

CHASE

For lead Theremin and Theremin ensemble.

February 2020 - Andrew Knight-Hill

NOTES

This piece should be interpreted playfully. The lead Theremin selects and plays the notated gestures, while the ensemble seek to follow and imitate the leader. The ensemble are variously instructed to follow more or less closely, and the natural and expected latency between the lead Theremin and the individual ensemble players are a key feature of the piece.

LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

The leader should ensure that the ensemble feel confident and encouraged. Ensemble musicians should naturally flock around the leader as they seek to follow. Discrepancies are a deliberate part of the piece.

The leader must be patient and make the most of moments of stillness and relative stasis in the piece. Textural richness and sidebands should emerge in these still moments.

Shatter the stillness abruptly with bold gestures. Any note marking indicated below is rough and only provided to give an impression of the gestural shapes.

Sometimes the ensemble will deliberately fall back or delay. Don't worry about this, simply continue. Don't rush or interrupt the followers. Give them time.

ENSEMBLE INSTRUCTIONS

Ensemble members should divide as evenly as possible between groups one and two. More confident players should join group two.

Each ensemble member should be independent and should try to focus on the lead Theremin and not their colleagues.

If you lose the leader, don't worry. Simply pause and re-join the piece at the next opportune moment.

Listening is key in this piece. Don't worry about pinpoint precision, just try to be as accurate you can. You should relish the subtleties and textures which emerge from the ensemble - the magic of the piece derives from the varying delays between the ensemble and the leader.

SCORE

LEAD THEREMIN

Establish a tone (around C4). *mf*
Allow the others to equalise around you.

Begin to slowly shift in 1/4 tones.
Increase the rate. And the interval distance (gradually up to a semitone). (Moving towards irregular vibrato).

Once you reach a vibrato rate, suddenly drop to the lowest note that you can play. then DISAPPEAR.

Wait until all followers have disappeared.

[— pause —]

Establish a tone (close to but distinct from the first). Allow the others to begin to equalise. Set up a pulse in amplitude. Increase rate of volume pulse. Before they all reach equalisation, slowly begin to ramp up in pitch.

Suddenly drop in a zig zag fashion - c5 / c3 / f3 / f1 - wait for them to reach you and then gliss. semitone down "sigh" then almost disappear PPPPPP "pretend", crescendo up rapidly and then really disappear.

[— pause —]

Establish a tone (around B#2) - this is actually a secret glissandi.
Once you've heard all followers reach your tone, gliss. steadily up towards the original pitch (C4).

As they begin to reach C4
Fast erratic tuning up down, around and around, slowly narrowing the circles to centre in on and establish a tone at a mid-high frequency (around B2). Hold this tone.

Gradually loop and fall with acceleration towards the bottom of each loop. Apply amplitude gestures to really make the loops zip. "uerr wvHOOM"

When you reach the bottom, Rapidly ascend with rigid and angular staccato gestures.

Staccato bursts of different durations inserting rests at different points. [think early Stockhausen].
These should be angular and rigid.

Extend this section, ensemble should cluster around you creating clouds.

[— pause —]

Establish a high tone (~C5) that slowly fluctuates to C#5 and back.

Build this into vibrato w. pitch change.

Once followers join slow the vibrato right down to fluctuation between semitones.

Create swirling, mass of HF sounds. Hold this for a moment.

Gradually circle down. when you reach ~C1 drop to *ppp* play with the subtlety of the quietness.

[— pause —]

Establish a tone (around C4).

Allow the others to equalise around you.

Begin to slowly shift in 1/4 tones.

Increase the rate. And the interval distance (gradually up to a semitone, moving towards irregular vibrato).

Once you reach a vibrato rate, suddenly drop to the lowest note that you can play. Then DISAPPEAR.

Wait until all followers have disappeared.

[— pause —]

Crescendo (*mf* -> *f*) w. semitone rise (C2 / C#2) (repeat at least three times) then disappear
eeerUPP eeerUPP eeerUPP [followers should copy and get more accurate each time]

End on high *pp* tone (B6)

THEREMIN ENSEMBLE

Group 1 - Listen and follow

Move on to the next instruction after each pause.

Respond gradually.

Get as close as you can.

Cluster around the leader, don't worry about exactly copying, imitate gesture types instead.

Be an Echo.

Shadow the leader.

Get as close as you can.

Group 2 - Listen and follow

Move on to the next instruction after each pause.

Respond after a delay.

Keep behind. ~3s and follow.

FREEZE - Refuse to follow, hold your pitch. Only re-join after rapid changes by the leader.

Rush to catch up, accelerating. Then drop back. [REPEAT]

Respond Gradually

Get as close as you can.