

# Do It Yourselfes

- Leigh LANDY

**for voice and at least one instrumentalist**

- any instrument(s), acoustic or electronic: all players may double on any other instrument(s) as long as there is always one reciter

*'... creating circumstances.'*

*John CAGE*

A number of texts are to be chosen. They can be of any length and in various foreign and/or made-up languages unknown to the speaker. The speaker - a performer, really - must learn something about the phonetics of each language treated, including those using other alphabets. The musicality of the texts are to be 'innocently' discovered, as the texts' contents are not of primary concern. The goal is to find combinations of virtuosity/diversity/humor/musicality in these texts. When possible, i.e., when performed in a country (or region) whose language is foreign to the speaker, that language should be incorporated as well. (For example, someone totally ignorant of Gaelic should use this Irish language at some point when performing in Ireland.)

The texts are to be selected, studied and prepared before performance. Each fragment can be presented in one of four ways:

a) 'question and response': the speaker begins by reading a word, line or sentence, the instrumentalist(s) answer, and so on. An 'answer' is the musical reading of the same text (similar to a talking drum's imitation of vocal syllables).

An unusual case here is the reversal of the above, where the instrument(s) first interprets the text and the speaker is then to keep as much of that melody and rhythm as possible in the response.

b) a variant of a: here the instrumentalist(s) does not imitate the phonetic speech of the speaker, but instead interprets something else, for example the calligraphy of that text. b) is to be used sparingly as a contrast to a).

c) unison: a (heterophonic) poly-timbral tutti rendition of a).

d) a mixture of shorter texts; any mixture of a) - c).

The form/sequence of events and types of 'conversation' for each textual event should be agreed upon beforehand. At the end of any given version the last text(s) should call for an *accelerando*, including an increase in verbal difficulty (tongue-twisters and the like) leading to a finale of high-level virtuosity, without losing the general improvisatory nature of the performance. The concluding sounds are agreed upon before performance, to avoid a staggered effect at the final 'cadence'.

The maximum length is about six minutes. It is advisable to show slides of the texts simultaneously with the performance.

**dedicated to Charlie Chaplin &  
Woody Allen & all others who  
combine their artistic inspiration  
with the willingness to make fools  
of themselves.**

*May 1990/Amsterdam*