

STARPERMEABLE

38'

For at least three musicians and processed environmental recordings

To the memory of Moshe Matyas (1925-2020)

Adam Zuckerman
Spring-Fall 2020

STARPERMEABLE is the fourth piece in a series of pieces, the inspiration for which arose from an engagement with the poetry of Paul Celan — and, in particular, the following poem:

In die Nacht gegangen, helferisch,
ein stern-
durchlässiges Blatt
statt des Mundes:

Gone into the night, helperish,
a star-
permeable leaf
for a mouth:

es bleibt
noch etwas wild zu vertun,
bäumlings.

something remains
for wild wasting,
treeward.

(English translation is a combination of those by Katharine Washburn and Pierre Joris.)

These pieces derive from the poem their conceptual frameworks and overall affect — thematically interweaving conditions of absence, presence, distance, closeness, as well as potential modalities for growth and collectivity. These are woven through conceptual and compositional strategies and frameworks — of translation, transparency, imitation, imbrication, covering, copying, simultaneity, spontaneity. The scores variously notate and prompt players towards individual and collective score- and sound-making processes. The resulting pieces are projections of these worlds assembled of bodily, instrumental, and environmental sound.

The pages below contain:

- Documentation of the studio album released on Nueni Recs (Berlin) Pg. 3
- Instructions for a concert realization of *STARPERMEABLE* Pg. 5
- Brief descriptions of the other pieces in the series Pg. 9

STARPERMEABLE

A collection of melodies
 as a constellation of stars
 in the direction of a tree
 in celebration of life

The melody is a thing of memory. It collects time and suspends it in apprehension of a whole. It is a sequence of points, and it is itself a point, a part cut from the virtual fabric of sound. The melodies here composed open a space of possibility, becoming only through the process of their realization. Filtered by this process, they emerge folded, many-faceted — like crystal, or stone. Heard, unheard, reheard, they suggest a listening in all temporal directions. Expanding and contracting like breath, here: melody crystallizes as harmony, harmony unfolds as melody.

To the memory of Moshe Matyas (1925-2020)

Studio album scheduled for release in December 2022 on Nueni Recs (Berlin, Germany)

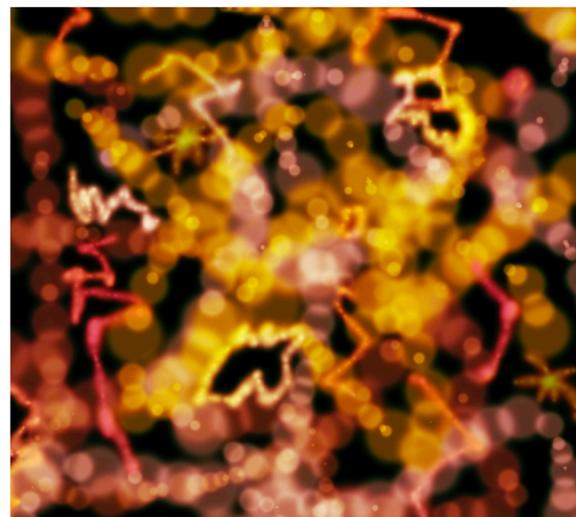
Track list:

one
two
three
four
five
six
Gone Into The Night
seven
eight
nine
ten
eleven
twelve
Something Remains For Wild Wasting
thirteen
fourteen
fifteen
sixteen
The Direction Of A Tree
seventeen
eighteen

Credits:

Kanoa Ichiyangi, hum, viola
 Zaq Kenefick, hum, harmonica
 Juan Marroquin, hum, flute
 Dylan Marx, hum, guitar
 Kristyna Svihalkova, hum, percussion
 Adam Zuckerman, composition, recording,
 mixing

Mastered by Sam Torres
 Album art by Mal Studio



IN DIE NACHT GEGANGEN, HELFERISCH,
EIN STERN DURCHLÄSSIGES
BLATT
STATT DES MUNDES:

ES BLEIBT
NOCH ETWAS WILD ZU VERTUN,
BAUMLINGS.

A poem by PAUL CELAN (English translation is a combination of those by KATHERINE WASHBURN and PIERRE JORIS)

Gone into the night, helperish,
a starpermeable
leaf
for a mouth:

Something remains
for wild wasting,
treeward.

To the memory of MOSHE MATIAS (1925-2020)

A collection of melodies:

1 AS A CONSTELLATION OF STARS
2 IN THE DIRECTION OF A TREE
3 IN CELEBRATION OF LIFE

The melody is a thing of memory. It collects time and suspends it in apprehension of a whole. It is a sequence of points, and it is itself a point, merely a part cut from the virtual fabric of sound. The melodies here open a space of possibility, becoming only through the process of their realization. Filtered by it, they emerge folded, many-faceted — like crystal, or stone. Heard, unheard, reheard, they listen in all temporal directions. Expanding and contracting like breath, here: melody crystallizes as harmony, harmony unfolds as melody.

KANO A ICHIYANAGI Viola	KRISTYNA SVIHALKOVA Percussion
ZAQ KENEFICK Harmonica	SAM TORRES Mastering
JUAN MARROQUIN Flute	
DYLAN MARX Guitar	ADAM ZUCKERMAN Composition, Recording, Mixing

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STARPERMEABLE — Performance Instructions

A concert performance of *STARPERMEABLE* consists of at least three musicians spread across the stage with three pairs of stereo monitors at the back of the audience (or interspersed between the musicians on the stage, if it is not possible to place them behind the audience). The performance alternates between melodies played by musicians and processed field recordings emanating from the stereo monitors. It is important that the field recordings be played through stereo monitors locally placed (not through an overhead loudspeaker system).

Equipment needed:

- Four pre-recorded tracks provided by the composer:
 - a track containing eighteen melodies, distributed to each musician
 - three tracks of processed field recordings, one for each of the three pairs of stereo monitors

- Three pairs of stereo monitors (six monitors total):
 - three playback devices each loaded with one of the three field recording tracks

- Each musician needs:
 - a pitched instrument of their choosing
 - a playback device (such as a cell phone)
 - in-ear headphones that allow the musician to leave one ear open to the space

The process for putting together a performance of *STARPERMEABLE* is as follows:

1. Preparation for performance — musicians make audio recordings

Each musician involved in the performance receives a single track recording of eighteen melodies consisting of long tones, wherein each melody is separated by a silence.

Having listened to no more than a small sample of the recording in advance — just enough to gain a sense of it — the musician prepares to record themselves playing on their chosen instrument while listening to the melody track through headphones. This recording need not be of high quality. It will only be heard by the musician during the concert performance.

Once ready, the musician listens to the recording and reproduces the melody on their instrument as they hear it. A pitch should be chosen instinctually, without deliberation, in the octave most appropriate to the instrument. Once a pitch is chosen musicians should avoid deviating from it. Divergences and convergences in pitch are expected and welcome.

In general, entrances, exits, and transitions from note to note should feel natural and proceed in accordance with one's instrument (breath, length of the bow, decay of instrument, and so on). At the start and end of each melody, musicians need not play the note immediately and need not immediately cease playing it when the corresponding note in the recording ceases. Internal to each melody, one should more closely follow the contour from note to note but without abruptly jumping to the next note at the very moment it is heard. A natural transition from note to note should be sought. Divergences in duration and transitions between notes are expected and welcome.

For sustaining instruments, onsets and offsets should be tapered.

For attack/delay instruments — such as piano, guitar, keyboard percussion, etc. — a more or less steady pulse is found. Pulse speeds should vary from pitch to pitch and can be very slow (or very fast). For the most part, once a pulse is found for a given pitch, it should be adhered to. However, musicians may occasionally alter the pulse once within a given pitch.

If necessary, configure the recording so that it is panned to only one side of the stereo field. Musicians will listen to this recording during the performance through one ear and will leave the other ear open to the space.

2. Performance

Musicians are scattered across the stage, only loosely collected. Musicians need not be symmetrically placed, but some consideration should be given to the layout.

The six stereo monitors are placed in pairs behind the audience. If it is not possible to place the monitors behind the audience, they should be placed on the stage, interspersed between and slightly behind the musicians. The three pairs of speakers should be roughly equidistant from one another (each pair stays close together).

Melodies

Each musician has their instrument, a playback device queued with the track they recorded (not the track they were initially sent), and in-ear headphones. One earbud is placed in the ear, while the other ear is open to the space. The recordings made by each musician function as an individual audio score to be listened to during the performance and with which they repeat the process of reproduction described above.

All notes should be played quiet but clearly present, and non vibrato.

In the performance, there are several ways to deviate from the audio score. These deviations should be intentional and infrequent, never becoming the norm. No musician should utilize every option:

— For all musicians there is the option — *up to five times in a performance* — of not playing a note heard in the recording. Throughout the duration of this chosen note, musician should remain quiet, still, and poised to play the note that follows. Always play the next note.

— For all musicians there is the option — *up to five times in a performance* — of substituting one's note in the recording with a note being played by another musician. This substitution should not occur immediately but rather after some time has elapsed from the onset of the other musician's note, like its shadow. Always return to playing one's own recording.

— For all musicians there is the option — *up to five times in a performance* — of substituting a pitched sound for a noise sound. This is made by producing a noise on one's instrument (such as bowing on the bridge for strings, breath sound for winds, knocking on the body of an instrument for attack/delay instruments, and so forth). Always return to playing a pitched sound.

— For all musicians there is the option — *up to two times in each of the eighteen melodies* — of humming in addition to playing a note on their instrument. Hum with a closed mouth. It should be quiet, taking breaths as needed. Humming is always in conjunction with playing, and pitch should be roughly matching, but in different octaves, if necessary.

— For all musicians there is the option — *only one time in a performance* — of substituting one of the eighteen melodies with the noise of some small object or objects, such as the rustling of a leaf (or a few leaves), the crumpling of a piece of paper, rubbing stones, etc. This action may last for the entire duration of that melody or occur somewhere within the melody's duration, lasting at least as long as one of the notes in the melody. This action should be taken no more than once per musician during a performance. It need not be taken by all (or any).

— For attack/delay instruments there is the option — *up to two times in a performance* — of simply playing their note once without repeating it in a pulse. This single note can occur anytime during the corresponding note's duration in the recording. Always return to playing a pulse.

Field recording playback

Six stereo monitors are positioned in three pairs behind the audience. Again, if this is not possible, they should be placed on the stage, interspersed between and somewhat behind the musicians. In the case of their being on the stage, exact placement will depend on the number of musicians present as well as the size of the stage. They need not be symmetrically placed. In either case, pairs should be roughly equidistant, and consideration should be given to their layout and to the progression from the first to second to third recordings.

There are three processed field recordings that are played at different points in the piece. They occur after melodies 6, 12, and 16. Each pair has an accompanying playback device loaded with one of these three processed field recording tracks. The recordings are configured with digital silence so as to last the entire duration of the piece while sounding only during their respective sections. In advance of the performance, three musicians are assigned to initiate the playback. At the start of the performance, these three musicians begin by initiating playback before taking their seats.

Time

All musicians gather off of the stage to coordinate the start of their playback devices. Once they all hit play/start, musicians enter the stage and all take their seats except for the three musicians assigned to initiate the field recordings. These three musicians go to their assigned speaker pair and initiate its playback recording at the 1' mark of their own individual playback device. These three then also take their seats. Melodies begin playing at 2'30". This preparation should not feel rushed: if the time required to initiate playback and settle on the stage exceeds the amount given, additional time can be added by incorporating the appropriate amount of digital silence at the beginning of all of the tracks and adjusting accordingly. The break down in time is as follows:

START

0' Musicians enter stage and take their seats. The three musicians assigned to initiate the field recording playback go to their respective speaker pair.

1' The three musicians initiate field recording playback and take their seats.

2'30" Melodies begin.

...

After the melodies begin, musicians simply follow their own recording and the various possibilities for deviation outlined above (pg. 7). After the final melody, musicians should hold the silence for a short time.

Other pieces in the series:

1.

Leaves for a Mouth

20', 2019

For spatialized, multi-media playback. The score instructs a group of people on how to make a set of recordings (at home and outside near the home) and how to situate speakers and other objects in a performance space. The participation of many people is encouraged.

2.

The Direction of a Tree

20', 2019

For one or more musicians playing any melodic instrument and other objects, with electronic playback using different kinds of recordings made by the musician(s) and emanating from different sources of amplification (speaker monitors, bare speaker cones, headphones).

3.

Something Remains For Wild Wasting

open duration , 2020

A sound installation using several kinds of recordings (home audio, field, studio); different kinds of speakers (speaker monitors, bare speaker cones, headphones); and other objects (chairs, lighting, paper, large piles of leaves).

A person encounters the installation as an insular, darkened, slightly obscure environment. A wide and deep bed of leaves covers most of the room, softly rustling — the result of sub-audible vibrations emanating from speaker cones spread throughout the room. In one part of the space, a loose collection of speaker monitors from which are heard dense, pulsating layers of environmental recordings. In another part of the space a configuration of chairs, and on each chair a pair of headphones. Each headphone is separated from its pair by severing the bind that connects them, forcing one to hold the headphone up to the ear in order to listen. In each separated headphone is a different instrumental recording of a set of melodies. Unbeknownst to the spectator, the frequencies of these melodies have been subtracted from the environmental recordings. Sitting with the headphone recordings engages the multiple layers of the installation — physical materials, kinds of speakers, kinds of recordings, modes of listening — which weave together the dynamic configuration of the environment and coalesce its core image. The implications of this space of the negative: an absence with the potential for presence, distance with the potential for closeness, isolated individual with the potential for collectivity. We encounter things that are, even when they are not; and things that are not, even when they are: the light of a star, the transparency of a leaf, the direction of a tree.

