The Man with the Hammer

A music theatre work for two percussionists, masks and tape [ca. 17'].

(2010-13)

Transcribed score and stage directions.

Nektarios Rodosthenous
Instruments and props

**Performer 1 (stage right)**

- **Sticks**: 4 hard sticks, 1 *agung* soft mallet
- bass drum on a rotating stand (sharing with P2)
- *agung* cymbal I (low)
- kick drum
- piccolo snare drum
- 2 roto toms
- 2 congas
- 2 medium dice
- white, neutral face mask
- stopwatch

**Performer 2 (stage left)**

- **Sticks**: 4 hard sticks, 2 medium soft mallets, 1 *agung* soft mallet
- bass drum on a rotating stand (sharing with P1)
- *agung* cymbal II (slightly higher in pitch than *agung* I)
- kick drum
- tom tom
- empty canvas on a stand
- black spray paint (one with a metal ball inside which acts as a shaker)
- leather belt
- white, neutral face mask
- stopwatch
- study lamp or halogen heater

The percussionists are opted to perform barefoot to minimize the unwanted noise while moving from one instrument to another.
The performers are marooned in the circular stage plan, back to back, facing and performing at their instrumental stations. They come side to side only in the first agung sequence, and in the end, during the bass drum sequence where they are sharing the instrument, and facing each other with the masks on.
The man with the hammer (2010 - 13)

Nektarios Rodosthenous (b.1986)

P1

START STOPWATCH AS SOON AS THE TAPE STARTS.

TACET

0'00”

0'30”

1'00”

1'10”

1'35”

2'00”

IMPROVISE ON THE LEFT AGUNG WITH THE AGUNG MALLET. SPARSE. CREATE A DIALOGUE WITH THE PERCUSSIONIST.

P2

START STOPWATCH AS SOON AS THE TAPE STARTS.

TACET

TURN ON THE LAMP AND WALK SLOWLY TOWARDS THE AGUNG CYMBAL.

IMPROVISE ON THE RIGHT AGUNG WITH THE AGUNG MALLET. SPARSE. WORK WITH AND AGAINST THE PERCUSSIONIST.

TAPE

incalzando

SOUND SAMPLES OF HALOGEN HEATERS WARMING UP

SOUND SAMPLES OF HAND PALM HITTING METAL OF MRC STAIRS

SIMILE

2'00”

2'10”

2'20”

3'00”

3'30”

3'40”

3'50”

4'00”

P1

PUT THE STICK DOWN AND WALK TO THE BASS DRUM.

IMPROVISE A SHORT MOTIF ON THE BASS DRUM. USE PALM/FINGERS AND SOFT MALLET TO START WITH LOOP AND DEVELOP. THE MOTIF GETS BUSIER LOUDER AND CLEARER WITH THE USE OF HARD STICKS.

WHEN P2 LEAVES CARRY ON IMPROVISING ON BOTH AGUNG CYMBALS WITH THE TWO AGUNG MALLETS.

PUT THE STICKS BACK TO THE THESAND AND WALK TO THE KICK DRUM.

P2

SIMILE

TAPE

SOUND OF HAND PALM ON METAL

CONT'D

KICK DRUM AND HAND CLAP RHYTHMIC UNISON. ONE HIT PER TIME. SYNC WITH BREATHS (attaccare levere).

KICK DRUM AND HAND CLAP RHYTHMIC UNISON. ONE HIT PER TIME. SYNC WITH BREATHS (attaccare levere).

CUE SAMPLE (for the next section)

SILENCE
P1

Simile
GET THE WOODEN WHIP.
PERFORM A HAND CLAP SOUND ON THE WHIP AND ON THE KICK DRUM IN RHYTHMIC UNISON.

4'00" 4'05"
4'10"

Simile
ONLY/SOLO KICK DRUM.

4'40"

Simile
TACET PICK UP DICE AND HARD STICKS.

4'55"

Simile
SHUFFLE STICKS AND THE DICE TO PRODUCE SIMILAR SOUND BETWEEN THESE TWO UNRELATED OBJECTS.

5'25"

Simile
PERFORM/KNOCK ON THE WOOD OF THE KICK DRUM TO PRODUCE DOOR-LIKE SOUNDS.

5'55"

IMPROVISE A BAR OF A FAST 6/4 FRAGMENT ON SNARE, KICK AND ROTO TOMS.

6'00"

P2

Simile
PERFORM A HAND CLAP SOUND ON THE WHIP AND ON THE KICK DRUM IN RHYTHMIC UNISON WITH P1.

Simile
ONLY/SOLO KICK DRUM.

TACET PICK UP HARD STICKS AND PAINT SPRAY.

TAPE
SILIENCE  
CUE SAMPLE  SILENCE  
CUE SAMPLE  TACET

CREATE SIMILAR SOUNDS TO P1 BY SHUFFLING THE STICKS AND SHAKING THE SPRAY PAINT. WALK TOWARDS THE BLANK CANVAS AND PAINT IT/COVER IT IN BLACK. CARRY ON UNTIL IT IS ALL TURNED TO BLACK.

TACET WALK BACK TO THE KICK DRUM.

P1

TACET
COME IN STRAIGHT AFTER THE DRUM FILL BY P2. AND IMPROVISE ON YOUR PREVIOUS 6/4 FRAGMENT. HAVE KICK DRUM ON THE BEAT.

6'00"

TACET
PUT THE STICK BACK.

6'05"

TACET
4 BARS OF 5/8 IMPROVISATION ON CONGAS AND KICK.

6'40"

TACET
PERFORM 7 BARS OF 5/8 PREVIOUS MOTIF AND HAVE KICK DRUM ON EVERY FIRST BEAT.

6'50"

P1+P2

PERFORM MICRONOISES ON ALL THE PERCUSSION OF YOUR SIDE. MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOU ARE EXPLORING THE SOUNDS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

7'00"

7'20"

FREE 2/2 IMPROVISATION ON SNARE AND BASS DRUM AS INTRO TO NEXT SESSION.

8'00"

P2

TACET
IMPROVISE ON A 6/4 FRAGMENT. ON THE SNARE AND THE TOM TOM THE KICK DRUM FUNCTIONS AS THE BEAT. STOP AND START THIS DIALOGUE WITH P1 THREE TIMES. SYNC WITH BREATH (attacca levare).

TACET
PUT THE STICK BACK.

TAPE
SILIENCE  
CUE SAMPLE  SILENCE  

AFTER 4 BARS OF 5/8 OF P1 COME IN BY PERFORMING 6 BARS OF 7/8 IMPROVISATION AT THE SAME TEMPO. KICK DRUM ON EVERY FIRST BEAT.

FIELD RECORDING OF A 9-MONTH-OLD BABY IMPROVISING THE ON AN EMPTY 20LITRE WATER CONTAINER.
P1
Simile
8'00"
CARRY ON IMPROVISING WITH MICRONOISES.

P2
Simile
9'00"
CARRY ON IMPROVISING WITH MICRONOISES.

TAPE
CONT'D
PRE-RECORDED BABY SOUNDS

CUE SAMPLE
PRE-RECORDED SOUNDS OF KEYS UNLOCKING A DOOR AND TRIGGER THE IMPROVISATIONS OF P1+P2

10'00"

IMPROVISE AND DEVELOP ENDING DRUM FILLS ON THE SNARE AND KICK DRUM FROM ROCK AND BLUES TRADITIONS. START SPARSELY AND GRADUALLY GET BUSIER. CREATE A DIALOGUE WITH P2.

10'25"

IMPROVISE AND DEVELOP ENDING DRUM FILLS ON THE TOM TOM, SNARE AND THE KICK DRUM, FROM ROCK AND BLUES TRADITIONS. START SPARSELY AND GRADUALLY GET BUSIER. CREATE A DIALOGUE WITH P1.

11'00" 11'25"

P1+P2
ON THE THIRD HEATER SOUND TURN TOWARDS THE BASS DRUM AND START TILTING IT UPSIDE DOWN WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY RUBBING THE THUMB ON THE DRUM SKIN TO FIT THE ACTION TO THE SOUNDS.

11'15"

ON THE THIRD HEATER SOUND TURN TOWARDS THE BASS DRUM FACING P2 STEP AWAY AND WATCH HIM PERFORM HIS RITUAL.

11'35"

WALK TO THE FACE MASK AND ON THE SECOND HEATER SOUND PUT THE MASK ON. KEEP HARD STICKS WITH YOU.

12'00"

P1
Simile rallentando
10'00"
GRADUALLY BLEND INTO PARADIDLES, OR QUIET SEMIQUARTERS ON THE SNAPE (piano, 140 bpm) AND THE KICK DRUM AS THE BEAT, IN AN ALMOST MACHINE-GUN SOUND, inculzando.

P2
Simile rallentando
11'00"
CARRY ON IMPROVISING WITH THE PREVIOUS DRUM FILLS. DEVELOP THAT MATERIAL EXTENSIVELY.

11'25"

GRADUALLY SYNC WITH P1 BY EAR AND COME IN RHYTHMIC UNISON. SOUND AS ONE.

TAPE
SILENCE

CUE SAMPLE + PRE-RECORDED HEATER SOUNDS

PRE-RECORDED SESSION OF A REAL NOSE OPERATION FROM A HOSPITAL IN CYPRUS
**P1**

-TACET-

Simile

- TRY TO TRICK P2 BY HOLDING THE STICKS IN NORMAL CONDUCTING POSITION AND PRETENDING THAT YOU ARE GOING TO LET THEM DROP ON THE SKIN OF THE BASS DRUM.
- DROP THE STICKS ON THE SOUND OF THE VENTILATOR.

**P2**

- CONT'D: TILLING + HAND SEQUENCES

Simile

- AFTER P1 HOLDS THE BASS DRUM STILL, GET YOUR HARD STICKS AND RETURN TO THE BASS DRUM.
- HOLD THE STICKS IN NORMAL CONDUCTING POSITION AND MIRROR AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE WHAT P1 IS DOING.
- DROP THE STICKS ON THE SOUND OF THE VENTILATOR.

**TAPe**

- CONT'D: PRE-RECORDED SOUNDS OF A NOSE OPERATION

**p1+p2**

Simile MIRROR SEQUENCE (P1+P2)

IMPROVISE AND DEVELOP THE ABOVE SEQUENCE BUT WHEN THE STICKS ARE DROPPED, CREATE A mF DRUM ROLL WITH THE FINGERS. THIS IS DUE TO THE RUMBLING ON THE FOUR STICKS ON THE BASS DRUM. WHILE YOU PERFORM THE ROLL, GO CLOSER TO THE SKIN WITH YOUR EAR AS IF YOU ARE ABOUT TO LISTEN TO SOMETHING. WHILE YOUR EAR IS CLOSE TO THE SKIN.

**P1**

- KEEP HOLDING THE HARD STICK WITH THE LH WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY WALKING OVER THE FOUR STICKS ON THE BASS DRUM WITH THE RH FINGERS FROM YOUR RIGHT SIDE TO LEFT.

**P2**

- CARRY ON WITH THE PREVIOUS MIRROR SEQUENCE WITH ONE STICK. 'GOING DOWN' ELEVATOR SOUND.

**TAPE**

- MEDICAL VENTILATOR: 3 BEEPS

'GOING DOWN' ELEVATOR SOUND
P1
Simile: CARRY ON WITH THE PREVIOUS ONE-STICK (LH) MIRROR SEQUENCE. YOU ARE NOT ONLY LEADING BUT ALSO FOLLOWING WHAT P2 IS DOING. DROP THE STICKS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ON THE BASS DRUM.

AT THIS POINT PICK UP WITH TWO HANDS BOTH STICKS AND CREATE A ‘MOCKING’ SEQUENCE BY LOOKING AT P2 AND PRETEND TO THROW THE STICKS ON THE BASS DRUM.

DROP THE STICKS FOR THE LAST TIMES ON THE BASS DRUM.

TACET

14'00"
14'35"
15'00"
15'03"
15'20"
15'30"
15'40"
16'00"

P2
Simile: CARRY ON WITH THE PREVIOUS ONE-STICK (RH) MIRROR SEQUENCE. DO NOT JUST FOLLOW WHAT P1 IS DOING BUT ALSO LEAD THE WAY (HE IS NOW FOLLOWING YOU). DROP THE STICKS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE BASS DRUM.

AFTER P1 GETS BOTH OF THE STICKS PLACE BOTH HANDS ON THE RING OF THE BASS DRUM AND LOOK DOWN AS IF YOU HAVE BEEN DEFEATED.

LOOK SLOWLY DOWN AT P1 AND SUDDENLY PICK THE TWO STICKS STRAIGHT AFTER HE DROPS THEM ON THE BASS DRUM PUT THEM ON THE STICKS STAND.

WALK SLOWLY AND THEATRICALLY TOWARDS THE STUDY LAMP AND TURN IT OFF.

WALK SLOWLY TOWARDS THE EMERGENCY EXIT OF THE VENUE.

TACET

14'00"
14'35"
15'00"
15'03"
15'20"
15'30"
15'40"
16'00"

TAPE
SILENCE

FIELD RECORDING OF THE ELEVATOR FROM THE LEEDS ONCOLOGY WARD

ELEVATOR DOOR: OPENING SOUND

ELEVATOR DOOR: CLOSING SOUND

P1
Simile
TACET

SYNC TO P2 VIA INBREATH (attacco levare) AND PERFORM THREE AERIAL KNOCKS AS A VISUAL REPLY TO HIS ACTUAL DOOR KNOCKS. REPEAT THIS SEQUENCE BY ASKING FOR MORE USING WORDS SUCH AS ‘AGAIN’ OR ‘LOUDER’.

16'00"
16'05"
16'30"
16'40"

P2
YOU SHOULD BE IN FRONT OF THE CLOSED EMERGENCY EXIT DOOR BY NOW.

CREATE THE ‘DOOR KNOCKS’ SEQUENCE BY PRODUCING A mP INBREATH (attacco levare) TO CUE P1 IN, AND BY PERFORMING THREE ACTUAL DOOR KNOCKS WITH CLOSED FIST ON THE DOOR (MEDIUM SPEED) PERFORM AS MANY TIMES AS YOU ARE ASKED BY P1.

TACET

(LIGHTS: SLOW FADE TO BLACK)

TACET

(LIGHTS: SLOW FADE TO BLACK)

TAPE
SILENCE