

Le temps est écoulé!

Russell Wimbish

PhD Music
2020

Le temps est écoulé

This is a piece for an ensemble of any size. The ensemble must determine the duration of the piece prior to performance. Times may be approximate (for example, five minutes and fifteen seconds) or generalised (about half an hour). Performers determine the meaning of the graphic notation. No performer is required to perform every graphic, nor is any performer required to perform for the entire duration of the piece.



Suggestions for rehearsal and performance

The primary challenge of this piece is for the ensemble to construct a coherent and effective performance strategy. As the notations themselves have no inherent musical meaning, the ensemble must decide how they will map musical information onto the score's visual attributes. These mappings can be highly specific or loosely plotted. What is important is that they reflect a well-conceived performance aesthetic. To performers who may need guidance, I offer a pathway to beginning this process.

The ensemble must first discuss the visual attributes of the score and how they might affect performance. For example, what moods or musical qualities do the colours suggest? Do the different colours indicate a change of tonality, timbre or rhythmic activity? Do they signal specific ensemble members to perform? How does the placement of colour within the score impact upon performance? This line of questioning must also be applied to the graphic symbols. How is the musical activity indicated by a circle different from that of coloured splotches? What of the *vegvísir*, an Icelandic symbol thought to aid navigation through rough water? What of the *Wawa Aba* (top left of centre), an Ashanti symbol of perseverance? How do they relate to each other, and how do they both relate to the title of the piece? How should these relationships translate musically? It is important to stress that, per my own aesthetic, the performance should not involve the blatant use of songs,

musical gestures or performative tropes from either Icelandic, West African or French music. Rather, consider how these symbols might affect the character of the performance. Perhaps the music will be urgent and tumultuous. If so, the use of dissonance, atonality and rhythmic instability may be appropriate. Or, if the performance will be meditative and serene, perhaps the graphics should indicate sustained tones, melodicism, and soft textual effects. These are but a few examples of how mapping strategies can coalesce through discussing the score's visual attributes.

The ensemble must also decide how these mappings fit within the temporal limit set for performance. For example, the group may decide to read the score in a clockwise fashion and perform the graphics as they occur along this trajectory. Or, the ensemble may designate graphics located anywhere within the score as temporal markers. Regardless of the strategy employed, each member of the ensemble should be clear about how the graphics relate to sonic events and how these events can be recognised throughout the temporal procession of the piece.