

so softly that it came, a wild dim chatter, meaningless

for three or more performers | luke martin

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this piece is for three or more performers. it may be of any duration.

preparation:

each performer will be provided with the same field recording (of any duration) and instructions regarding 'silence notation.' the task is to transcribe the field recording using that notation. **rules:**

- 1) paper: 4.25in x 11in (8.5in x 11in cut in half, length-wise), landscape. pencil should be used. the total width of this transcription is a single page of the dimensions given above. the transcription begins on the far left and ends on the far right.
- 2) all listening should be done with headphones, at a normal (not overly loud or soft) volume.
- 3) before transcribing, listen to the full field recording to familiarize yourself with it.
- 4) a spectrogram, or similar aid, should not be used.
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- 5) frequency: top of the paper (highest relative pitch) to bottom of the paper (lowest relative pitch).
- 6) the transcription must occur in *real time*: listen straight through without stopping.
- 7) the transcription must be represented in *felt time*, i.e., with no timecode: transcribe the material as best as possible, left to right, with proportional spacing of sound objects.
- 8) listen through, while transcribing, **three times** (not including the initial listen).
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- 9) how dynamics are represented is up to you, though the decision should be given careful consideration. two possible methods (or a combination of these) that occur to me are: 1) notate traditionally with *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, etc. symbols based on how loud the sounds in the field recording are, or 2) instruct the performer to play all the sound objects at approximately the same dynamic level of the ambient sounds during performance. other methods are welcome.

final score:

once the transcriptions are finished, they should be scanned and sent to the composer B&W (PDF or tiff). the composer will compile them into a final score for each performer (the composer will also make a transcription following the above rules). the vertical organization of the score will be randomized for each performer. one possible example below, if 3 performers:

[transcription '1']
[transcription '2']
[transcription '3']
[transcription '4']

performance:

performers interpret the notation on their instruments/sound-making devices. with each new sound object symbol, a decision must be made: 1) [external] sound/play the notated sound, 2) [internal] sound the notated sound in your head, or 3) [withhold] be silent, i.e., do not articulate that sound either internally or externally.

performers should read the score(s) left to right, at their own paces. there are no timers in this piece. performers may wander vertically, to either adjacent or non-adjacent transcriptions. the pitch ranges are separate for each transcription, but are malleable – that is, the performer can determine what the pitch range(s) are and change them at will, even during performance. when finished, remain silent. the piece is complete when all performers have finished.

**the title is from Samuel Beckett's novel, "Watt"*