

7 = p'

Fa-vel-lan-di

a-va-

-nent

cu-ri - -e

dat pro -

-i-

do it yourself

-le con -

b

-um-

iu- di-ci-um

te-

-i-

co - ti-di - e!

la-to-

-e-

do-mi-ni - um

-li-

leigh landy

DO IT YOURSELF
solo for
voice-overs
leigh landy

DO IT YOURSELF is a piece for solo voice and tape, where each tape track is to consist of one realization of the piece using the same soloist. The title, to be thought of in the same sense as a "Do It Yourself Kit," refers to the notion of the performer building his/her version based on his/her own tastes and abilities.

Essentially for each version of DO IT YOURSELF the performer is faced with the following decisions:

Duration of performance

Number of tape channels

Time length of score pages

Musical material & general layout (these four are the only non-random decisions)

&
Specific layout of musical events (exclusively based on random processes)

NON-RANDOM DECISIONS -

These decisions create a frame for the specific performance version. A performance of DO IT YOURSELF may consist of a solo voice and one track of tape (i.e., 2 simultaneous realizations of the piece by the same performer) or voice and as many tracks as desired/needed/feasible (e.g., with 8 tracks of tape, 9 realizations would be performed simultaneously). The duration for all tape channels and voice must be the same, but beginning and ending points for each tape channel and live performance part need not be coincident. This duration decision is a crucial and difficult one since the performer, here, must project his/her feelings concerning time taking into account an audience's overall boredom tolerance or potential unsatiated appetites.

The score for each realization (i.e., each tape channel and live voice) has a fixed number of pages where each page has a fixed time length (e.g., 5 2-minute pages for a ten minute version for all parts). This allows for the score's projection during performance. Either the material performed live by the soloist may be projected or that material plus all tape parts are to be projected throughout the performance space. A sample score page has been included (see cover).

Now that outermost decisions have been made, the performer must decide what sounds to use. At this level many decisions must be made. Should each "voice" in the performance sing only one piece or several (including the possibility of singing randomly generated music)? In either case should the entire piece or pieces be subjected to random processes or only fragments thereof and then in which order? Are there repeats? What genre of music is to be sung? Is this to be the work of one composer or folk tradition or many? And is there a relationship between sound material of the live voice part and tape channel(s)? If so, how do they interrelate with respect to a time layout?

At the point where all these decisions have been made, a score for all voices is full of music for the full length of performance. These parts are subsequently to be put to sound extraction via random methods; the explanation follows directly.

Please note that a version for voice and tape channel(s) is unique to a performer - no one performer may use another's tape; however, a performer is not limited to his/her own score realizations, nor is a performer limited uniquely to one tape realization. DO IT YOURSELF could be performed more than once by a single or several performers in sequence. Another possible performance realization would be to have DO IT YOURSELF performed simultaneously in different versions by more than one soloist virtually creating a sound as well as visual installation.

RANDOM DECISIONS -

"It's not what you say that counts; it's what you don't say."

American cliché

Now that the "full" score has been created, the most difficult phase of DO IT YOURSELF begins. The goal of this phase is to arrange all realization scores in final/performance form. Please look at the cover; this is a sample page. Since a performer's music should be familiar, the spaces between musical events will not be difficult to decipher. Essentially after going through this last phase, the soloist makes his/her tape(s) and prepares the live part. Then a performance version is ready.

The following questions are dealt with in this phase:

Start and stop times in each "voice"

Density of sound information in each "voice" - i.e., how much singing is to be heard live and on each tape channel? & When?

Whether the extraction is to be done in a + (additive from no music) or - (subtractive from "full" score) manner.

The performer may make these decisions outside of a random-decision context. Otherwise, the first random number selections are made. There are several existing random number tables ranging from Chemistry guides to telephone books to computer tables. The performer, when dealing with a question to be treated randomly, must decide what all possible or desirable answers there are for that question and then set up a table based on the range of random numbers (be it 1-999 or 0-48 or whatever) so that any chosen random number points uniquely to an answer to that question. The probability of any answer to a given question being called through the random numbers should be uniform so that any solution is indeed randomly chosen.

Once the performer knows generally what music is to be sung, how much of it is to be sung, and where the music lies in time sequence, the last phase of random selection begins. Performance events are now to be chosen (either to be included or extracted based on the + or - decision). There are four sorts of musical "events:" one musical note, one musical word (one note or melisma), one musical measure, or one strophe. The already chosen density diagrams should say finally how many events are to be chosen; and from those, how many are notes, words, measures, and strophes. Then these events are chosen through random numbers (if an event is called more than once, ignore the second calling and continue). This will leave the performer with scores for each "voice" in the form of the sample page.

A great deal of concentration is needed in recording the tape channels and singing the live part, for even though the sound events were chosen randomly, this in no way allows the performer to randomly choose rhythms - they are as fixed as the composer(s) fixed them originally. One last performance question deals with the beginning and ending of the performance. If the soloist desires that the realizations have a sort of linear attack in the beginning and a tapering off at the end, this may be included in the density layout. This is by no means the only way to perform DO IT YOURSELF.

The rest is up to the soloist.

Dedicated to Roswitha Trexler
August, 1977 / Amsterdam

(Cover - pg. from "Le Roman
de Fauvel" - Ph. de Vitry)