determine which of the calls was played and respond by playing a note from the corresponding answer. With each answer, they imagine themselves at a certain distance from the center of the room. The greater the distance, the softer they play the answer. They vary the distance with each answer.

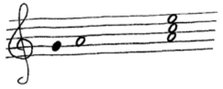
Octave is free for any note in an answer. Entrances are free once the second note of a call has begun.
Duration is free. The selected note may be repeated. Multiple tones in an answer may be played
consecutively or simultaneously.

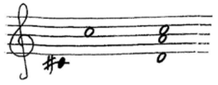
Players are free to not answer every call.

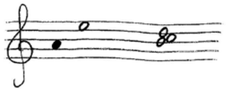
Accidentals apply only to that specific note.











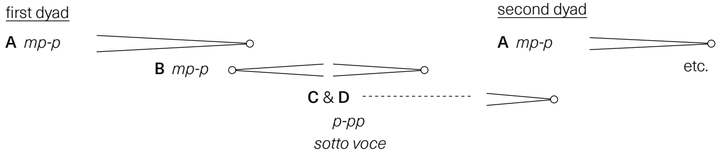
M

2018
for four or more players

Instrumentation
Player **A**
an instrument with naturally decaying sound (e.g. piano, acoustic guitar, harp)
and the ability to play the given dyads
Player **B**
an instrument with the ability to play the given dyads *dal niente* and *al niente*
(e.g. accordion, electric guitar with volume pedal, electronics)
Player **C**
playing only the top notes of the dyads
Player **D**
playing only the bottom notes of the dyads

The parts for **C** and **D** may be doubled, but there are always the same amount of players on both parts, e.g. 1 and 1, 2 and 2, etc.
If possible, lower sounding instruments play part **C** and higher sounding instruments play part **D**.

Each dyad is sounded three times in a row before the ensemble moves on to the next one. **A** enters and the dyad sounds for a moment. While the sound decays **B** enters. When **B** is in a decrescendo **C** & **D** enter more or less simultaneously. When **C** & **D** round off their notes **A** enters with the next dyad and the same order is followed again.

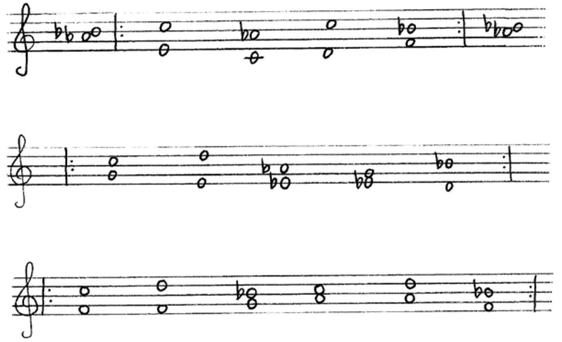


Due to this order for each dyad, the ensemble will reach a somewhat steady pace of entrances. This pace is not maintained rigorously. Small deviations from it will occur naturally and can be enjoyed. During these deviations it might occur that at some point all players will be playing simultaneously for a moment, or that a player might be playing alone for longer.

At the end of each line, after the repetition, there is a moment (or longer) of silence.

The approximate minimum duration of the piece is 7 minutes; there is no maximum duration.

Accidentals apply only to that specific note.



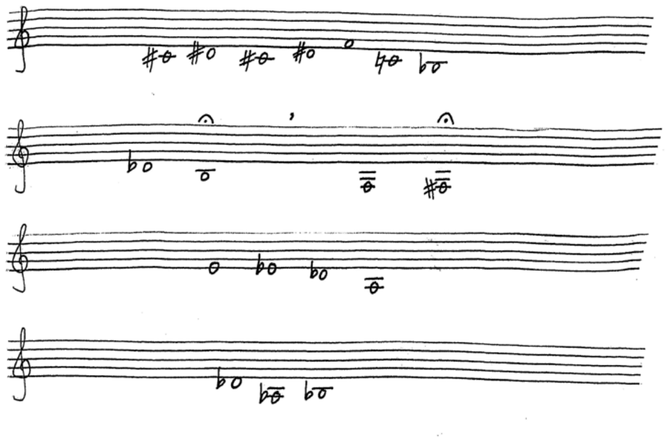
a song

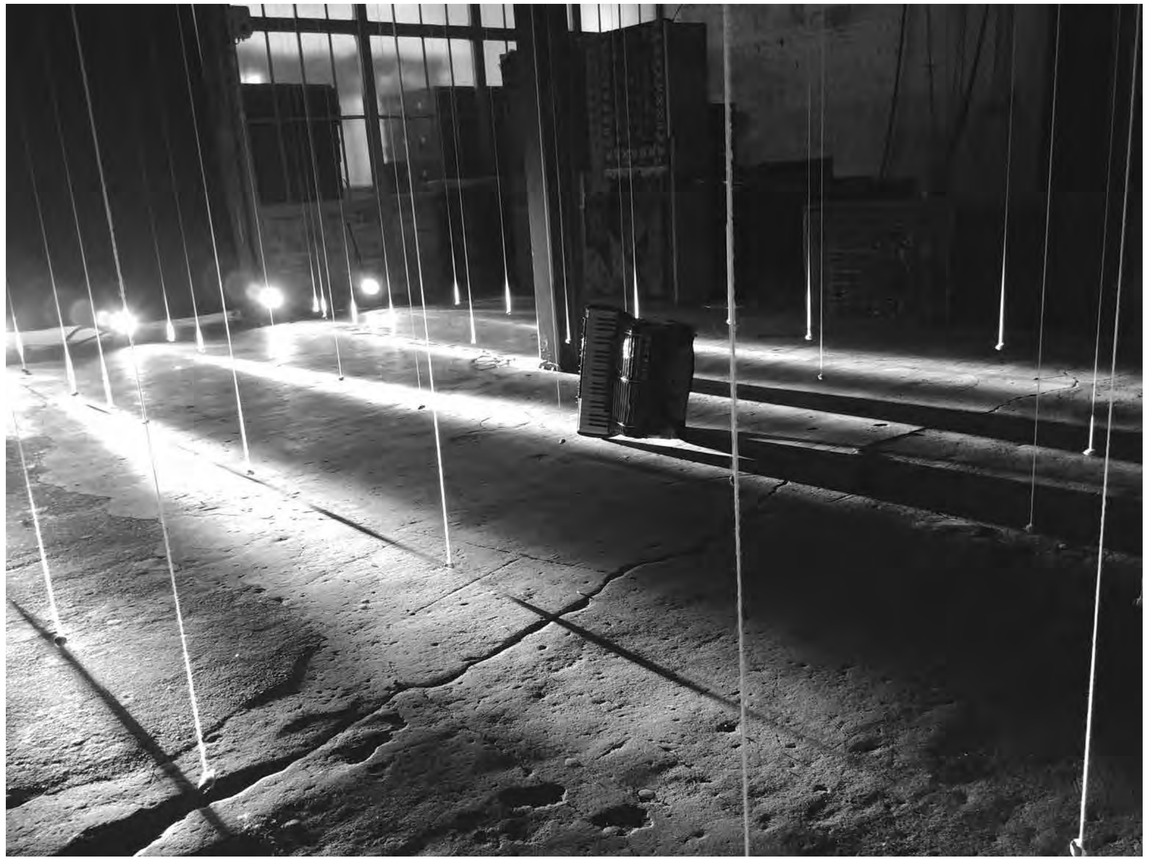
2018
for three or more pitched instruments

Melody
One player, like singing, rather thoughtfully, legato. Calm, never loud.
The player plays the first line in the song four or five times, with pauses between repetitions.
They then continue the rest of the melody, with pauses at the end of each line.

The other players are free to double notes that occur in the melody, entering more or less at the same time as the melody note or after it sounds. The doubled notes may be held across the melody's following notes. Entrances which do not overpower the melody.

Accidentals apply only to that specific note.





Installations for *a song* & *N*
2018, Intro in Situ, Maastricht NL
acrylic yarn, stones, pin spots

2018, Maankwartier, Heerlen NL
acrylic yarn, pin spots
Vertically present. Horizontally going forward and coming along on a route.

N

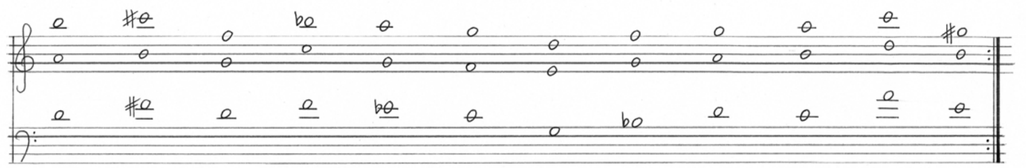
2018
for accordion and two other instruments

The musicians are positioned at the center of the space, surrounded by the audience. The accordionist sits in the middle. The other musicians sit, at a distance and facing each other, to the right and left of the accordionist.

The accordionist begins at any point in the system, reading the chords from left to right. Long tones, dynamics up to ***mf***. The twelve chord sequence may be looped as many times as desired. The accordionist begins the piece by building up, playing only one or two notes from each chord. Gradually they play any number of notes from a chord with free choice of register and octave doubling. Changes from one chord to the next happens note by note, a few notes at a time, or all at once.

When the two other players are not attentively listening to the accordion, they shadow what they hear, as a pair, communicating with each other, using the pitches A, A#, C, C#, D and D# (in any octave), *sotto voce*, in dynamics up to ***p***. Durations are free, but never staccato. Each player plays one to three pitches (including repeated tones) each time that they play. Whenever one of them plays, the other also plays, either overlapping the pitches of the previous player, or after a short pause. The two players either continue to respond to each other or return to silence.

Accidentals apply only to that specific note.



Thi

2018
for bass clarinet with low C

Eighteen events. After each event enough time is left for the next event to feel like a beginning. The events are played in the given order from top to bottom.

Pitches are in treble clef sounding a major ninth lower than written. Whistled pitches and approximate “airstream” pitches are written in Bb.
Black notes are shorter, open notes are long(er).
Accidentals apply only to that specific note. Repetitions with ∞ are repeated as often as the breath allows.

Harmonics
These events begin through the momentary playing of the given note: the lowest (written) C, D, Eb or F on the instrument. Keeping the stream of air, the fundamental and as many of the lower harmonics as possible are removed, leaving the highest harmonic(s) that can barely be manipulated sounding. Using embouchure, throat and airstream, the stream of air and reed pressure are gently manipulated to switch between very high harmonics, perhaps creating something melodic and occasional multiphonics. These events are played for as long as one full breath allows.

Teeth
A very high pitch with teeth on the reed instead of regular embouchure. Try to control the volume and penetrative timbre of the note. This event is played as long as one full breath allows.

↑/↓
A stream of air is blown onto the edge of the reed and into the opening of the mouthpiece, creating the combination of an airy, softly pitched sound from the body of the instrument, and ghost notes from the reed.

When ↑ is indicated, blowing with a number of keys and holes closed and opening them smoothly, one at a time, over the course of your breath.
When ↓ is indicated, blowing with all holes and keys open and closing a number of them smoothly, one at a time, over the course of your breath.

These events are played as long as one full breath allows.

Melodies
Warm, full sounding timbre, although never too loud.

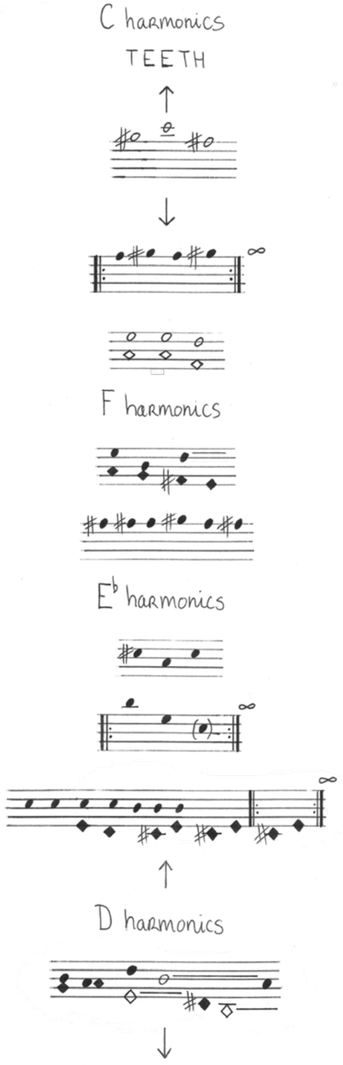
|: G# F# :| ∞ A calm and regular oscillation between the two notes as long as one full breath allows.
|:B E (C):| ∞ A calm and regular oscillation between B and E as long as one full breath allows, replacing E by C one time during this event.

Counterpoint
The round notes are whistled in an octave that is comfortable, projecting the stream of air into the mouthpiece.

The diamond shaped notes are created by the airstream of the whistling in the instrument. These need not be accurately in tune and can be achieved by closing holes and keys. The performer uses the fingering that works best for them.

In case of free-standing regular notes, whistle without directing the stream of air into the instrument so that only regular whistling will sound. In case of free-standing diamond shaped notes, blow gently into the mouthpiece without whistling, creating only airstream pitches.

Whistled or airstream pitches followed by a horizontal line are held for the duration indicated by the line, whilst whistled or airstream pitches change during the held note.



Installation & audio
2018, Bureau Europa, Maastricht NL
acrylic yarn, nylon thread
photo by Joris Hilterman

POM

2018
for solo piano
for Dante

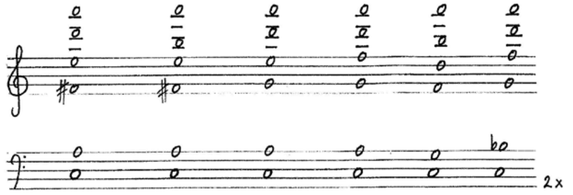
First part

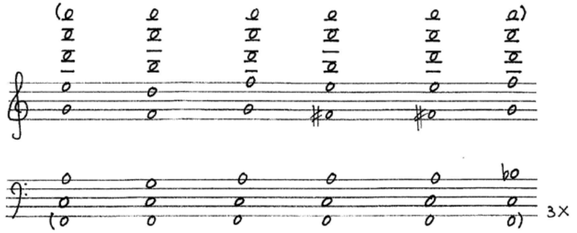
As the pianist plays, they choose two notes from each chord. They play these notes melodically (ascending or descending, choosing freely per chord) in the 1st, 3rd, and 5th chord. In the 2nd, 4th, and 6th chord they play two of the notes harmonically. They play through the line of the first part twice in this manner. The choice of notes in the repetition is also free. Timing is free, dynamics on the softer side. Pedaling per one or two chords.

Pause between the parts.

Second part

The pianist begins each chord on one of its notes, then moves simultaneously to the adjacent notes above and below, then simultaneously to the next highest and next lowest note, etc. Like a flower opening, decrescendo while expanding to the outer ends of the chord. The player will always end up playing single notes at the top or bottom of the chord. Upon reaching the top or bottom note of the chord (resp. A or C), the pianist may occasionally repeat that note, or continue one more step with the notes given in parentheses (E at the top, F at the bottom). Timing is free; the last note of each chord that is played may be left to sound a while. Pedal per chord. The second part is played three times.





Lavendula

2018
for four or more pitched instruments

Listening
Any time, playing or not playing

Chord
Long notes are played at any time. A constantly present world, also when not sounding. Softly, dimly, aware of the space, perhaps part of it.

Melody
Any player starts any of the melodies and plays it until its end. A gently luminous voice, with notes about as long as one would sing them.

Once (an)other player(s) recognise(s) a melody, they may join in for the entire melody or part(s) of it, at the tempo of their choosing.

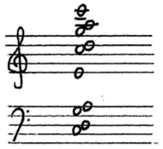
From the clusters and dyads one to all of the notes are played, melodically or simultaneously. Register is free of choice, pitch relations within the melodies are kept. One melody at a time. In the event of two players beginning two different melodies simultaneously, one of them stops playing.

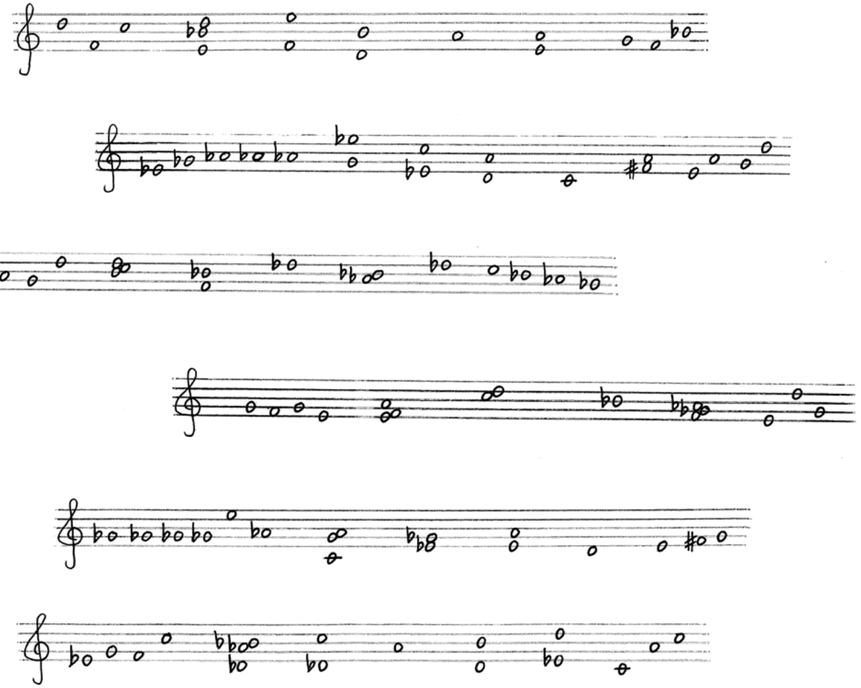
Duration is free.

Accidentals apply only to that specific note.

Musicians and listeners are seated intermingled throughout the performance space.

Lavendula
2018, Intro in Situ, Maastricht NL
cotton yarn, nylon line, pin spots
Two materials in sound and space. Appearing and disappearing, moving between foreground and background in changing light.





Jasminum

2019
for three or more pitched instruments with sustained sounds

Three sections of roughly equal duration.
The overall duration is free, with a minimum length of 10 minutes per section.
Accidentals apply only to that specific note.
Musicians and listeners are seated intermingled throughout the performance space.

I
Long tones played with a subdued timbre.
Breaths/short pauses are taken individually, but overall there is a continuous sound from the ensemble.

The musicians start by playing only one of the black notes a number of times.
They then expand their range with the adjacent notes above and below their starting note, playing a number of long tones from this range.
After this, they expand their range again with the next adjacent notes. They continue expanding their range in this way. Once they have reached the largest range possible on their instruments, they continue playing long notes throughout that range.

II
Silences may occur in the music. Breaths/pauses are taken freely.

Subtly move from the musical material in part I to the chord in part II.
The musicians start by playing a long note from the chord, then the three black notes from the melody (brightly, a signalling motif) and then return to long notes from the chord.

Once the signalling motif has been sounded by all the players, they alternate between playing parts of the melody and long notes from the chord. Parts of the melody are begun from any point in the melodic line; the complete melody can be looped. They start by playing a four-note fragment of the melody.
Each repeated fragment – from anywhere within the melodic line – is longer than the previous one, played brightly and calmly.

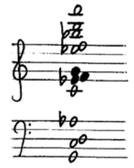
III
start with silence

Any player starts any of the melodies and play until its end. Once (an)other player(s) recognise(s) a melody, they may join in for the entire melody or part(s) of it, at the tempo of their choice.
Relating in some way to the sound world of the other players, or not.
One melody at a time. In the event of two players beginning two different melodies simultaneously, one of them stops playing.
From the clusters and dyads one to all of the notes are played, melodically or simultaneously.
Register is free of choice; pitch relations within the melodies are kept.
After the end of each melody there occurs a silence long enough for the following melody to feel like a new beginning.

Musicians and listeners are seated intermingled throughout the performance space.

Jasminum
2019, Intro in Situ, Maastricht NL
nylon thread, acrylic yarn, rice paper, ice, pin spots
Spreading together, solid to transparent.

I



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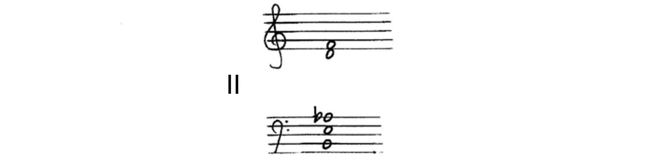

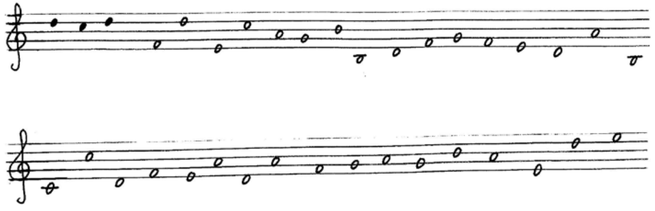

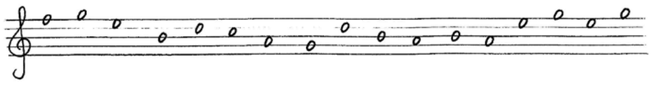

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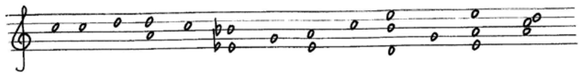
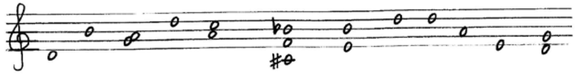
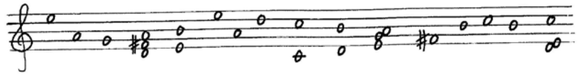
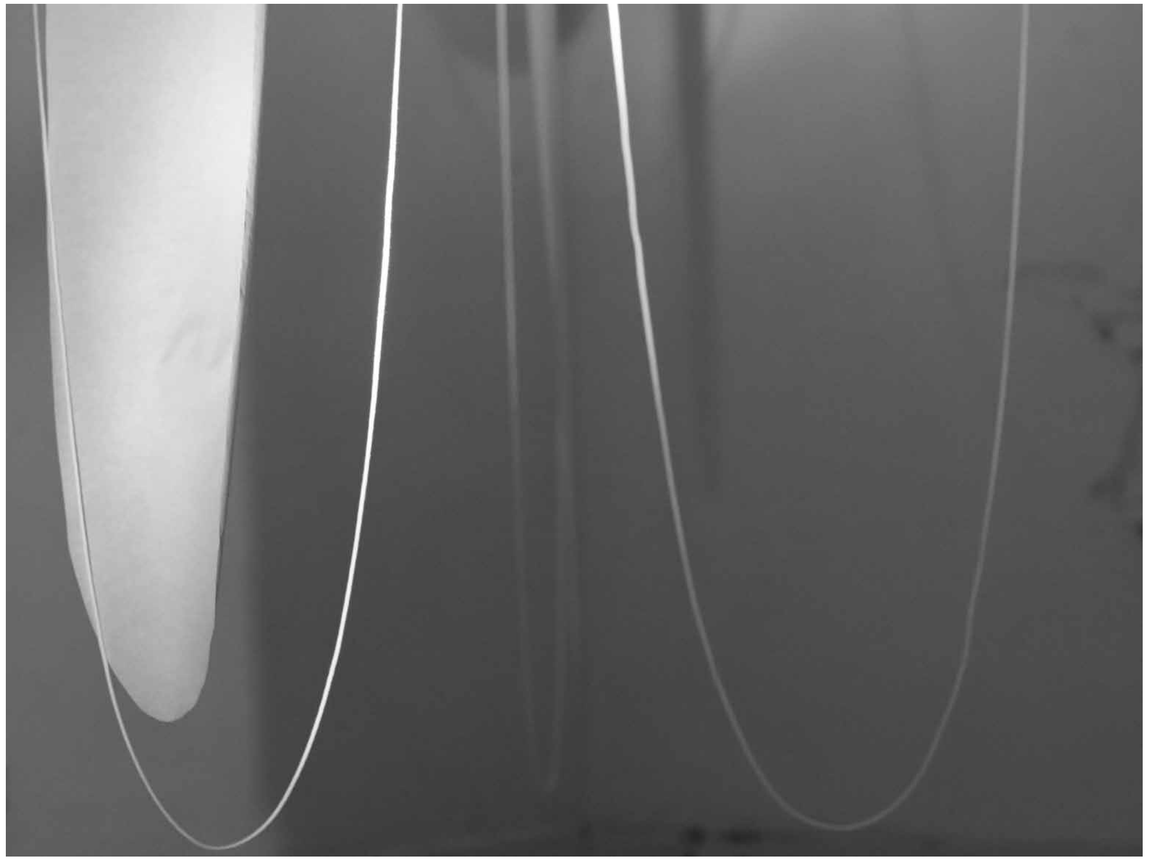
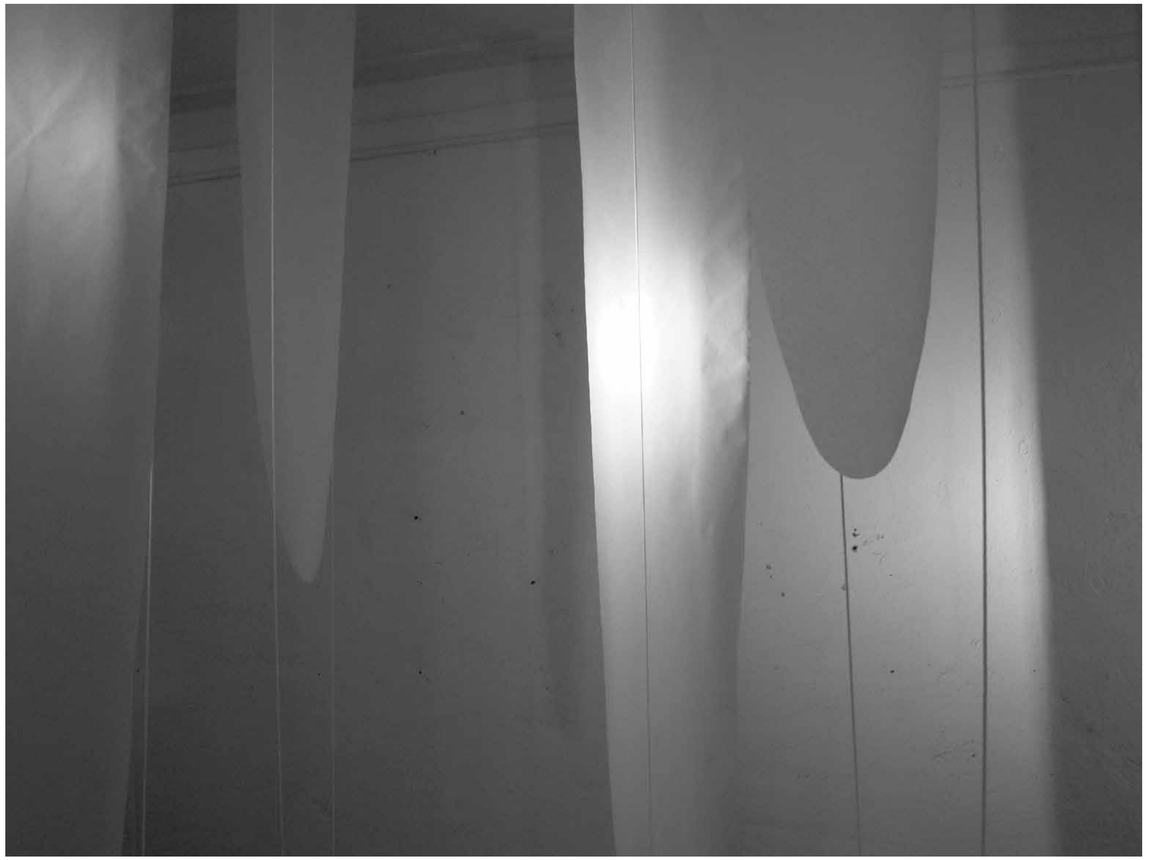










Linden
2020, 'Pand, Heerlen NL
cotton line, rice paper, pin spots
Commissioned by ensemble Möbelgruppe, installation for Cultura Nova festival.
Collective remembrance of personal experiences of nature in the present, ever in flux.

Linden

2020
for ensemble Möbelgruppe
for three or more pitched instruments with the possibility of sustaining sounds

Listening
At any point, playing or not playing.

Remembrance
As the musicians go about their day before playing this piece, they pay attention to sounds in their surroundings coming from flora, fauna or natural phenomena. They try to remember one or more sounds that they could emulate with their instrument or voice as a sustained or looped sound. These sounds may be pitched or unpitched, a singular or compound sound, or a combination or sequence of such characteristics. The length of a sound is long (a breath) to very long (wind players may take small breathing pauses).

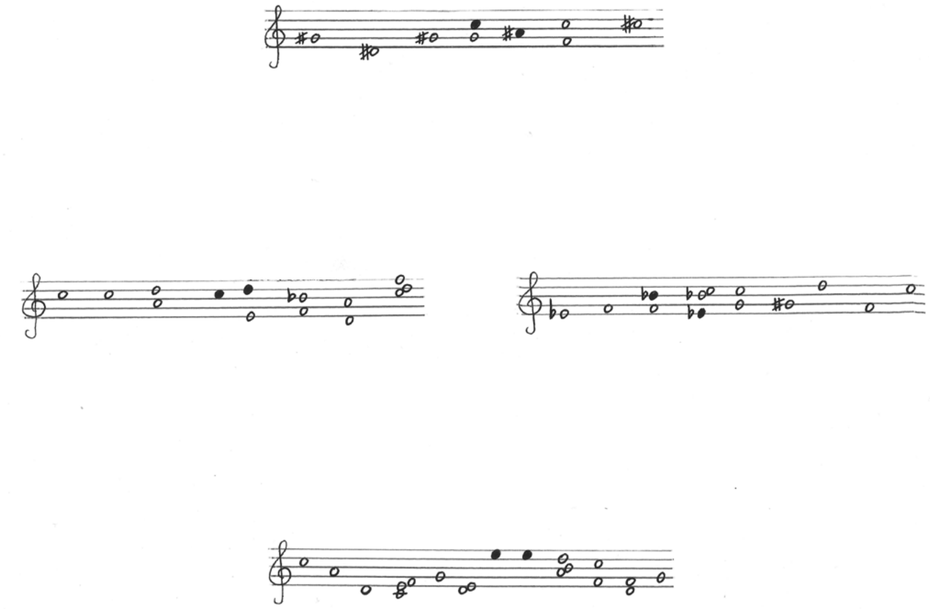
These sustained sounds or looped materials may be played by any player at any point during the piece.
The musicians play them to themselves, remembering the moment and surroundings in which they took notice of them. If a player wishes to use recorded material as a basis for a sound, they try to use sounds recorded on or as close as possible to the day of playing the piece.

Melody
Any player may initiate any of the melodies, when no other melody is already sounding. The initiator starts by playing the indicated fragment of the melody, so other players can recognise which melody it is. Over the course of several repetitions they extend their fragment of the melody each time by including notes from before and/or after the fragment in their previous repetition, until they have played the entire melody once.
Once other players recognise which melody has started, they may join in. They can start with a small fragment anywhere in the melody and extend it with every repetition in the same manner as the initiator. They may keep extending until they have played the entire melody once.
Each player moves through the melody and its repetitions at their own pace. Dynamics are never overpowering.

From the clusters and dyads one to all of the notes may be played, melodically, harmonically or in an arpeggio-like manner. Their execution may be varied with each repetition. Register is free of choice, pitch relations within the melodies are kept, accidentals apply to the note they directly precede. Phrasing may occur and be varied, note lengths are free although not too short. After a repetition taking a moment to listen.
In the event of two players beginning two different melodies simultaneously, one of them stops playing.
The same melody may occur more than once, not all melodies have to occur.

Duration is free.

Musicians and listeners are seated intermingled throughout the performance space.



Linden
2020, 'Pand, Heerlen NL
cotton line, rice paper, pin spots
Commissioned by ensemble Möbelgruppe, installation for Cultura Nova festival.
Collective remembrance of personal experiences of nature in the present, ever in flux.

Elexen

2020
for Joachim and Marcus
two players in duet: contours followed by silences

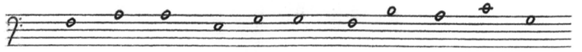
During a period of silence, a player may choose to play any of the three contours. The timing of the contours is free, with the second player accompanying the beginning player with a contour of their own choosing (including the contour being played by the beginning player). This should occur without cueing, and can be anywhere between simultaneously and a few moments apart.

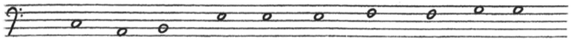
Timing, phrasing, articulation, and timbre are free. A silence occurs after each duet of contours.

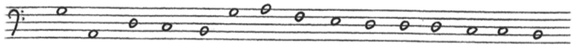
The contours may be played in any octave. Additionally, they may be altered by playing them in their entirety:
. ~quartertone higher
. ~quartertone lower
. a semitone higher
. a semitone lower

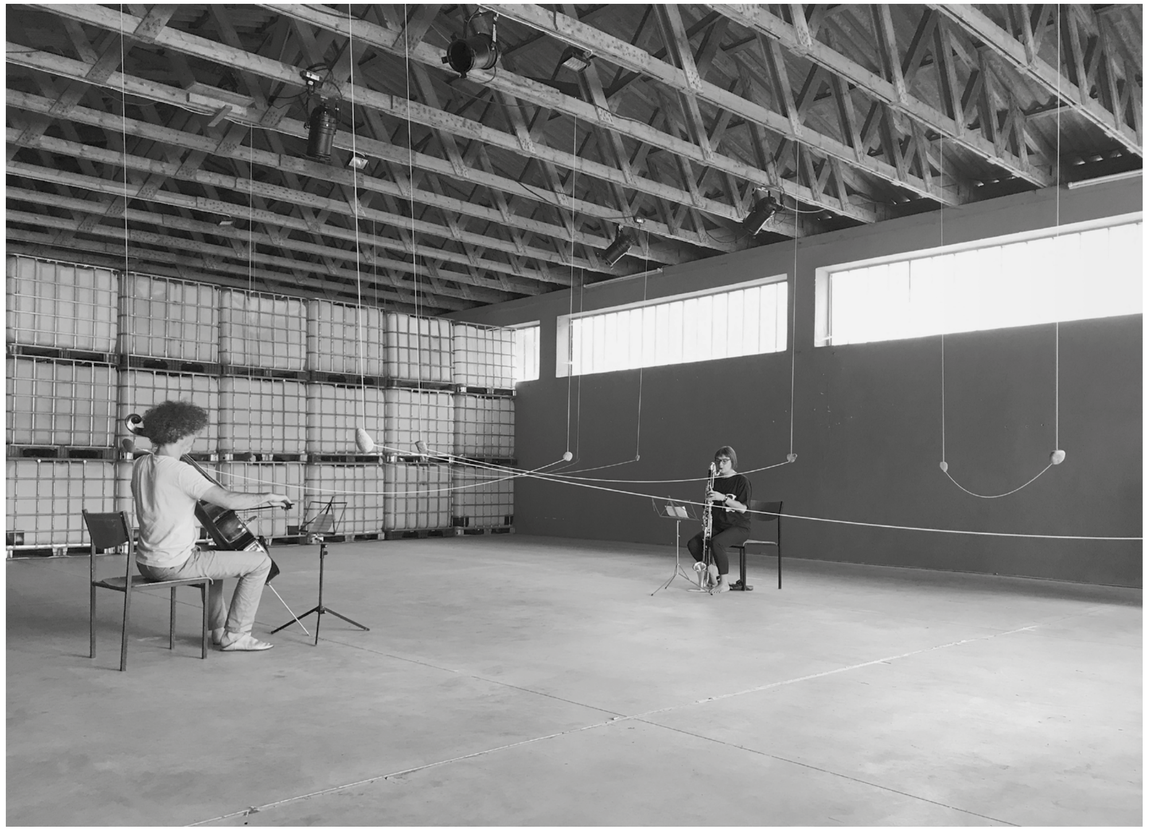
Dynamics are appropriate to the space and may be varied. Players leave enough space in dynamics for one another.

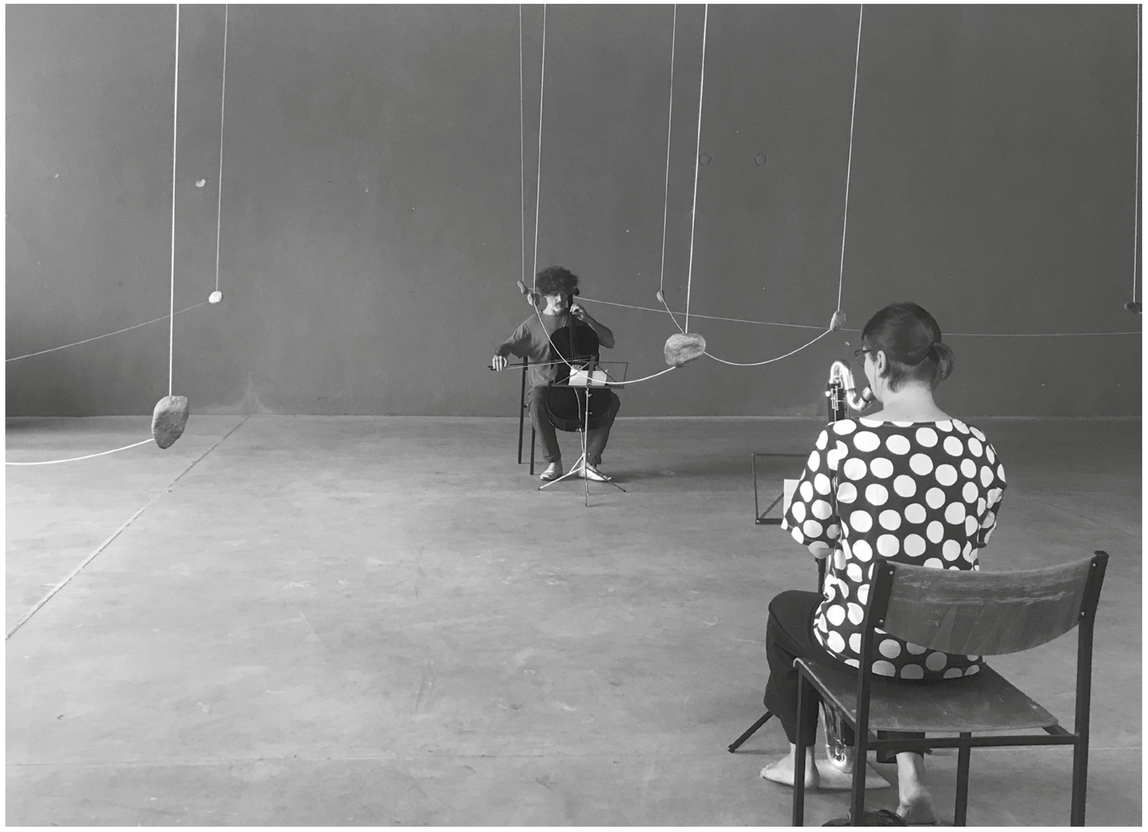
Duration is free. The piece ends when either player decides not to play any further entrance.











Elexen
2020, heim.art®-Station, Neufelden AT
cotton line, stones
Connections of two encountering and undulating. Parallel, reciprocal, coinciding movements.

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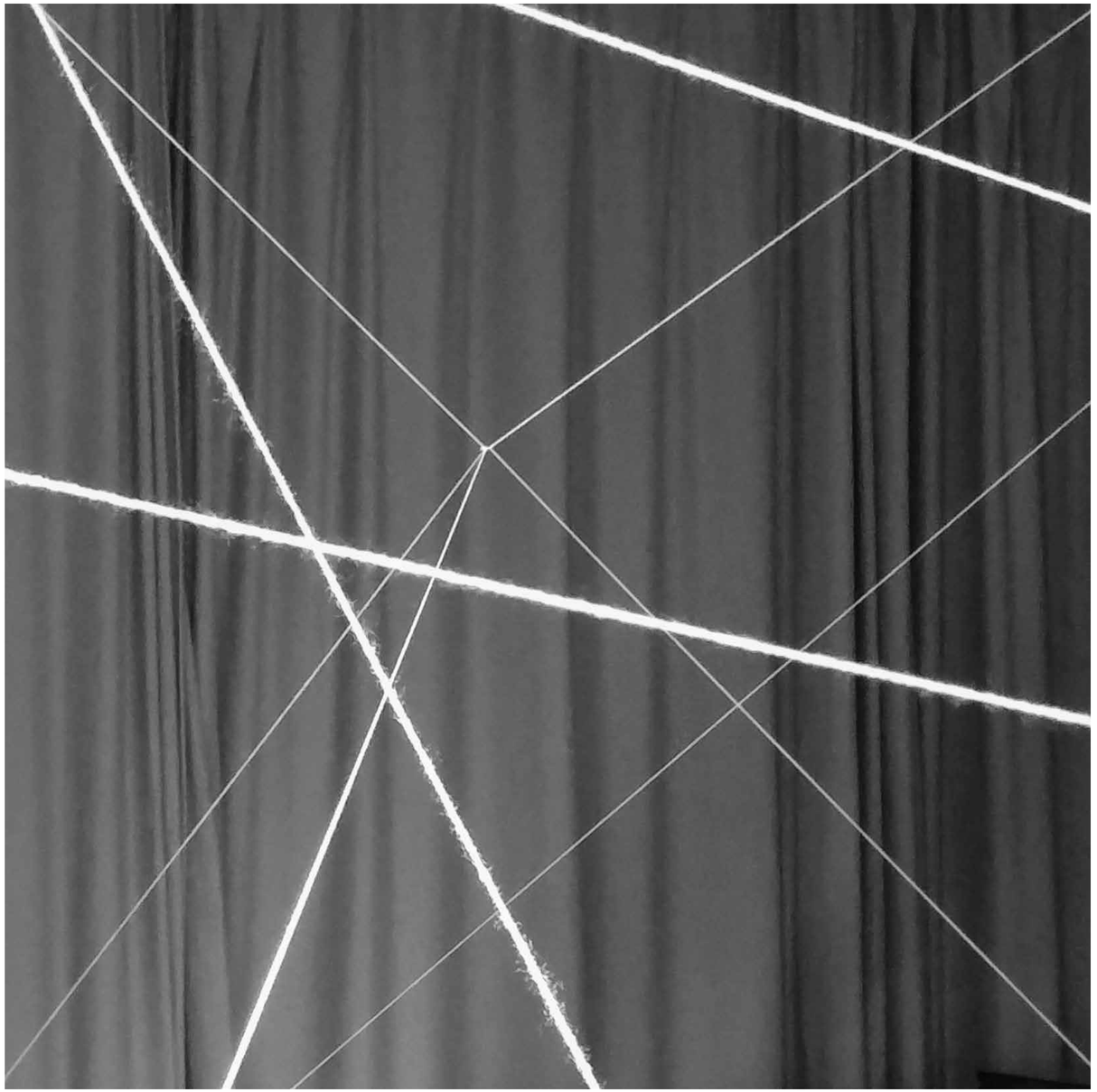
Photos by Germaine Sijstermans
Catalogue design by Anna Bernhardt
Text editing by Rishin Singh
Printed by Druckerei Bad Leonfelden GmbH, Bad Leonfelden AT



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