

James Whittle

um

a minute manifestoverture

The stage is set for the ensemble to begin. The audience must not expect a Speaker.

The Speaker appears at the front of the stage and stands facing the audience in front of the ensemble.

He carries a scroll which he unrolls vertically as he reads the text from it. On the back of the scroll is inscribed 'um.'

The Speaker begins. The piano should begin at any point after 'I am a composer.'

Upon reaching INFLATE, all players must do so as quickly as possible with a balloon that has been until this point completely hidden from the audience.

This action is to be followed immediately by RELEASE.

RELEASE of the air should be in whichever way the players wish, but should aim to last for the duration of the rest of the Speaker's text.

Try experimenting with sounds and variation of timbre. Try to make the air sound like radio static or flutter-tonguing.

On the last phrase ending 'any questions' the Speaker must look up from their score into the audience.

[The last segments of text are not to be read aloud by the Speaker.]

If the Speaker stands before a chair, he/she then sits down, stands still, or leaves.

Pause.

Written for The Chimera Ensemble
for performance at the Postgraduate Forum Composers' Workshop
at the University of York, 19th October 2011.

Duration: the piece must last 1 minute.

um

hello

I am a composer of music

though I would rather you called me an 'organiser of sound'

except I am not interested in sound alone

as you can see me talking to you right now

because my brain is telling my lips and tongue to talk to you and my eyes to look at you
and your brain is telling your ears to listen to me and your eyes to watch me

But they don't have to be
and maybe not all of them are anyway

But they are intrinsically and unavoidably juxtaposed
and always have been

So what would it matter if i went and sat over in the corner
if there is one

What then do you call me
if you can see and hear me
or cannot see but can hear
or see but not hear
or cannot see and cannot hear
or do not see and do not hear
are you even listening to me at all

Is that not theatre Or is it music

Does it depend on which you thought about first
that is

Why are you here
and

What were you expecting
and

Have the priorities changed

for that matter
why am i here
when i could be
over there

The hierarchy has slipped sideways at last
Now there are sounds and sights

So perhaps you should call me an organiser of sounds and sights
though are they really that disconnected
like a mind not present within a body

Is that all that the body will ever be
the experiential nebula, the nucleus of all outwardly measurable and categorical science
by which we understand ourselves

and is the mind not just the name we give to the capacity which we perceive ourselves to have
to think and ask why
and ask why are we asking why
the answer to which is surely

What priority was given to the first why and how has that shaped our experience

So please listen and look
and tell me what you think
and feel free to ask
any questions

*I must write what I hear
I must write what I see
I must hear what I see
I must see what I hear
I must see and hear what I write*

**I believe that the use of the body in addition to the use of noise to make music
is necessary for the organisation of sounds
and the manner in which they are created and received.**

(something is happening)

Auch Zeit ist



a minute manifestoverture

James Whittle
October 2011

The Speaker begins: $\text{♩} = 60$ $\text{♩} = 80$ Begin beating on bar 3

Conductor

Speaker
um
Hello
I am a composer of music though I would rather you called me an 'organiser of sound' ...

Flute
ff f mp fp f f fp mf

Clarinet in Bb
ff f p mf f ff

Balloon
INFLATE → RELEASE AIR
high, rasping, loud - like radio static

Piano
p fff f fff f fff
chromatic clusters - any notes in the notated vicinity

Violin
 $\text{♩} = 60$ $\text{♩} = 80$
arco molto sul pont.
mf fff fp mp fp f p fp ff
m.s.p.

Violoncello
arco molto sul pont.
mf fff mf brutally flowing f ff p ff
I nat. II m.s.p. III IV

All continue releasing air until it runs out.
The piece ends abruptly at the end of the speech:

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Conductor

Speaker

Fl.

Cl.

Bln

Pno.

Vln

Vc.

INFLATE balloon. RELEASE air.

So please listen and look and tell me what you think and feel free to ask any questions