

Portfolio

Cathy van Eck

selection of works for two or more performers

More information, videos, images, and text on all my works can be found on
www.cathyvaneck.net

In this portfolio you find a selection of my performances, that can be performed by a group of performers. I included a technical rider for nearly each piece. Max or PD patches (depending on the piece) are available, please write me if you are interested. Many of the pieces use specific material such as small loudspeakers or phones. I can give you more details on what is exactly needed, which models are easy to use etcetera.

The pieces are listed in order of amount of performers: it starts with pieces for two performers, and ends with an intervention for orchestra. Most pieces need an extra person controlling the patch and the loudness levels. This person is not listed as a performer, so for example Words, Words, Words. is listed as for five performers but a sixth person will be needed for controlling the patch and the loudness levels.

You can find more information, videos, images, and text on my works on www.cathyvaneck.net.

If you want to contact me for more information, questions, or technical riders do not hesitate to write me on info@cathyvaneck.net.

Music Stands (2011)

for two performers, three music stands, small loudspeakers, contact microphones and live electronics.

<https://vimeo.com/1099325631?fl=pl&fe=vl>

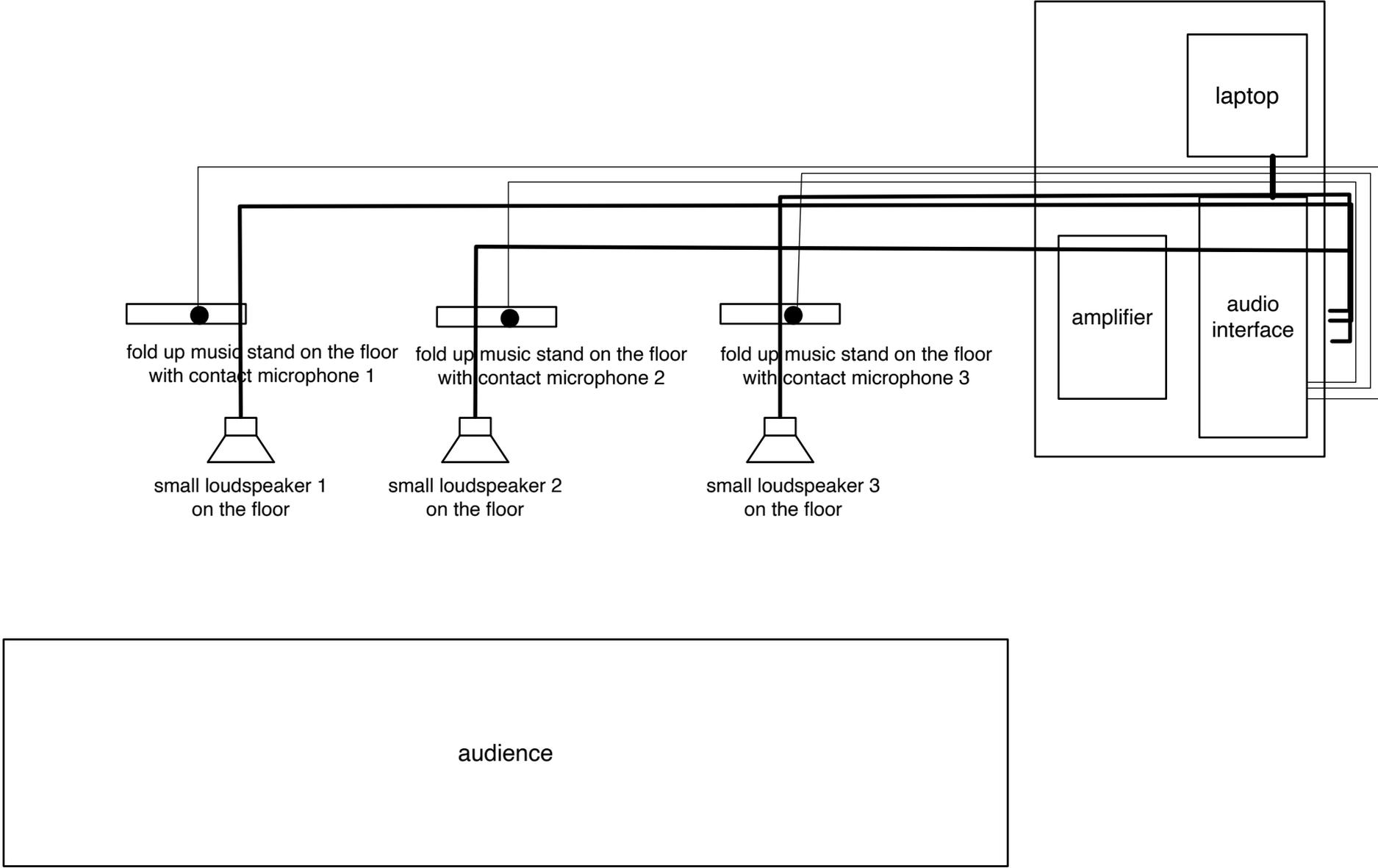
This is a duo version of my solo performance *Music Stands*. Instead of two music stands, three music stands are used, but the whole form of the piece is very similar.

What normally stays silent during a musical performance—a music stand—is creating the sound in this performance. Three music stands are unfolded at the start of the performance. The music stands are amplified using a contact microphone glued onto the stand and a small loudspeaker, placed on the floor. During the performance, the loudspeakers are placed on the stands. The vibrations of the loudspeakers are transmitted through the metal of the stands back to the contact microphones and in this way an acoustic feedback loop occurs. By changing the altitude of the stands, the distance between microphone and loudspeaker changes, and therefore, the acoustic feedback sound changes as well. The music stands are “played” by the performers similar to how commonly musical instruments are played. The performers search for the sound behind the score.



video still

Music Stands for Two by Cathy van Eck



Wings (2007 – 2008)

for three performers, big white shields, three microphones, one loudspeaker.

video: <https://u.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=XZLLiK5ZNhAiYdcmoXXW8nTIL4TJTyoBJIz7>

score follower video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKtxgK7D_58

One loudspeaker and three microphones are placed opposite each other. The volume is turned up, and acoustic feedback occurs between the microphones and speaker. Three performers manipulate the feedback by shifting foam-board panels around, creating new spaces with every movement and therefore also changing the space, in which the feedback can resonate. Depending of the placement of the shields and of the pitches of the feedback, the sound is processed differently by the computer.



© Silvana Torrinha

SET UP PERFORMANCE Wings

Cathy van Eck

quick answer: text or phone



slow answer: email cathy@cathyvaneck.net

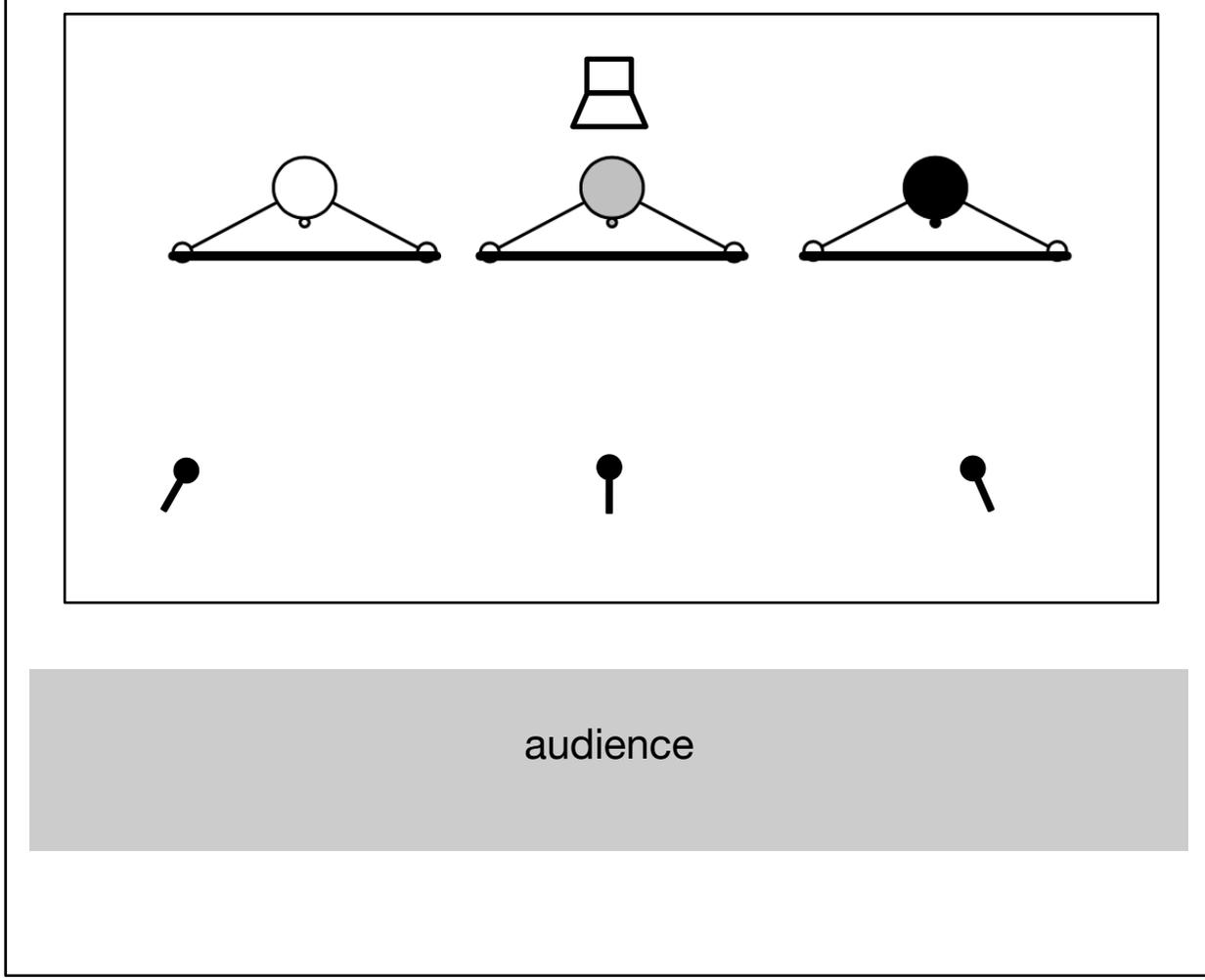


Table with computer and audio interface, next to the stage or in the dark or hidden in some way. All microphone and loudspeaker cables go to this table.

SET UP PERFORMANCE *Wings*

Cathy van Eck

quick answer: text or phone 0041 77 4383834, slow answer: email cathy@cathyvaneck.net

Organiser:

- one loudspeaker such as a medium or big genelec loudspeaker (not one of the smallest because it would be too soft. A similar loudspeaker is also fine.
- 3 shields: easiest to move with are foam board panels, used for example for foto exhibitions. Unfortunately this material is quite expensive. Measurements around 200x70 cm, but slightly different is okay as well, as long as the performers can hide behind the panel. You might also use cardboard or something similar, as long as it is light enough to handle.
- three microphones: condensator microphones with quite strong cardioid directional characteristics.
- three microphone stands, if possible small ones, with a height of around 30 cm.
- long XLR cables for connecting everything

Cathy:

- computer
- audio interface

Light:

- if possible a fade in at the beginning of the piece, and then quite “natural” stage light.

Short explanation:

This performance consists of feedback between one loudspeaker and three microphones. The feedback is manipulated by three performers with big white shields (made preferably of foamboard or other light material, 75 cm broad, 200 cm high) in combination with a Max patch. In the score the movements of the performers with the shields are notated. The Max patch processes the acoustic feedback between the one loudspeaker and the three microphones. Among others ringmodulation and pitch shifting is used for processing the feedback. Also, the loudspeaker is emitting a 18000 Hz frequency, directed at the microphone in the middle. As soon as there is a shield between this microphone and the loudspeaker, the signal is not received anymore by the microphone. The changes in this signal are used for triggering different presets in the audio processing. Much compression is used to keep the feedback soft and flexible.

We are prepared (2020)

Version for three performers, four chairs, sensors, four loudspeakers, two microphones and live electronics.

- see also the version for 6 instrumental performers.

<https://vimeo.com/485028005>

Chairs are equipped with loudspeakers and sensors are used and the voices of the performers are used as an input for the chairs and an extra chair is added. The piece stages four chairs in the room, each equipped with a loudspeaker. Sounds captured by microphones and breath and vocal noises are sent to the chairs. Three performers interact with the chairs by moving them and placing them in new formations. Every movement of the chairs is sent to the computer via sensors. At the same time, a centrally positioned microphone picks up the positioning noises. The actions affect the chair sounds as the chair sounds have an influence on the actions. The noises of the breath and the voices of the performers, amplified with special contact microphones, are integrated into this interaction process. The performers' bodies in their physical manifestation interact with the chairs brought to life in their existential materiality.

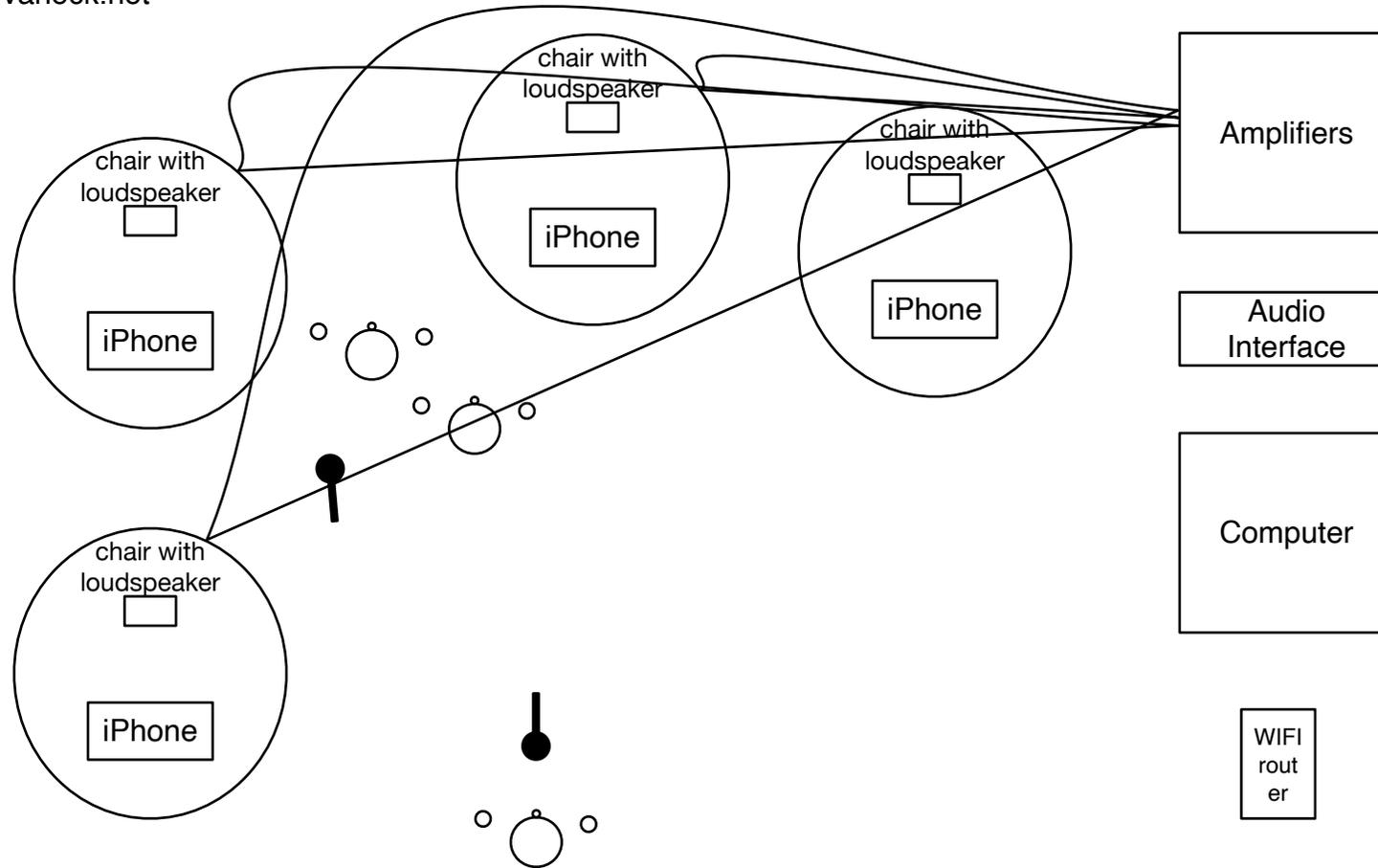


Technical Rider We Are Prepared Version for three performers

Cathy van Eck



cathy@cathyvaneck.net



During this piece three performers move four chairs around. Sometimes one of them moves in front of a microphone and makes soft sounds with their voice. The microphone signal is sent to the computer. The chairs process the sound in many different ways. There are iphones attached underneath each chair, and these control a max msp patch in the computer. The computer sends audio out to the four loudspeakers attached to the chairs. These loudspeakers are the sound sources for the piece (no PA is included). A fourth person should control all levels of the sound.

Material needed:

- four chairs (with the possibility of taping an iphone underneath. Please send me some pictures)
- one microphone like an sm 58 for amplifying soft voice sounds without causing feedback problems.
- one microphone that can feedback easily (most types of condenser microphones are good, for example AKG c1000).
- XLR cables etcetera for the microphones
- one computer that plays the patch.
- audio interface with at least 6 inputs and four outputs
- a mixing desk for all the incoming signals to the audio interface, or any other way (I often use an audio interface with eight inputs without a mixing desk).
- four iphones with the software installed for sending everything to the computer
- two two-channel amplifiers for the loudspeakers
- four loudspeakers for on the chairs (and cables)
- wifi router

Silver Breath (2018)

for three performers, interactive sound, aluminium foil, microphones and tactile transducers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feSZbNGvpb8>

A performance on our attempts to speak freely, to clearly express our ideas, and to convey all messages without any reflections.

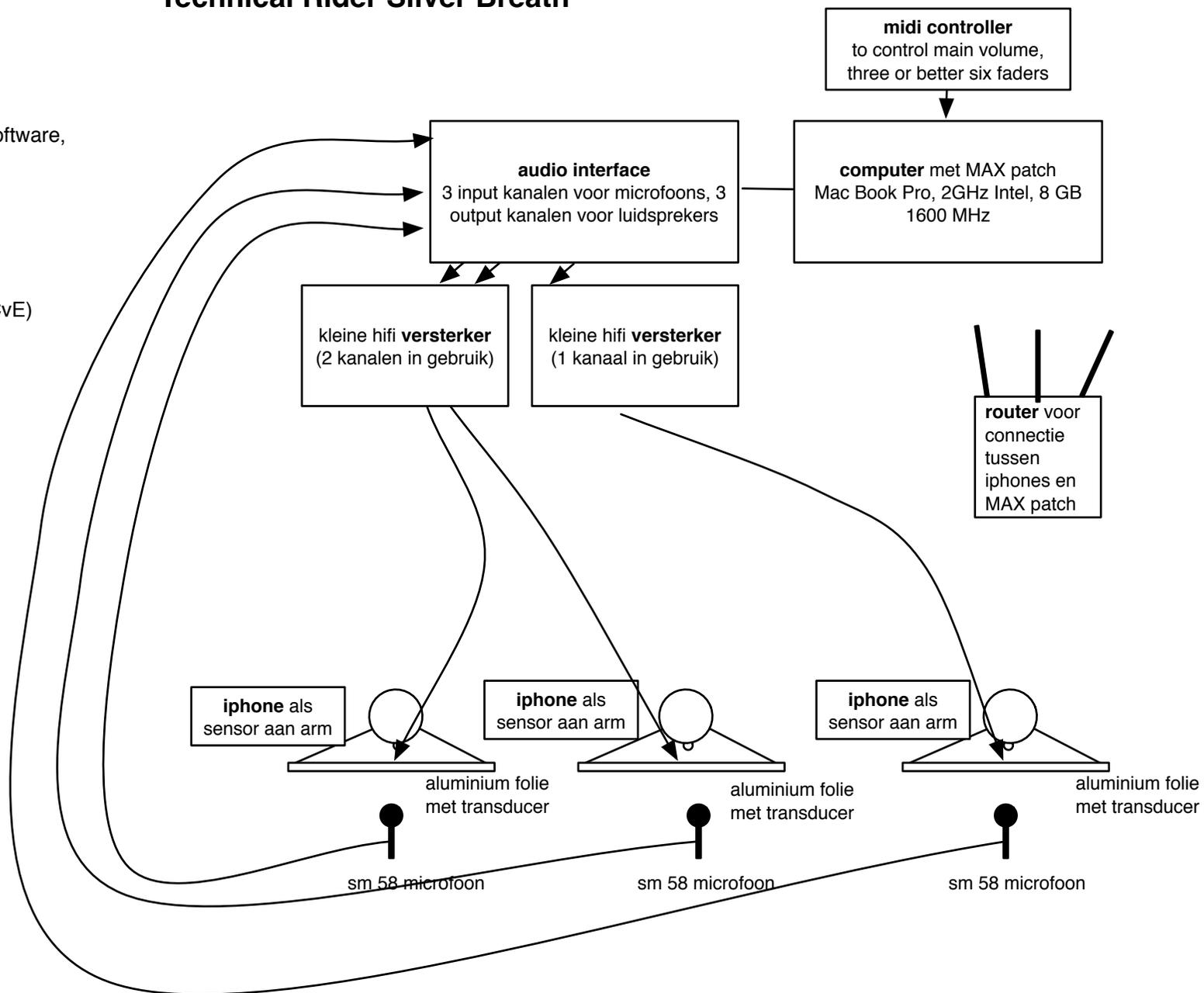
Live electronics are controlled by the performers through a smart phone on their arm. The piece uses a Max patch for doing all electronics. All sounds are diffused through transducers on the big aluminium foils hold by the performers.



Technical Rider Silver Breath

MATERIAAL

- 3 sm 58 (NADAR)
- XLR Kabels (NADAR)
- Audio Interface, 3 in 3 out (NADAR)
- Computer Mac Book Pro, MAX 7 Software, 2GHz Intel, (NADAR)
- midi controller (NADAR)
- 2 small amplifiers (CvE)
- loudspeaker cables (CvE)
- 3 tactile transducers (CvE)
- Aluminium Foil (CvE)
- router for WIFI signal for iphones (CvE)
- 3 iPhones (CvE)
- 3 iPhone sport cases (CvE)
- iPhone charging devices



La Nature dans le Miroir (2020)

for four performers, mirrors, four phones, four loudspeakers and live electronics.

<https://vimeo.com/715951930>

As a human being I try to observe nature by catching it. I make pictures of beautiful landscapes and recordings of bird sounds. But this process of catching is also transforming nature. I use trails made in the landscape so I can easily walk around, I leave the sound of my footsteps in the surrounding, and by travelling to for example the Ile St Pierre the loud boat sounds are added to the acoustics of the landscape. On a much larger scale, human-caused climate change modifies our environment in general. In a few decades, when the climate at St Pierre is substantially warmer, its nature will have changed also. The wind will probably blow through different trees, in which birds formerly living in more southern regions might live.

Inspired by these possible soundscapes of the future, in my piece nature is caught by a kind of mirror in the performers hand. Sensors on their arms are tracking the movements of the mirror. These sensor data are used to develop the sounds for the new soundscape. A loudspeaker placed on the heart of the performers diffuses the composition of this new nature. Every movement with the mirror triggers a sound from the loudspeaker on the performer. In the beginning these are local bird sounds, but they start to transform into non-local bird sounds, the birds who might live here in a few decades. The soundscape develops further in other kinds of artificial weird birds, and other sounds of the environment are added by the movements of the performers. At the end the performers move like birds themselves, and slowly “fly” around with their mirror-arm.



Outdoor performance under quite challenging circumstances by SoundTrieb.

Words, Words, Words. (2022)

for five performers, microphones, loudspeakers with cardboard covers and live electronics.

<https://vimeo.com/807535218>

In *Words, Words, Words* no words will be heard. I am looking for sounds and movements that give us a very minimal impression of someone speaking, someone trying to say something. I try to find borders of sounds and movements that are very remotely related to speech and singing. The piece looks for these small moments of phonetic communication, often falling back to moments during which our (body) language is silent again. Five performers stand side by side. All have a microphone in one hand and a loudspeaker in the other hand. A white cardboard is glued to the speaker. The sounds from the loudspeaker replace the words you would normally produce with your mouth. The mouth is—so to speak—detached from its usual place on the body and can now be held in one's hand. Only a minimal gesture of speaking remains: the microphone goes to the loudspeaker-mask and back again, and the microphone controls all the sounds coming from the loudspeaker with only this movement. The sounds themselves are as remote as possible from language: they are long and monotonous. Some variation slowly emerges throughout the piece, but most sounds are very remote of what would not normally come through a microphone for speech.

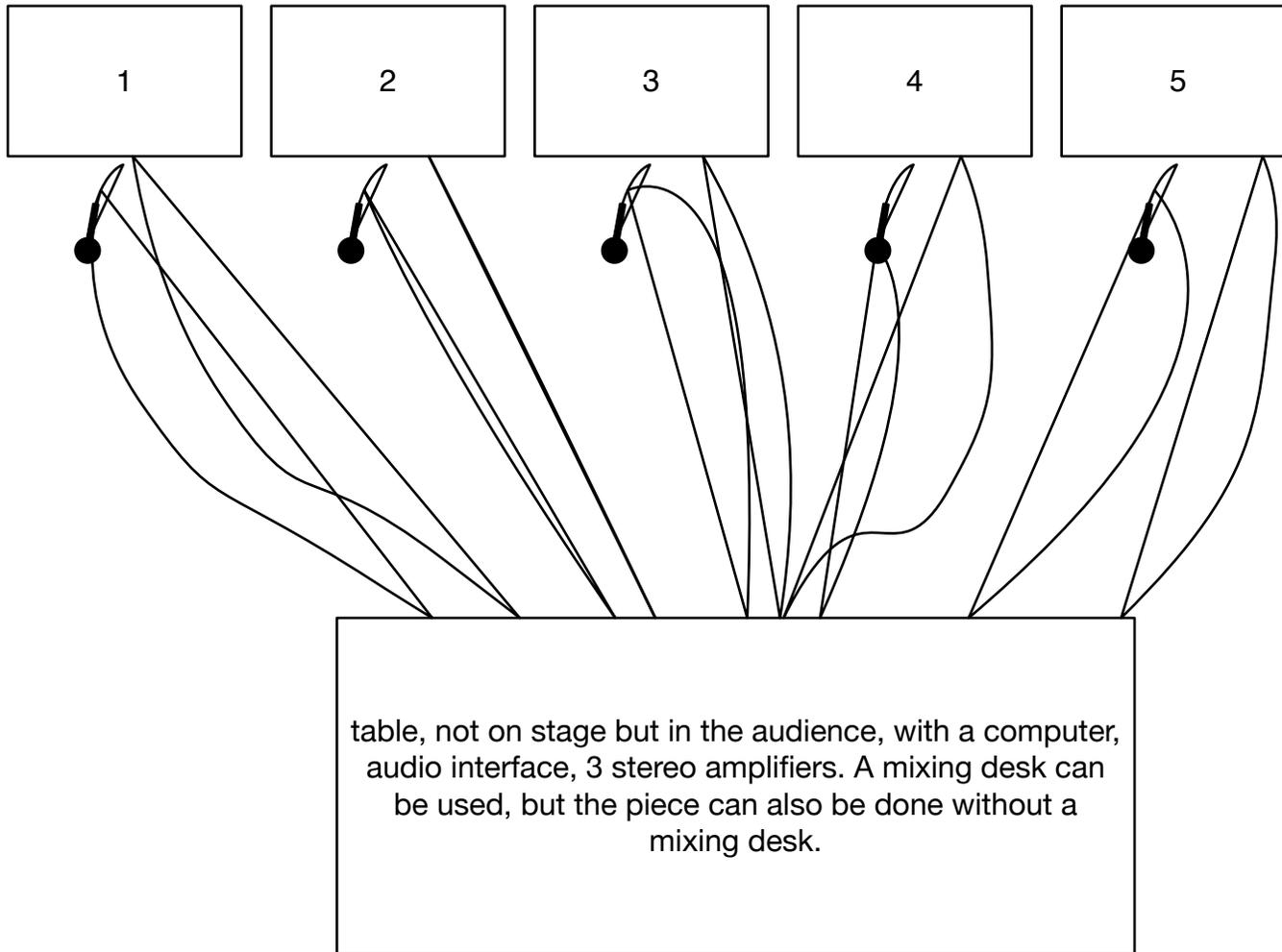


Cathy van Eck

Technical Rider for Words, words, words.

slow answers: cathy@cathyvaneck.net

quick answers: signal /whatsapp / telegram /sms [REDACTED]



Short explanation of the piece:

Each performer holds a loudspeaker mask (made from a loudspeaker and a piece of cardboard) and a microphone. The performers move the microphone to the mask during the performance. The amplitude of these microphone signals are used to control the sound processing in a Max patch. It takes time to achieve a good volume level for the microphones that avoids any leaking in from other loudspeakers than the one the performer wears and is still as responsive as possible to the loudspeaker signal of the performer. Please contact me to make sure that you do this in the right way and the set-up is functioning well. Whereas the performers should stand in a line in front of the audience, the table with technology should be either in the audience, or placed somewhere at the side of the stage.

Material needed:

- computer
- audio interface (at least 5 inputs / 5 outputs)
- mixing desk (optional)
- 5 sm58 microphones or something very similar. All microphones should have identical characteristics.
- 5 amplification channels (for example 3 hifi amplifiers such as small SMSL amplifiers)
- XLR cables
- all other cables to make connections between microphones / mixing desk / amplifiers / computer (depending on the in- and outputs of the equipment mentioned above).
- this piece works without PA. In a very, very big concert hall it might make sense to amplify the output signal (take care that the system of the data feedback still works well).
- 5 loudspeakers (I often use the Visaton BG 13P)
- 5 pieces of white cardboard (choose firm but light cardboard) attached to the loudspeakers for example with gaffer tape. Make a hole in the middle of the cardboard, so the middle of the loudspeaker is visible and the sound can be easily diffused through this hole.
- cables (without any plugs) from the loudspeakers to the amplifiers.
- you can either hold the loudspeakers in your hand or attach a kind of holding stick at the loudspeaker or some rubber band, so it is easier to hold the loudspeaker. It should be invisible to the audience though.

Favourite Pieces in Cardboard Boxes (2021)

for five till eleven performers, cardboard boxes, live electronics and many favourite pieces.

<https://vimeo.com/1045644222>

One by one, the performers come on stage and play a fragment of their favourite piece. Other performers carry boxes around, that record these fragments. By walking around these recordings are played back softly inside the cardboard boxes. More and more favourite pieces are packed in the boxes during the performance, forming a soft murmur of musical reminiscences.

There is no technical rider for this piece: every performer needs a phone and a small loudspeaker connected through mini-jack (I often use bluetooth loudspeakers with an aux/mini-jack input). The software for on your phone (using pdParty by Dan Wilcox) and score for this piece can be obtained by contacting me.



We are prepared (2026) (musicians version)

Version for six performers (any instrument or voice), four chairs, sensors, four loudspeakers, one microphone, two throat microphones and live electronics.

- see also the version for 3 performers.
- no documentation yet.

The principle of this piece is similar to my solo performance *Empty Chairs* and *We are prepared* for three performers. During this piece, the chairs evolve through different phases: they start with simply recording setting up sounds, then they amplify the nearly inaudible sounds played by the musicians, slowly starting to sample the musicians and playing by their own.

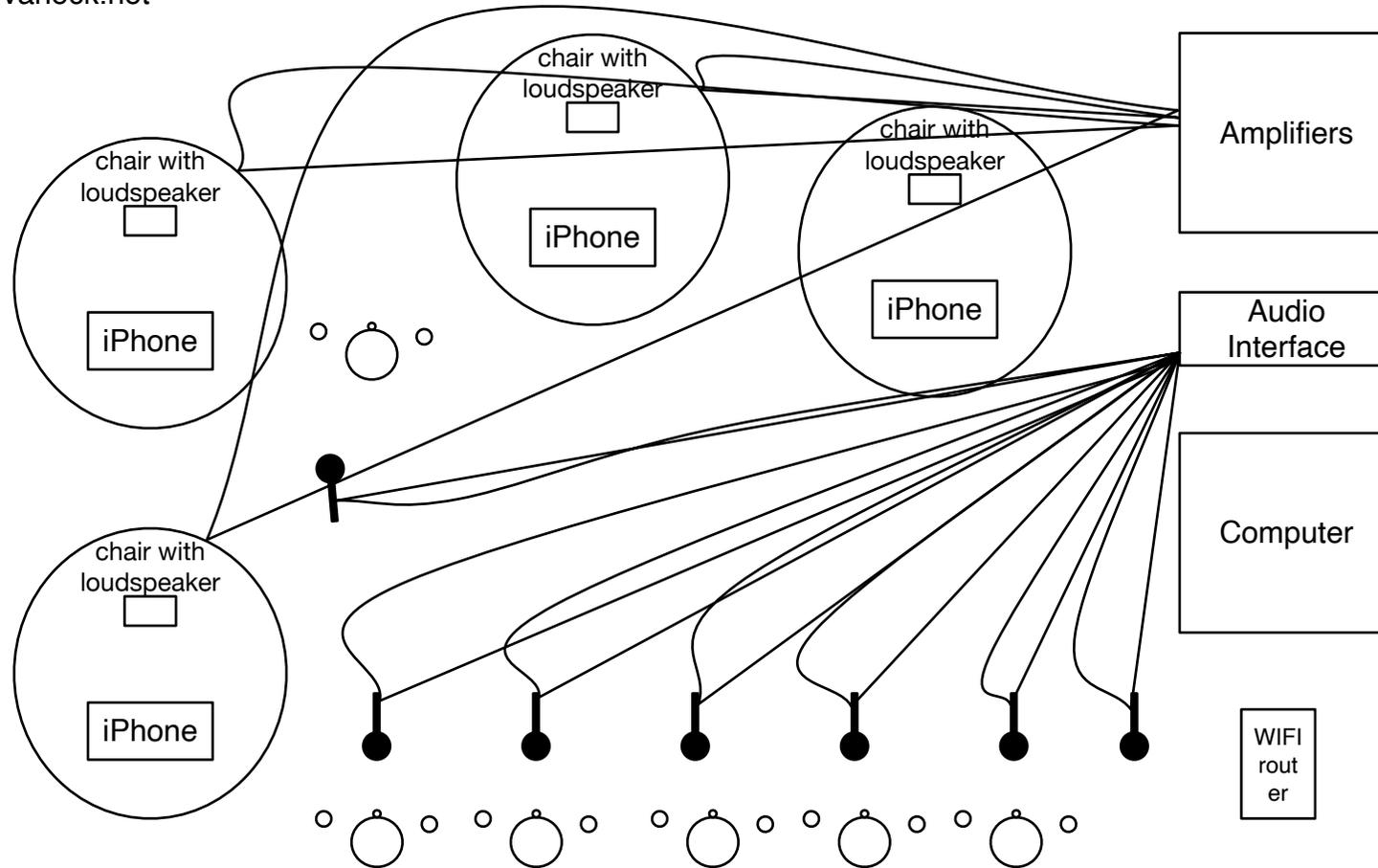


Technical Rider We Are Prepared Version for six performers

Cathy van Eck



cathy@cathyvaneck.net



technical rider We Are Prepared (six performers) 1/2

In this piece six musicians play their instruments / live electronics set up in a very silent way, but still clearly audible for the audience. They send their signals to the computer (with the help of microphones, contact microphones, or the direct output of their set up). During their playing several performers get up and move four chairs around. These chairs make the sound of the six musicians audible in many different ways. There are iphones attached underneath each chair, and these control a max msp patch in the computer. The computer process the inputs of the six musicians and sends audio out to the four loudspeakers attached to the chairs. Together with the six musicians these are the sound sources for the piece (no PA is included). A seventh person should control all levels of the sound.

Material needed:

- four chairs (with the possibility of taping an iphone underneath. Please send me some pictures)
- several microphones or contact microphones suitable to record the instruments without causing much feedback troubles.
- one microphone that can feedback (most types of condenser microphones are good, for example AKG c1000). This microphone is not assigned to one of the musicians.
- XLR cables etcetera for the microphones
- one computer that plays the patch.
- audio interface with at least seven inputs and four outputs
- a mixing desk for all the incoming signals to the audio interface, or any other way of being able to control the levels (I often use an audio interface with eight inputs without a mixing desk and use a midi controller for volume control).
- four iphones with the software installed for sending everything to the computer
- two two-channel amplifiers for the loudspeakers
- four loudspeakers for on the chairs(and cables)
- wifi router

De Beweging (2017)

for at least six performers, interactive sound, aluminium foil and tactile transducers.

<https://vimeo.com/1099329514>

Become part of the movement. Move up, down, to the right or the left. (De beweging is Dutch for the movement.)

There is no technical rider for this piece: every performer needs a phone and a small transducer loudspeaker connected through mini-jack. Other options for loudspeakers are possible as well (for example using more common loudspeakers). The software for on your phone (using pdParty by Dan Wilcox) and score for this piece can be obtained by contacting me.



De staat der natuur (2024)

text score for a group of musicians, performed before *De Staat* by Louis Andriessen.

This piece only meant to be performed directly after *De Staat* by Louis Andriessen. It is an example of my “situation-based” work that focuses on creating “reactions” on existing pieces.

As Louis Andriessen writes in his note for the score of *De Staat*, he agrees with Plato that:

abstract musical material - pitch, duration, and rhythm - is beyond social conditioning: it is found in nature. However, the moment the musical material is ordered it becomes culture and hence a social entity.

I would like to bring the pitches, durations, and rhythms of *De Staat* back to nature. Louis Andriessen has found them in nature, ordered them, and made them into a social entity. I would love to hear them while they are still unordered. How could I bring them back to their natural state? And does this exist at all, sounds beyond social conditioning? And can I find pitches, durations, and rhythms in nature that are not framed by my cultural background?

To explore these questions, all musicians perform the original composition *De Staat* with an essential change: they play the pitches according to the duration dictated by their individual breathing patterns. Instead of following the rhythm and duration that is notated, they play a pitch or chord as long as they are breathing out. They then breathe in again and play the next pitch or chord in the score with their next exhalation. For players of wind instruments, the sound produced is synchronous with the exhalation, but for other instrumentalists, playing instruments such as harps, pianos, and guitars the timing of the exhalation might just indicate the start of a pitch or chord (and the pitch might have stopped to sound already by the time the musicians finish exhaling).

Just as animals walk or fly around, pausing to utter some sounds, all musicians start to look for a new position in the hall. One after the other leave their place in the ensemble. After a few breaths (and thus notes), the musician moves to another spot in the concert hall.

The piece ends when the closest approximation to a state of nature seems to be reached. All ensemble members are completely dispersed at different places in the concert hall. Perhaps some of them even opened doors or windows of the concert hall and went out.

Evidently, there is no way out of “the state of nature” and therefore this last part of the piece should last forever. Since a performance of this piece probably takes place in a less utopian setting, feel free to end the performance abruptly, and continue with something else.

Valse triste op. 44 Nr. 1 (1903) und ein Versuch, die Musik einzupacken (2026)

Intervention for an orchestra, playing *Valse triste* by Jean Sibelius

This is another example of my “situation-based” work that focuses on creating “reactions” on existing pieces. This intervention was made and performed by the Berner Symphony Orchestra playing parts of *Valse Triste* by Jean Sibelius. I do not release any documentation of this intervention, because it highly relies on the unexpectedness of what happens. In case you are interested, please contact me for more details.

After playing the oboe for just three months, I was invited to play in an orchestra for the first time. The program included Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* Overture. I was very excited and took my part home with me after the first rehearsal and started practicing. What a disappointment! The second oboe part consisted of nothing more than a boring A repeated three times – instead of the rich variety I had heard from the orchestra.

I have always remembered this experience. How I would have loved to pack up the orchestra and take it home with me. And isn't it the same for all orchestra members? Isn't it both wonderful and terrible that the music only sounds right when everyone plays together? That each individual voice in the orchestra is always only a small part of the whole? And what about us, the audience? After all, we do it all the time: we try to take the music from the concert home with us. We stream our playlists as if we could buy music at the supermarket. But an orchestra in the living room doesn't even come close to sounding like an orchestra in a concert hall. With this feeling in my gut, the idea for my intervention was born—and the attempt to pack up Jean Sibelius' *Valse triste*."

In this piece, some orchestra members are allowed to pack up the orchestra and take it with them. The music that the orchestra is currently playing are captured and stored in special containers. Slowly the piece dissolves into many packages.