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7x7

for 4 electric guitars
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Dedicated to the ZWERM electric guitar quartet (Antwerpen)

The four electric guitars are positioned in the four corner points of a virtual square around the audience. The score is organized in a sort of chess board with 7x7 fields. Each field contains a musical phrase which duration is left to the discretion of the player. After finishing a phrase, the player makes a pause of an undefined length. Then he proceeds to the next motive and so on.

Each musician begins in one of the four corner fields of the grid. The entrance of the players is staggered. Player 1 starts with his phrase. When the maximum of the crescendo is reached, the second player enters, then the third and finally the fourth. Each player takes an individual path through the grid following the directions of the respective arrows. Each path describes a spiral that finally ends in the center field.

Here, the players improvise with the supplied pitches using structures that have already been played before. Never fall into the habit of empty virtuosity. Instead, floating colors and textures that sum up into collective sound are feasible.

At a sign of the first player, the improvisation ends. Each player follows a diagonal that leads to the corner field opposed to the one on which he started. There the piece ends.

Technical requirements

- Small guitar amplifier with built-in overdrive (like *Roland Cube-20x*)
- Volume pedal (like *Ernie Ball VP JR*)
- E-Bow

Material

The piece consists of several types of structures. The dynamics and duration are not defined and decided by players according to the global musical context – always striving to produce a collective sound together.

Drones: Sustained sounds produced with an E-Bow. The swelling and fading is accomplished with the aid of a volume pedal.

Chords: The attack is cut-off by the volume pedal which is opened afterwards so that only the resonance of the chord can be heard.

Morse: Strings are damped with the left hand. Tap onto the fingerboard with a finger of the right hand, producing a irregular morse-like rhythm.

Trills: To be played only with the left hand. Use the volume pedal to produce an alternation of *crescendi* and *decrescendi*.

Tapping: General fast inner movement modulated by *ritardandi* and *accelerandi*.

Tremolo: Played with two fingers of the right hand. The speed can be modulated by *ritardandi* and *accelerandi*. Use the volume pedal to produce an alternation of *crescendi* and *decrescendi*.

Accents: Single plucked notes – normal (sustained), Bartòk pizzicato (*secco*) or with ties.

Indications

As the sound quality of the 4 guitars should be very similar, the setting of the pickups and the amplifiers must be treated with utmost care. I suggest using a humbucker pickup as the general sound and a mellow and warm overdrive on the amplifier. For the chords, a cleaner setting with less distortion should be taken into consideration.

Drone sounds produced with the E-Bow should be generally soft and mellow.

The morse sound on the low E string has to be played with palm mute (P.M.)

Never use a plectrum, only your fingers!

Trills are always played with the fingers of the left hand.

Damp the strings with the left hand when tapping morse patterns with your right hand fingers.

Glissandi can be achieved either by string bending or by using a whammy bar on the guitar.