

Coalescence

For Any Flve Sustaining Instruments

(2023)

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2 Performance Note:

Coalescence, for any five sustaining instruments, situates each player's individual intuition in the foreground of how the piece would unfold. Each player is given a pre-determined order of notes to play within a time limit of 10 minutes, but the register of which is unspecified so every instrument should be able to play any part of the score. Please note that the score is in C, so transposing instrumentalists will have to do the transposing of their parts in advance of playing (Konzeptmusik musicians, if you don't mind, please be prepared to try multiple parts in the rehearsal).

A stopwatch is required in performing the piece. Players can begin any time after starting the timer. Each player has agency to decide how long each note should be played depending on what feels 'right' in the performance, as long as everyone finish on the final note at the 10 minute mark, and holding it until ending together.

Generally, players should aim to play each note slowly, with each note lasting approximately a full breath (i.e. around 20 seconds), though occasional exceptions of shorter notes are also welcomed as long as they occur rarely enough. Notes do not have to follow immediately; performers are free to take as much time as they feel is 'right' between notes, or not, if they feel that a continuously line is more appropriate.

Players should try to avoid changing notes at the same instant. Note changes in close proximity or changes that occur after a long static held chord are both fine. The judgement of when to change notes is up to the player, according to when they feel it is 'right' to do so. Similarly, register is decided by performers intuitively; registral change can occur as frequently and drastically or as infrequently as the performer wishes. For example, in a cluster chord, a player may or may not wish to gain clarity by going significantly higher or lower in the register, and the rest of the ensemble may or may not react to it accordingly.

Whatever the chosen instrumentation is, players should play the score with a technique that obscures the pitch slightly (but not completely). It is up to the players to decide if the same technique will be used, or if there will be any changes (and when) throughout. This is to help with the blending of timbres within the open instrumentation. For the same reason, the dynamic level should be generally quiet throughout. See below for a non-exhaustive list of suggestions of techniques that obscures pitch. If players wish to practice prior to the rehearsal, it is recommended that they play through all five parts and mark approximately what sorts of technique to use for each note (especially when multiphonics are involved).

Overall, the aim is to create a cloud of blurry and quiet sounds where everyone is actively reacting to the broader soundscape timbrally and harmonically through interpreting duration, rests, register, and technique to its respective extent/ frequency of change intuitively.

Non-exhaustive Playing Technique Suggestions (Choose and switch freely depending on the instrument, the player's preference, and how the piece unfolds in the performance):

Strings:

Sul ponticello/ Over-pressured bowing/ Loosening bow hair/ Artificial harmonics /Preparation with considerable sustain (e.g. blue tack)

Woodwind:

Whisper tone/ Airy timbre/ Overblowing / Playing with mouthpiece only / Multiphonics that involve adjacent notes/ Singing into instrument/ Singing and playing at a close interval (i.e. minor second)/ Preparation (e.g. aluminium foil, tinned can, sheets of card/paper)

Brass:

Playing with mouthpiece only/ Overpressured Embouchure/ Half-pressed valves/ Play with mute/ Multiphonics/ Singing into instrument/ Singing and playing at a close interval/ Preparation (e.g. aluminium foil, tinned can, sheets of card/paper)

Keyboards/ pitched percussion/ Harp:

Preparation with sustain (pieces of thin metal, plastic, paper, or blue tack)/ If preparation is not possible, play every note in clusters of various densities and make sure to include the notated note. For example, some clusters can be just 2 semitones, some can span up to an octave.

N.B. The emphasis of this piece is not on the pitch order itself, but rather on the attempt for players to realize the piece 'musically' according to their intuition and respective instrumental idiom. Therefore, it is expected that some of these techniques will sound 'out of tune' or may not even sound in the notated pitch. It is completely fine when that happens.

(c. 10'00")

Coalescence

For any 5 sustaining instruments

Score in C

Very slowly (each note should last about the length of a full breath)

Begin in any order

0'00"

10'00"

finish last chord
at the same time

The musical score for 'Coalescence' is written for five players, each on a single staff. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Very slowly' with the instruction that each note should last about the length of a full breath. The score begins with a 'Begin in any order' instruction at the 0'00" mark. Each player's part starts with a whole note, followed by a series of half notes and quarter notes, creating a complex, overlapping texture. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano) throughout. The score concludes at the 10'00" mark with a final chord, which all players are instructed to finish at the same time. The notation includes various accidentals (sharps and naturals) and rests, indicating a highly specific and intricate composition.

Player 1
p throughout

Player 2
p throughout

Player 3
p throughout

Player 4
p throughout

Player 5
p throughout