

Charlie Sdraulig

few

for solo voice

2013

Note

A miniature. A few sounds.

This is the third work in a series of pieces, collectively known as *breath*.

Performance directions

Perform this piece alone, to yourself, or to a few others very close to you.

1. Enter a very quiet environment, be still.
2. Spend a short time listening to the environment.
3. There are continuous and non-continuous ambient sounds (ambient sounds are sounds that you do not intend or are not responsible for creating).
4. Start the score (preferably perform from memory).
5. Your sounds and breath pressure should always be *barely* audible over the continuous ambient sounds, according to *your* perception alone.
6. When a non-continuous ambient sound occurs, stop performing the score.
7. Listen again (breathe slowly, steadily and as quietly as possible as you listen).
8. Have the continuous ambient sounds changed? If so, adjust your sounds and breath pressure so that they are again only *barely* audible to you.
9. Resume your progress through the score, beginning at the nearest 'breath in' before the point at which you stopped.
10. Repeat steps 6 to 9 until you reach the end of the score.

(The division between continuous and non-continuous sounds is arbitrary. You must decide how to classify any given ambient sound. It may be useful to think of continuous sounds as relatively long sounds and non-continuous sounds as relatively short sounds. Exactly how you interpret these terms and divide ambient sounds will drastically alter the length of a performance.)

(If the environment changes in a way that makes it impossible to finish the score, abandon the performance.)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Michael Baldwin, whose suggestions in the course of preparing a performance of *few* resulted in some small, but important revisions to the score.

Explanations

Breath:

 : a breath in that is as long as humanly possible.

 : a breath out that is as long as humanly possible.

Mouth shapes:

Your teeth should always be close together.

◦ : tight pursed lips.

○ : a rounded shape, as if saying 'oo'.

△ : a relaxed open shape, as if saying 'ah'.

◌ : a wide, flat shape, achieved using your cheek muscles, as if saying 'ee'.

∪ : a wide, open 'smile' shape.

With all of these shapes, blow air voicelessly without any suggestion of a vowel or consonant.

There will be only the slightest natural hint of a glissando when changing between shapes. So ◦ should sound relatively low and ∪ should sound relatively high.

An arrow indicates a smooth, consistent and gradual transformation from one shape to another.

Tongue clicks:

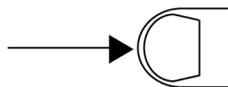
× : at the last possible moment of a breath in, attempt a tongue click as quietly as possible. Click by briefly and gently touching the roof of your mouth with the tip of your tongue. There should be a risk that the tongue click will not sound.

Humming:

(mm) : at the last possible moment of a breath out, attempt to briefly hum a comfortable midrange pitch as quietly as possible. There should be a risk that the hum will not sound. Attempt the same pitch throughout.

Thumb whistle:

th - - - : promptly and calmly raise one thumb to within a few millimetres of your lips. Gently rest your fingertips against your palm. With tight pursed lips, blow directly on to the tip of your thumbnail (see the diagram, a side-on view, where the arrow indicates air direction from your lips, as well as the picture below) and allow the tip of your thumb nail to split the air and create a whistle sound. You may subtly adjust the air direction or the position of your thumb to achieve this whistle sound however, sometimes the whistle just won't sound.



few

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