

# ETIQUETTES

by Zachary Seldess

Each Etiquettes may be performed alone (as a separate work), consecutively with other Etiquettes (as a series), or simultaneously with other Etiquettes (as a collage).

# ETIQUETTES (1)

for five performers with at least one common octave in register

This work consists of five “musical Personae”(five parts). A different “Persona” will be realized by each of the five performers.

## *assigning musical Personae:*

At some point before a performance of Etiquettes (1) and through any of various methods, assign a Persona to each performer. Do this in a way as to keep the assigned Persona of each performer unknown from the other performers. (Each Persona is described on its own sheet of paper, so the easiest method may be to shuffle the pages face-down and have each performer choose one).

## *positioning:*

Positioning of the performers may be anywhere within the performance space(s) given that

- 1) each performer is able to clearly hear the other performers, and
- 2) in the event that performers will be reading from their appropriate pages of instructions, they are positioned within the space so that their pages are not legible by the other performers.

All performers should be in clear view of a stopwatch or other time counting mechanism.

## *beginning:*

0'00" All five performers begin on a unison pitch of their choice.

## *proceeding:*

See musical Personae pages for instructions (separate pages). All Personae require the ability to sustain tone for various durations. For non-sustaining instruments a very fast, un-metered tremolo may substitute for a single sustained tone.

## *ending:*

At some point before a performance of Etiquettes (1) and through any of various methods, assign an ending order for each performer (Persona 3 must be one of the first three performers to end).

≥10'00" The first designated performer drops out at any time. Throughout the work, according to the instructions of the different Personae, a performer may rest for various amounts of time and then reenter. At this point in the work, a performer may only reenter if his/her resting falls short of 15 seconds. Once 15 seconds of rest have passed the performer is considered to have ended and may not reenter.

≥15" later When the first performer has ended (his/her 15 second window of rest has expired), the second designated performer drops out at any time. This performer may reenter within 15 seconds from dropping out, but once 15 seconds of rest have passed the performer may not reenter.

≥15" later When the second performer has ended (his/her 15 second window of rest has expired), the third designated performer drops out at any time. This performer may reenter within 15 seconds from dropping out, but once 15 seconds of rest have passed the performer may not reenter.

≥15" later When the third performer has ended (his/her 15 second window of rest has expired), the last two designated performers drop out at any time. These two performers must drop out simultaneously (one forces the other to drop out). One or both of these performers may reenter within 15 seconds from dropping out (according to their individual rules), but once one performer has ended (his/her 15 second window has expired) the other performer must end immediately.

There is no maximum length. The minimum possible length based on the above rules is 11'00".

# MUSICAL PERSONA 1

-You always seek to sustain a tone one half step or less (not at the unison) above or below the tone that is surrounded by the largest empty registral space (excluding your own tone, if present). The distance between a tone's adjacent upper and lower neighbors determines the size of that tone's surrounding empty registral space. If a tone has only one adjacent neighbor (as is the case with the highest and lowest tones), then the distance between that tone and its single neighbor determines its empty registral space.

-You will continue this tone until a new target tone appears (or until you run out of breath if a wind instrument or voice), at which point you may

- 1) change to a new tone according to the first rule,
- 2) drop out for any duration (this is your only choice if you run out of breath),
  - If you drop out, then you may reenter at any time according to the first rule.
- 3) continue for any duration (or until out of breath).
  - If while continuing, the same target tone reappears, then you will drop out at least until a new target tone appears.

-If no target tone exists (all the other performers are resting), then you will rest.

-When a target tone appears, you may reenter at any time according to the first rule.

-Play at a mezzo forte level that is equally balanced with the other performers.

NOTE: Due to the dynamic and unpredictable temporal relationships of the Musical Personae, mistakes (actions that do not conform to your Persona's rules) will be virtually unavoidable and should be considered part of the fabric of the work. Integrating mistakes with actions that conform to your Persona's rules is left to you.

## MUSICAL PERSONA 2

-You always seek to sustain a tone in the middle ground of the registral space. The quantity and position of different pitches throughout the registral space will serve to define the middle ground. Two or more tones sounding at the unison should be counted as one pitch and perceived as residing in the same location within the registral space. In determining the middle ground, do not including yourself as a factor in the space.

*possibilities:*

-If 5 different pitches are present (including yourself) and you find yourself *above* the pitch in the middle ground, then you will move anywhere between that pitch and its adjacent lower neighbor (placing yourself below two tones and above two tones).

-If 5 different pitches are present (including yourself) and you find yourself *below* the pitch in the middle ground, then you will move anywhere between that pitch and its adjacent upper neighbor.

-If 4 different pitches are present (excluding yourself—you are resting), then you will move anywhere between the two inner pitches.

-If 4 different pitches are present (including yourself), then you will match at the unison the pitch in the middle ground of the registral space. In determining the middle ground, do not including yourself as a factor in the space.

-If 3 different pitches are present (excluding yourself—you are resting), then you will match at the unison the pitch in the middle ground of the registral space.

-If 3 different pitches are present (including yourself), then you will move anywhere between the other two pitches.

-If 2 different pitches are present (excluding yourself—you are resting), then you will move anywhere between the two pitches.

-If 2 different pitches are present (including yourself), then you will match the other pitch at the unison.

-If 1 pitch is present (excluding yourself—you are resting), then you will match the pitch at the unison.

-If 1 pitch is present (including yourself and at least one other performer), then you will continue the pitch.

-If you alone are playing, then you will play any pitch of your choice.

-You may drop out at any time, but you must reenter when the spacing of the other tones changes.

-If after dropping out, you reenter into the same spacing, then you will reenter at a different pitch.

-Play at a mezzo forte level that is equally balanced with the other performers.

NOTE: Due to the dynamic and unpredictable temporal relationships of the Musical Personae, mistakes (actions that do not conform to your Persona's rules) will be virtually unavoidable and should be considered part of the fabric of the work. Integrating mistakes with actions that conform to your Persona's rules is left to you.

## MUSICAL PERSONA 3

-You always seek to sustain a tone at any octave transposition above or below 1 of the 2 tones that are closest together (not at the unison) in the registral space (excluding your own tone, if present).

-You will continue this tone until a new target tone appears (or until you run out of breath if a wind instrument or voice), at which point you may

- 1) change to a new tone according to the first rule,
- 2) drop out for any duration (this is your only choice if you run out of breath),
  - If you drop out, then you may reenter at any time according to the first rule.
- 3) continue for any duration (or until out of breath).
  - If while continuing, the same target tone reappears, then you will drop out at least until a new target tone appears.

-If there are not at least 2 performers sounding at least 2 different pitches (excluding yourself), then you will rest.

-When 2 or more performers are playing (excluding yourself) and they are sounding at least 2 different pitches, you may reenter at any time according to the first rule.

### ***beginning:***

To begin this work all five performers will sound the unison pitch of their choice. According to your rules, this situation (the presence of only 1 pitch) will force you to drop out. During this initial unison pitch, disregard your rules and continue sustaining the original pitch until 2 other pitches appear. When 2 other pitches appear, proceed according to the first rule (all rules apply for the remainder of the work).

-Play at a mezzo forte level that is equally balanced with the other performers.

NOTE: Due to the dynamic and unpredictable temporal relationships of the Musical Personae, mistakes (actions that do not conform to your Persona's rules) will be virtually unavoidable and should be considered part of the fabric of the work. Integrating mistakes with actions that conform to your Persona's rules is left to you.

## MUSICAL PERSONA 4

-You always seek to sustain a tone one perfect 5<sup>th</sup> above or below any tone present (excluding your own tone, if present) given that the tone is not the group's highest or lowest in pitch.

-If two or less performers are playing (excluding yourself), then you will sustain a tone one perfect 5<sup>th</sup> above or below any tone present, regardless of whether it's the highest or lowest in pitch.

-If no target tone exists (all the other performers are resting), then you will play any tone of your choice.

-You will continue this tone until a target tone appears (if no target tone existed previously), or until your target tone drops out or changes (or until you run out of breath if a wind instrument or voice), at which point you will drop out for any duration.

-You may reenter at any time according to the first rule.

-Play at a mezzo forte level that is equally balanced with the other performers.

NOTE: Due to the dynamic and unpredictable temporal relationships of the Musical Personae, mistakes (actions that do not conform to your Persona's rules) will be virtually unavoidable and should be considered part of the fabric of the work. Integrating mistakes with actions that conform to your Persona's rules is left to you.

## MUSICAL PERSONA 5

-You always seek to sustain a tone anywhere between the two tones that are separated by the largest empty registral space (excluding your own tone, if present). Once having entered into this space do not count yourself as a factor in its size. In other words, the distance between your adjacent upper and lower neighbors determines the size of your immediate registral space.

-If 1 performer is playing (excluding yourself), then you will sound a tone anywhere above or below that performer's tone.

-If you alone are playing, or if no one is playing, then you will sound any tone of your choice.

-You will drop out when your immediate registral space is no longer the largest, through changing of adjacent upper and/or lower neighbors, introduction of new tones within the space, or a larger empty registral space appearing elsewhere.

-You may reenter at any time according to the first rule.

-You may drop out at any time and for any duration.

-If you drop out, then you may reenter at any time according to the first rule.

-Play at a mezzo forte level that is equally balanced with the other performers.

NOTE: Due to the dynamic and unpredictable temporal relationships of the Musical Personae, mistakes (actions that do not conform to your Persona's rules) will be virtually unavoidable and should be considered part of the fabric of the work. Integrating mistakes with actions that conform to your Persona's rules is left to you.

# ETIQUETTES (2)

for two pairs of performers,  
each pair comprised of like instruments

## *beginning and proceeding:*

- One pair enters. Each performer simultaneously sounds and sustains a tone of his/her choice. Both performers drop out when the second pair enters.
- The second pair enters at any point (forcing the first pair to drop out).
  - One performer sounds a tone of the previous pair's at the unison or any octave transposition, and the other sounds a new tone (not of the previous pair's). Both drop out when the first pair reenters.
  - If this criteria is not fulfilled, (i.e. both performers sound the same tone of the previous pair's or any of that tone's octave transpositions, each sounds a different tone of the previous pair's, neither sounds a tone of the previous pair's), then both performers drop out immediately.
- The first pair reenters at any point (forcing the second pair, if sounding tones, to drop out).
  - One performer sounds a tone of the previous pair's at the unison or any octave transposition, and the other sounds a new tone (not of the previous pair's). Both drop out when the second pair reenters.
  - If this criteria is not fulfilled, (i.e. both performers sound the same tone of the previous pair's or any of that tone's octave transpositions, each sounds a different tone of the previous pair's, neither sounds a tone of the previous pair's), then both performers drop out immediately.
  - If the previous pair did not fulfill the criteria for sustaining their tones and subsequently dropped out, then each performer sounds and sustains a tone of his/her choice.
- The second pair reenters at any point (forcing the first pair, if sounding tones, to drop out).
  - same as first pair's rules...
- Etc...

## *ending:*

- The work ends when both pairs are able to consistently fulfill the criteria for sustaining their tones, or when they are unable to do so.

## *ensemble:*

- All parts require the ability to sustain tone for various durations. If one or both pairs consist of wind instruments, the rate of exchange between the pairs should be such that no performer runs out of air. For non-sustaining instruments a very fast, un-metered tremolo may substitute for a single sustained tone.
- No decision (prior to or during a performance) should be made between performers regarding their individual roles in fulfilling the above criteria. These decisions (play one of the previous pair's tones [which one, octave transposition], play a new tone, etc.) should be made as spontaneously as possible prior to the moment of entrance.
- Communication and cueing between pair members should be discreet (no eye contact or overt physical gestures).
- All tones should be soft and equally balanced.

## *positioning:*

- Positioning of the performers may be anywhere within the performance space(s) given that each performer is able to clearly hear the other performers.



# ETIQUETTES (3)

## for six or more bowed string instruments

At any time before a performance of this work, the performers together choose one pitch. This pitch will be referred to initially as the “home pitch”.

Throughout this work, the performers will oscillate between their home pitch and other individually chosen pitches (according to the rules below). This oscillation from the home pitch to other non-home pitches will occur at a steady pulse. The speed of the pulse (decided by the performers) should not exceed 1 per second. All performers should be in clear view of a stopwatch or other time counting mechanism.

At any time before a performance, and through any of various methods, the performers decide the duration of the work, number of sections contained within that duration, and starting times for each section, given that the work

- 1) is no less than 5 minutes in duration, and
- 2) contains at least 6 sections.

Play at a soft dynamic level that is equally balanced with the other performers.

### Section 1:

1<sup>st</sup> pulse:

-Play the predetermined home pitch.

2<sup>nd</sup> pulse:

-Move to any non-home pitch within the intervallic space of a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> (including the 5<sup>th</sup>) *either* above *or* below the home pitch. This range of a 5<sup>th</sup>, above or below, will remain your range for now.

3<sup>rd</sup> pulse:

-Return to the home pitch.

4<sup>th</sup> pulse:

-Move to any pitch within your range, as determined in the 2<sup>nd</sup> pulse.

Etc...

### Section 2:

-Choose to expand your range by a perfect 4<sup>th</sup> (including the 4<sup>th</sup>) *either* in the same direction *or* in the opposite direction of your previous expansion. In both cases, your range becomes one octave in size.

-Continue oscillating between the home pitch and the non-home pitches within your newly expanded range.

### Section 3:

1<sup>st</sup> pulse:

-During your first pulse away from the home pitch in this section, choose a pitch in your range that at least two performers are playing (including yourself). This will be your new home pitch. If no two performers are playing the same pitch in your range, then choose any pitch of your choice within your current range (excluding the previous home pitch).

2<sup>nd</sup> pulse:

-Move to your new home pitch.

3<sup>rd</sup> pulse:

-Move to any non-home pitch within the intervallic space of a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> (including the 5<sup>th</sup>) *either* above *or* below the home pitch. This range of a 5<sup>th</sup>, above or below, will remain your range for now.

4<sup>th</sup> pulse:

-Move to your home pitch.

5<sup>th</sup> pulse:

-Move to any pitch within your range.

Etc...

**Section 4:** same as Section 2

**Section 5:** same as Section 3

**Section 6:** same as Section 2

**Section 7:** same as Section 3

-Continue this process until the predetermined time (no less than 5 minutes), at which point the work ends.

# ETIQUETTES (4)

for two or more groups of three performers,  
each group comprised of like instruments

At any time before a performance of this work, each group of performers

- 1) chooses a unison pitch with which to begin, and
- 2) designates its three performers as Performers 1, 2 and 3.

All parts require the ability to sustain tone for various durations. If a group consists of wind instruments, the progression from one step to the next (see below) should be such that no performer runs out of air. For non-sustaining instruments a very fast, un-metered tremolo may substitute for a single sustained tone.

Play at a soft dynamic level that is equally balanced with the other performers.

## ***beginning and proceeding:***

Step 1)

-Performers 1 and 2 of each group sound and sustain their chosen unison pitch(es).

Step 2)

-At any time after Step 1, Performer 3 of each group sounds his/her group's unison pitch (not necessarily in synchronicity with Performer 3 of the other group[s]).

Step 3)

-Immediately after Step 2, Performers 1 and 2 change pitch, one moving to a higher pitch and one moving to a lower pitch. No decision (prior to or during a performance) should be made between these two performers regarding which direction they will move. This decision should be made as spontaneously as possible immediately prior to the move.

-If this criteria is not fulfilled (i.e. both performers move in the same direction), then all three performers will drop out immediately and start the process again from Step 1, except this time Performers 2 and 3 will perform Step 1 (sounding the group's most recent unison pitch [realign the performers with their tasks accordingly]). The next time this criteria is not fulfilled Performers 3 and 1 will perform Step 1. The next time...Performers 1 and 2 will perform Step 1...etc.

Step 4)

-At any time after Step 3, the performer sustaining the lower pitch matches (at the unison) the higher pitch of the other performer. The next time Step 4 is performed (when Step 5 is completed the group will repeat the process from Step 2 [see below]), the performer sustaining the higher pitch will match (at the unison) the lower pitch of the other performer. The next time Step 4 is performed, the performer sustaining the lower pitch will match...etc.

Step 5)

-Immediately after Step 4 (a new unison pitch is sounded and sustained), the performer not sounding the unison pitch drops out.

-Repeat the process from Step 2 (realign the performers with their tasks accordingly, if necessary).

## ***ending:***

-Once a group has navigated through all 5 steps of the process by a number equal to 3 times the total number of performers, that group may end at any time thereafter. There is no maximum length.

## ***positioning:***

-Positioning of the performers may be anywhere within the performance space(s) given that each performer is in close proximity to the other performers in his/her group.