

Blue Skies

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UM2012 Edition

Composed for performance at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, USA, March 2012.

Performance Notes

This piece is written for any instrumentation and any number of performers. However, it is designed in conjunction with the Blue Skies computer system, a hardware/software system that includes sensors to detect changes in wind and light level, and an algorithmic improviser that produces sounds in response to these changes. The score can be played both by people and by the Motivator. Translation into the Motivator's file format is required in order for it to play the score.

Each rectangle represents a State. When you enter a state, follow the instructions in that state.

Arrows emerging from states indicate transitions. Most arrows are labeled either with verbal instructions or with a symbol (explained under "Special Symbols" to the right). This symbol or instruction indicates the trigger that should cause you to transition out of your current state. If none of the triggers occur, you should remain in your current state until one does occur.

To begin, each performer chooses a Starting Point from among the designated Starting Points. This indicates the first state for that performer.

Performers may enter the performance at any time. Whenever the performer chooses to enter, he or she should simply choose a Starting Point and begin.

Any musical parameter that is not specified is to be determined by the performer. If a staff is shown without a clef, then any pitches are determined by the performer. However, within the performance of a particular figure, the performer should be consistent about the pitch that is tied to each line or space. The interval between two adjacent lines or spaces should still be roughly a 3rd (major or minor).

A symbol followed by an amount of time indicates that you should not transition until that condition has been maintained for that amount of time. For example, the "little or no wind" symbol followed by 30" would indicate that you should transition once the wind has stopped (or almost stopped) for 30 seconds. These times should be viewed as approximate; it is not necessary to use a stopwatch unless you want to.

A time without a symbol indicates that you should transition after being in the state for the specified amount of time. Again, the time is approximate. Use your best judgement!

The performance continues indefinitely. Whenever you wish to stop playing, simply stop.

A time embedded in the border around the state box (such as the 3 minutes shown here) indicates that you should stay in that state for at least the amount of time indicated. If the transition arrow out of the state does not have any additional symbols or instructions, then you simply transition after the specified time. If it has an additional symbol, then you start paying attention to that symbol only after you have been in the state for the specified duration.

Special Symbols

- Little or no wind
- Moderate wind
- Strong wind
- Relatively dark
- Moderately bright
- Relatively bright

Starting Point 1

Declaration

Play one of the following motives:

Pause, then play the same one or choose a different one.
Repeat for one minute then move to the next state.

one minute

Aeolian Pitch

Observe the wind. If there is no wind, play this at pitch. If the wind picks up speed, play this proportionally higher based on the speed of the wind.

(You decide what "proportionally higher" means.)

Time between notes is roughly proportional to horizontal space. Notes in parentheses are optional.

more wind
higher pitch
less wind
lower pitch

3 minutes

Massive Chord

Play this once:

(Pick any note and hold it.) (Pick another note and hold it.) (and so on...) (massive chord)

choose path

Empty

Do nothing.

Improvise 5th

Improvise using these notes:

Maintain a moderate tempo.

Canon

Choose one of the other performers* to follow. Imitate whatever that performer plays, just a little behind them in time.

* Performer may be a person or one of the computer-controlled instruments.

Canon 3rd

Choose one pitch. (choose your pitch so that it fits with everything you are hearing.) Pick a tempo, and play your pitch in a rock-solid rhythm:

Mechanically. Repeat indefinitely.

You may gradually vary dynamics, but do not vary pitch, rhythm, or accent.

Nada

Do nothing.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

Choose one pitch. (choose your pitch so that it fits with everything you are hearing.) Pick a tempo, and play your pitch in a rock-solid rhythm:

Mechanically. Repeat indefinitely.

You may gradually vary dynamics, but do not vary pitch, rhythm, or accent.

Empty

Do nothing.

Starting Point 2

Nada

Do nothing for one minute.

Rhythm Canon

Choose one of the other performers* to follow. Imitate the rhythm of whatever that performer plays, just a little behind them in time.

For the pitch: Choose a pitch to be the "center". If it's dark, just play that pitch. If it's brighter, alternate between two pitches an equal interval above and below the center pitch. As it gets brighter, increase the interval. As it gets darker, decrease the interval.

* Performer may be a person or one of the computer-controlled instruments.

Sustained Noise

Play sustained noise. Get louder as the wind gets stronger.

less wind → more wind

Improv 5th Rit

Improvise using these notes:

Start fast. Gradually get slower and slower.

Slow Growing Chord

Play this over and over:

add this after a while then this:

dark ← accel. rit. → bright

As the performance space gets darker, *accelerando*. As it gets lighter, *ritardando*.

when it gets really slow

Canon 3rd

Choose one of the other performers* to follow. Imitate whatever that performer plays, just a little behind them in time, and a major 3rd higher.

* Performer may be a person or one of the computer-controlled instruments.

Slow Growing Chord

Play this over and over:

add this after a while then this:

dark ← accel. rit. → bright

As the performance space gets darker, *accelerando*. As it gets lighter, *ritardando*.

Starting Point 3

Bursts of Noise

Play bursts of noise.

Motives A

Improvise 2 short motives with the following scale:

any microtones in between

Continue to improvise using only the same 2 motives. Pause 3 or 4 seconds after each motive. You may subtly alter the motives each time. If you have already been to this state, reuse your motives!

Wind Popcorn

Play short percussive sounds.

If there is more wind, increase the density of sounds. If there is less wind, decrease the density.

less wind → more wind

Use a variety of sounds, but keep them short!

Crickets

Choose a high note. Play it in short, staccato pairs.

Rest between pairs is shorter when space is darker, longer when it's brighter.

Spotty Canon

Choose one of the other performers* to follow. Occasionally, imitate one or two notes that performer plays, just a little behind them in time.

* Performer may be a person or one of the computer-controlled instruments.