# RaY

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# The Hour of Lead

**Performance Guidance** (revised 03.05.22)

Please read the following before preparing to perform this piece. At the beginning is guidance relevant to *all* performers. Following that is specific guidance for each part.

## ALL PARTS

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| **Staging** | Performers should be dispersed throughout the space homogeneously. There should be no clusters of performers; everyone is experiencing the piece in their own bubble. |
| | Performers who are performing remotely should be broadcast as individuals, each to their own computer or other device. Their sound should be locatable to that device (in other words, not channeled through a global PA or sound system), and, as much as possible, be in balance with the volume of in-person performers. |
| | Audience members should be free to move and relocate throughout the piece. |
| | All participants should be positioned comfortably during the performance. There is no need to stand still or be rigid. |
| **Timing** | The notation allows performers to progress through the piece at the same rate. Trust what you see; only follow the instructions that are presented at any given time. |
| | Synchronisation of the beginning of the piece is desirable, but only needs to be within a second or two. One way of synchronising the beginning of the performance would be to agree to start the notation at a specified time (i.e. at 12.00 noon), with any remote performers starting their notation two or three seconds beforehand to ameliorate significant issues around lag. |
| | Synchronisation within the piece itself is to be avoided. Do not attempt to line up what you are playing with others; revel in coincidental alignments. The piece is intended to move like a cloud or murmuration of birds. |

# ALL PARTS

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| **Text** | The light grey text in the videos is spoken by a reader. They should be able to be heard above the surrounding musical material, and thus will likely need to be amplified. The text is included in all of the notation videos to allow performers to understand the context of the section they are playing and to adjust their volume in response to the spoken voice. |
| **Backing Track** | The backing track should be played centrally within the space. It should be loud enough so that<br>• the drone in Movement 5 completely overwhelms the performers' voices, yet<br>• the ambient sounds during 'I miss...' are below the level of performers' speaking voices. |
| **Composure** | Performers should maintain a thoughtful, introspective composure throughout the performance. Even in sections where they do not play, performers should still *perform*. |
| | Although audience members should not be alienated, performers should not actively play to particular people. This piece is an expression of parallel individual experiences, out of which arises a shared atmosphere of emotion. |
| **'I miss...'** | After taking time to reflect on them, performers speak one or more of the phrases presented on the slide. Before speaking, the performer may consider how they may emotionally frame or present each statement. |
| | Should the performer feel inclined to do so, they may add personalised additional statements to these sections, although each statement should begin with 'I miss...'. |
| **2. the FRUIT** | Whole notes are cautious. Notes in repeats remain in order, but are rhythmically free. As the section progresses, melodies become more energetic and confident. |
| **4. the PAPERCUT** | The pulse should be erratic. Please do not attempt to align with other performers. |
| **5. Fly Away** | After one performer sings through the song once, all performers join in in a loose, congregational style. If it synchronises, it synchronises; if it does not, it does not. Let the sound be overwhelmed at the end – don't fight it. |

# PART 1 – VOICE

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| **Transposition** | The notation is presented throughout in treble clef. Should any phrase extend beyond the range of a performer, that phrase should be transposed into a more appropriate octave. Thus, male vocalists will likely perform the entire work an octave below where it is notated. |
| **Guide Tones** | Guide tones are provided as the audio track to the notation. I would recommend vocalists wear one headphone so they are reminded of relevant pitches throughout the piece. |
| **1. the VOID** | As pitches in the melody become greyed out, stop singing them. Leave the amount of space they would have taken in the melody, though. It may help to pretend to perform them by breathing out air during their place in the melody to mark their absence. |
| **6. the POOL** | Exact pitching is irrelevant. Beginning and ending each line in an 'mm' consonant will mask the exact pitches used. This will likely feel very much like a vocal warm-up. |

# PART 2 – MELODY

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| **Instrumentation** | The term 'melody' in this context refers mainly to instruments that normally only play one note at a time. |
| **Transposition** | The notation is presented in concert pitch treble clef. Should any phrase extend beyond the range of a performer, that phrase should be transposed into a more appropriate octave. Thus, bass clef instruments will likely perform the entire work an octave below where it is notated. There is no need to play any notation in the octave it is presented on the staff. |
| **Repetition** | Repeat individual pitches in accordance with the number above them. For example, should a pitch have the number 3 written above it, it should be repeated three times before moving on to the next pitch. These repeated notes do not have to be of the same length. |
| | Should a pitch have 'N' written above it, performers should repeat that note a number of times of their choosing. This number does not need to be consistent; it is more to indicate that the pitch should be repeated more than once. |

# PART 2 – MELODY

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| **1. the VOID** | As pitches in the melody become greyed out, stop playing them. Leave the amount of space they would have taken in the melody, though. It may help to pretend to perform them during their place in the melody to mark their absence. |
| **3. What will separate us?** | Performers should improvise melodies using the pitches indicated. There is no need to rush or continuously play. |
| **4. the PAPERCUT** | Performers should choose which key signature (Eb major or E major) they wish to apply to the melodies indicated. |
| | The interjections notated are violent and fast. It is worth rehearsing these phrases until they are intuitive, as there may not be enough time to sight-read the notation effectively before it goes away. |
| **6. the POOL** | Performers should take their time in-between bars. Explore how timing, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, and other factors may be varied between bars. |
| | Adjust the octave of each bar as necessary for your instrument. However, do not adjust octave within single bars. |

# PART 3 – HARMONY

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| **Instrumentation** | The term 'harmony' in this context refers to instruments that can easily play more than one note at a time. |
| **Notation** | Most notation within this part is presented both as written pitches and on a staff. For the most part, this indicates the set of pitches to be played at a given moment of time rather than a specific voicing or timing. Where pitch names are presented as a fraction, the pitch beneath the line indicates what the bass note of the resulting chord should be. |
| **Transposition** | The notation is presented in concert pitch. There is no need to play any notation in the octave it is presented on the staff. |
| **1. the VOID** | As pitches become greyed out, stop playing them. Leave the amount of space they would have taken, though. It may help to pretend to perform them during their place to mark their absence. |

# PART 3 – HARMONY

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| | The pitch sets provided should be played organically, in a loose arpeggiation like a wind chime. |
| **6. the POOL** | Begin the line high in your range; this does not have to be at the first pitch indicated. The phrase loops back upon itself; if you run out of range on your instrument, softly begin again at the top of your range. |

# PART 4 – PERCUSSION

| Topic/Section | Comments |
|---|---|
| **Instrumentation** | The term 'percussion' in this context refers to unpitched instruments. This includes but is not limited to Western percussion, found sounds, synthesised or sampled sounds, or vocal percussion. I would recommend that each sound is simultaneously consistent and reproducible, but has scope for interpretative flexibility in performance. |
| | For this piece, performers need to source their own collection of **seven** percussive sounds. I would suggest that these sounds be somewhat distinct from each other, and that some should have the capacity to ring. |
| | These sounds should be labelled one through seven, and be consistent throughout the piece where named sounds are called for. The only sound specified is number two: a gentle, long 'shhhhhhh'. |
| **Notation** | More than any other part, your score draws on written instructions. I would recommend being more risky than cautious when interpreting these pieces of text. |
| **1. the VOID** | As pitches become greyed out, stop playing them. Leave the amount of space they would have taken, though. It may help to pretend to perform them during their place to mark their absence. |
| **4. the PAPERCUT** | You cannot be aggressive enough by the third interjection. |
| **6. the POOL** | Pitches should become further and further apart. The notated grid of numbers illustrates one way of thinking about this: if you were to play on beat one and progressively add silent beats in-between, you would create a consistent *ritardando*. |
| | Let the timbre become more distant. This may be accomplished by slowly muffling the instrument being played. |