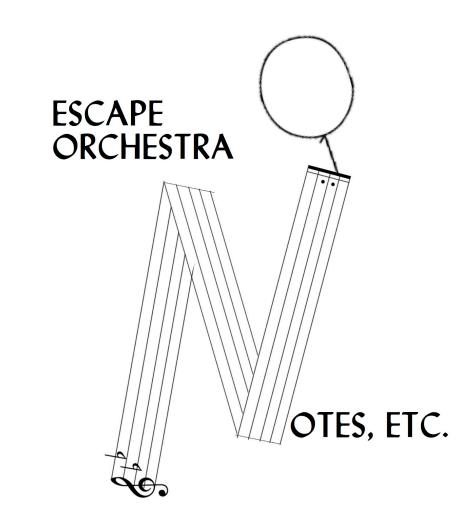
Lauren Sudbrink ESCAPE

ORCHESTRA Made in the United States of America///MMXVIII Notes, commentary, etc.



Published on the occasion of Lauren Sudbrink's exhibition "Escape Orchestra" at Roman Susan, Chicago March 18-21, 2018 www.laurencsudbrink.com www.romansusan.org



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With Escape Orchestra, Lauren Sudbrink continues her investigations into endurance performance, the sonic and material properties of breath. and how sound can be reorganized. Sudbrink will fill Roman Susan with over 1,000 manually inflated balloons, trapping the artist inside. Once movement is no longer possible. Sudbrink will pop each balloon for "escape" ~ recording the sequence for an audio edition. The performance will be on view through the window of the gallery, and once Sudbrink has "escaped" visitors will be invited inside to experience the residual elements of the work.

This accompanying publication features essays, responses, uncanny similarities, and found materials of relevance to the exhibition's premise from five poets, artists, thinkers, writers, and performers. This booklet thus serves as an expansion or, to use a thematically relevant term, a series of ledger lines on Sudbrink's performance and ideas.

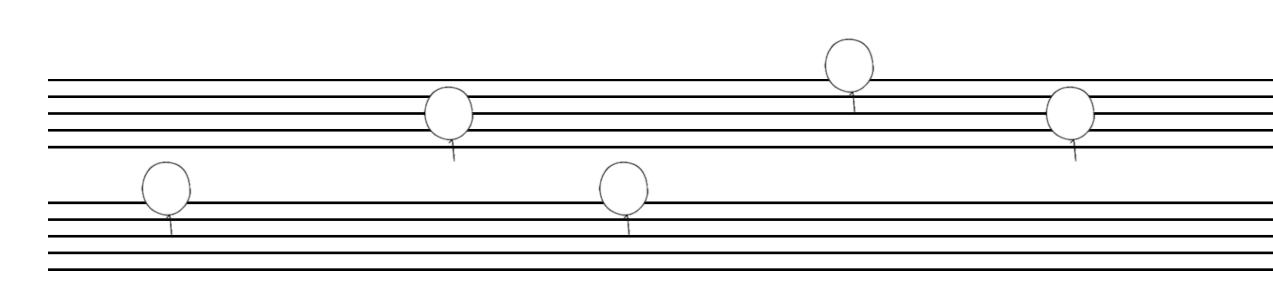
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There is a hole inside of me

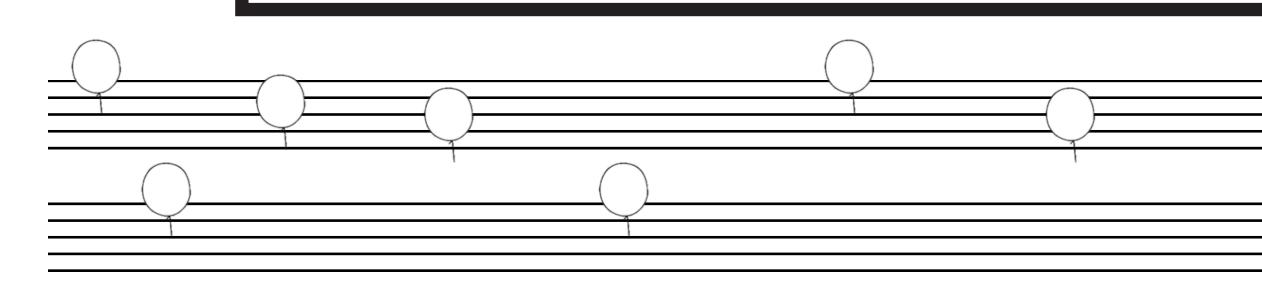
There is a hole inside of me shaped like a tiny collapsed tunnel behind the grocery store in a post-rave suburb. This is during what was the pre-opioid crisis. This hole is shaped like a tub of Cool Whip, because it's vegan, and shaped like their middle and ring fingers, because getting fingered is vegan, and like a pair of high-waisted silver shorts from Topshop and menthol cigarettes, the shorts long enough to cover the beadaches, dizziness, sore throat, emphysema, lung, throat and gum cancer, existential nausea, hairy inner thighs, and chunkiest cellulite.



Which exhaustion do you prefer?

I considered getting laser hair removal because a man, again, he said something about my body hair so I looked at the groupons and had a lot of cash at the time and then I was like wait. This is my body, my body, my hair, mine.

Tired, we made out in a CVS and at my apartment she said my most beautiful detail is my mustache. My queerness, never the same, is always mine. Her hand in mine on the street, she curled her lips onto mine, sat her ass down on my palm and wiggled. This was in public and it mattered. We had the waiter take our photo. We walked along Hubbard, it was March 12 and already Saint Patrick's Day in Chicago, the river already green and drunk. That weekend we made out in front of the Trump Tower and back at our staycation hotel room I listened to her sing as she showered. I am whole again, near her, close by, humming under the water, the splashes and drips.

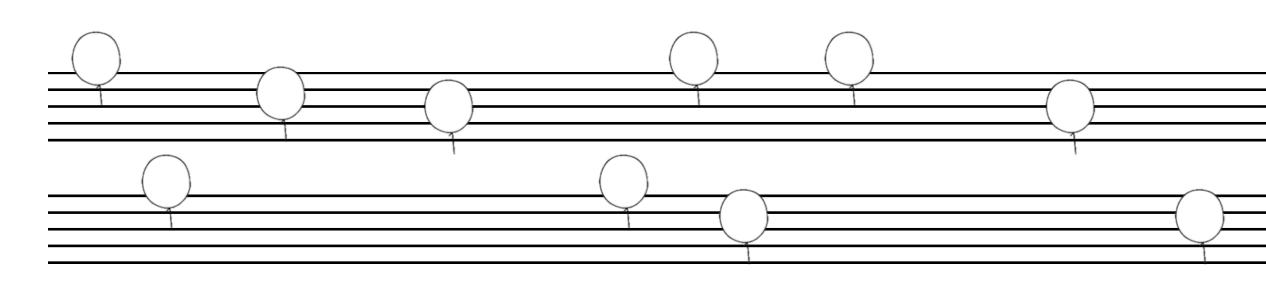


Another painting of a woman's back

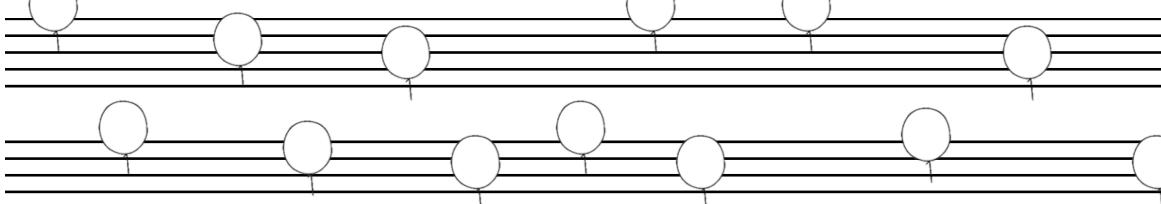
I see a painting of a woman's back, she is about to dip into a bathtub, or she is sitting in front of a large bouquet of lilies or turning around to look you in the eye over her shoulder. Or maybe it's a photograph taken from behind, an art historical reference, she is walking or running or another tattoo of a woman's back on someone's arm.

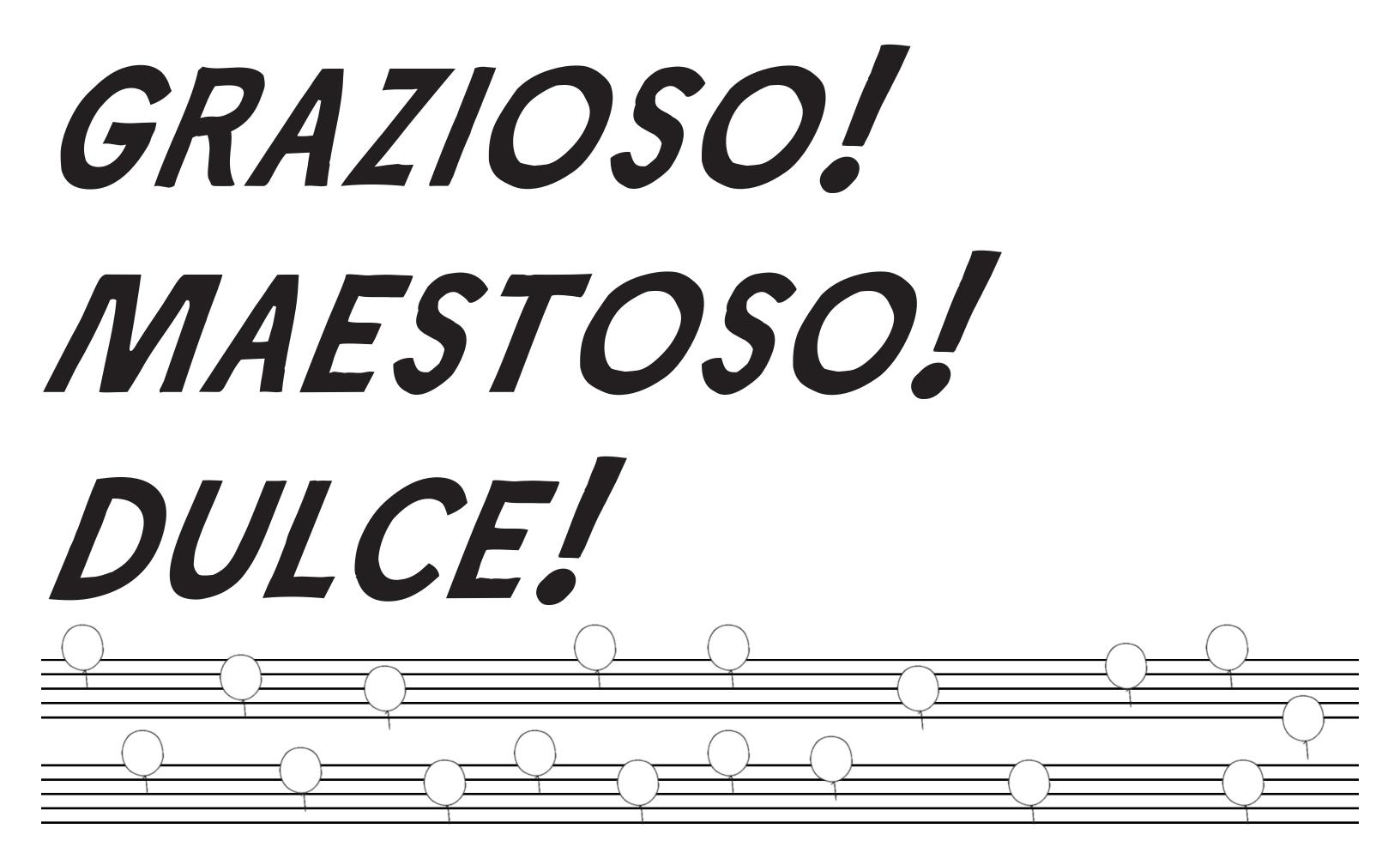
A woman sits in the backseat of a parked car on Cermak, her forehead on the headrest, her hair in a bun, slumped, shoulders slumped too. Is she high or is there a baby next to her? She is the mother in my dreams, the woman from behind.

Again and again I dream of giving birth, over and over, ever since puberty I dream of my fertility, of endless labor, overdue pregnancies, bearing down and holes ripping. Impregnated by my neighbor's older brother, by uncles and cousins, by celebrities and exes. In this last dream I deliver seven babies, one pops out after another.



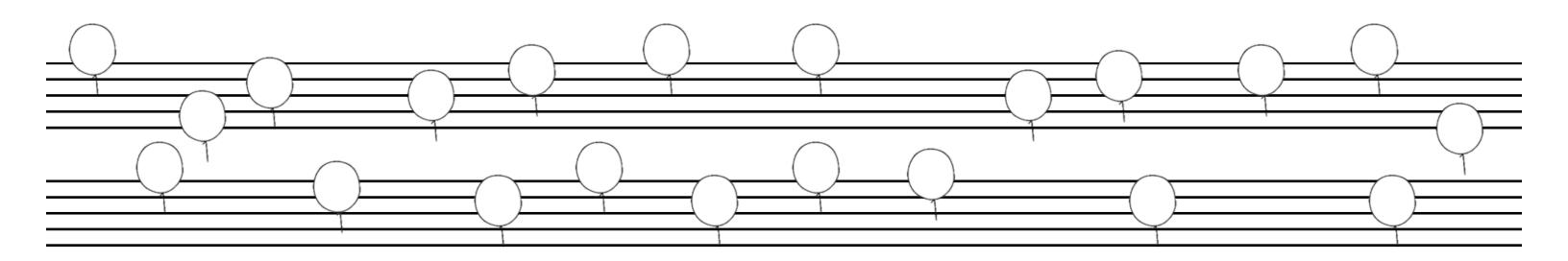


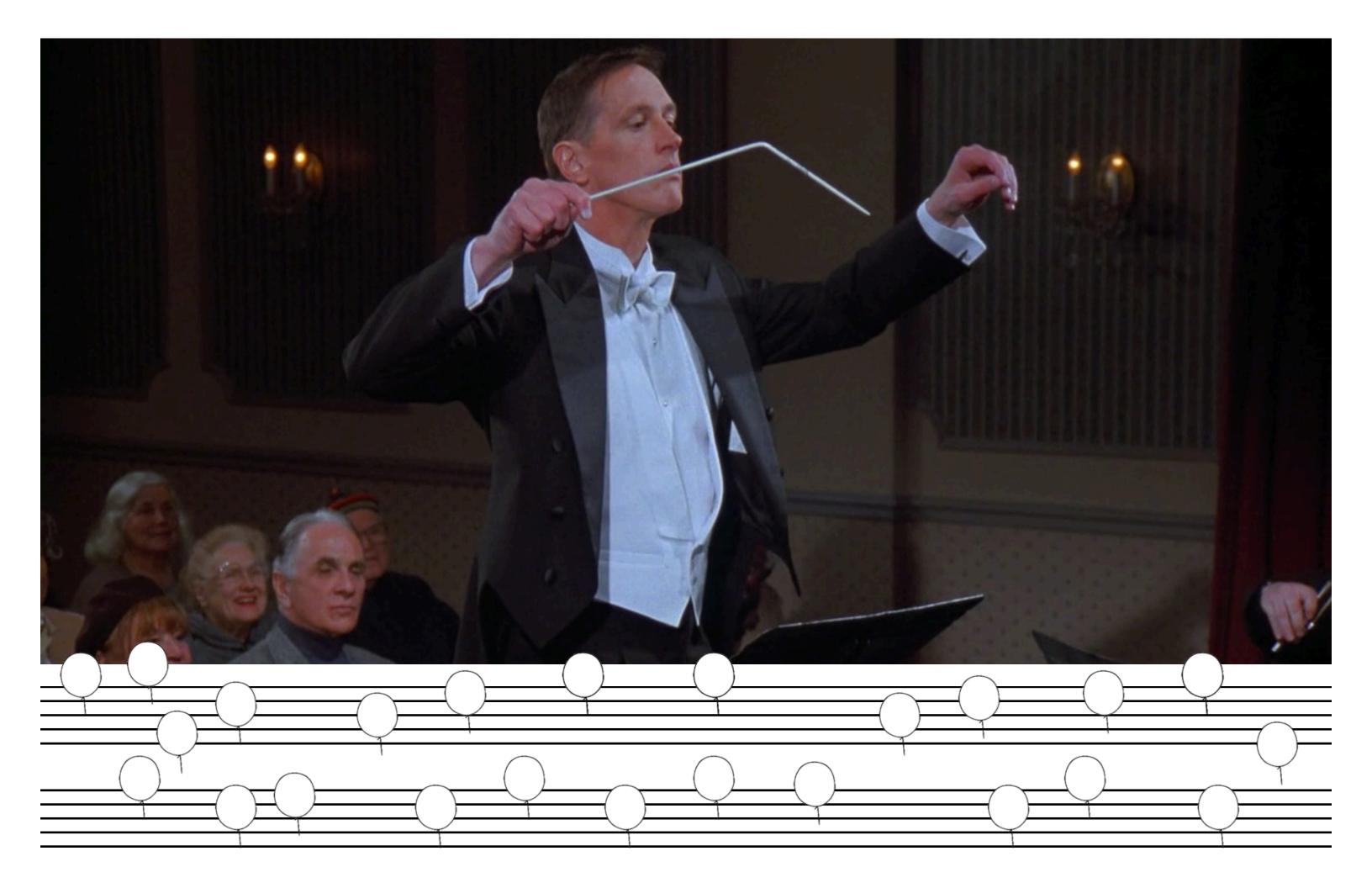




CHRIS REPRES

The Maestro at the Bar Or, The Image of the Conductor





On the television show Seinfeld the character Bob Cobb, conductor of "The Policeman's Benevolence Orchestra," insists on being called, by friends and lovers alike, "Maestro." We are meant to infer that Cobb's mania is a product of his conducting a lower end orchestra, either a marker of insecurity or a symptom of entirely unearned confidence. While on a date, the character Elaine makes the mistake of calling him by his birth name:

Maestro: You know, I'm sorry I didn't mention it earlier, but actually I prefer to be called Maestro.

> Elaine: Excuse me?

Maestro: Well, you know, I am a conductor.

> Elaine: Yeah, so?

Maestro:

Oh, I suppose it's okay for Leonard Bernstein to be called Maestro because he conducted the New York Philharmonic. So he gets to be called Maestro and I don't.

Elaine:

Well, I mean don't you think that he was probably called Maestro while he was conducting, not in social situations. I mean his friends probably just called him Lenny.

Maestro:

I happen to know for a fact, that he was called Maestro in social situations. I once saw him at a bar and someone came up to him and said "Hello Maestro, how about a beer". O.K. So that's a fact.

How does Bob Cobb think of Leonard Bernstein? What could it mean that, even in intimate social gatherings (note that "beer" is a more affable symbol of leisure than "wine" or even "drink") Bernstein was referred to by his profession? While the accuracy of Cobb's story is arguable,1 what we can glean from Cobb's inferiority complex is not only a coveting of respect (the joke being that Bernstein is one of the most revered conductors in history) but his inability to distinguish between personal and professional life, something Elaine on the other hand, is wholly able to do. Yet, Cobb's demand is not entirely uncommon, particular in the realm of authority figures - "Mr. President," "Boss," "Officer," to name a few possible examples whose titles are synecdoche for their subjectivity. Asking "why don't we call all orchestra conductors 'Maestro'?" opens up an inquiry that touches on the authority of orchestra conductors and how we perceive them.

On Quora, a "questions and answers website," a (notably anonymous) question was posed:

Why is there a conductor in an orchestra? Don't the musicians know the music?

"Jimmy Levi, probably a music major" answers:

Have you ever run a rehearsal? I ran a few string quartet rehearsals — it's hard. You have to manage your rehearsal time to make sure you cover all the passages you need to. Hell, it's difficult getting 4 people in a room together, let alone 100.

The conductor of an orchestra does all this — planning and running rehearsals. Running rehearsals involves communicating musical ideas to the musicians efficiently, so conductors must be master communicators.

My rehearsal was a piece of cake compared to what a conductor actually does. I wrote the piece I was rehearsing, so I knew exactly how I wanted each passage performed. A conductor has to spend hours and hours studying the music to try and figure out how to perform someone else's music. If the musicians did score

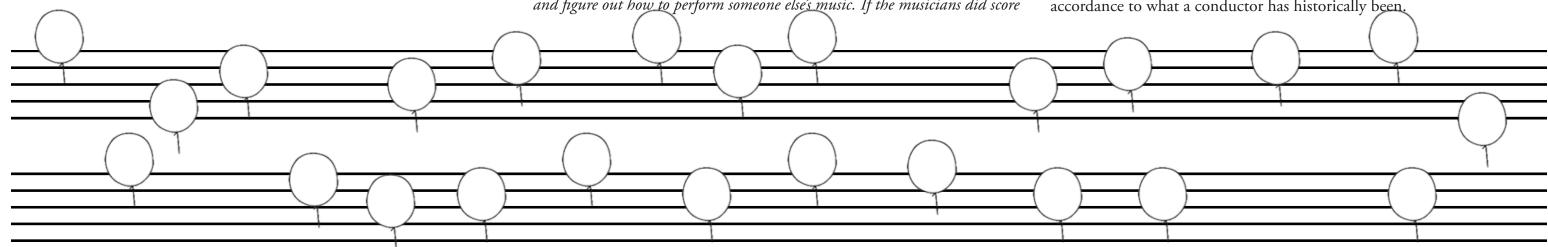
study instead, then you would have to reconcile 100 different opinions about how the piece should be performed.

Performance of music has 3–4 layers. It begins with the composer, then the score, then (where applicable) the conductor, then finally the musician. The conductor isn't a necessary middleman in small chamber ensembles. An orchestra has far too many parts to be leaderless.

What Jimmy Levi, probably a music major gets at, is a longstanding truism of the conductor, which we can trace all the way back to 1913 in Lavignac and Laurencie's Encyclopedia of Music:

Artists, as we are all aware of, are a difficult lot – bohemian, demanding, visionaries who, without a proper supervisor, will spin into pure chaos. This is why we look to the bourgeois, who take the form of curators, collectors, taste makers, critics, and institutional directors, to tame and temper these woolly personalities. As Lavignac and Laurencie suggest, this is no different, despite perhaps an immediate reticence to associate a chamber orchestra player with bohemia, when it comes to the makeup of an orchestra. Jacques Attali, in his seminal book, Noise: The Political Economy of Music, makes this point crystal clear: The ruling class- whether bourgeois industrial or bureaucratic elite - identifies with the orchestra leader, the creator of the order needed to avoid chaos in production. It has eyes only for him. He is the image it wishes to communicate to others and bestow upon itself. 2

As a thought experiment, think for a moment about the image of a conductor. Our immediate thought might go to signs: the baton or the tuxedo. We might also think about their expressions or movements: serious, poised, arms outstretched, rapidly moving, hair (if they have any) disheveled and moving wildly. Of course, the conductor must also act in accordance to what a conductor has historically been.



In summary, the orchestra leader must possess the qualities of a leader of men, an always difficult task that is more particularly delicate in the case of artists. Let us consider this conductor for an orchestra. Their movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. They conduct the orchestra with a step a little too quick. They bend forward a little too eagerly; their eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the audience assembled. Finally they bow for the finale, an inflexible stiffness like that of some kind of automaton while holding their baton with the recklessness of a tight-rope-walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which they perpetually re-establish by a light movement of the arm and hand. All this behavior seems to us a game. They apply themselves to chaining their movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; their gestures and even their voices seem to be mechanisms; they gives themselves the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. They are playing, they are amusing themselves. But what are they playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: they are playing at being a conductor in an orchestra. There is nothing there to surprise us. The game is a kind of marking out and investigation. The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the conductor of the orchestra plays with their condition in order to realize it.

In 1970, Portsmouth Polytechnic School of Art student John Farley, was chosen to be the conductor of the Portsmouth Sinfonia, an orchestra made up of individuals who were unable to properly play their chosen instruments. Gavin Bryars, the Sinfonia's co-founder, recalls, "(Farley) was chosen because he looked most like a conductor. He studied all the photos...he had long black flowing hair. He looked terrific. He was completely incompetent as a musician...he wouldn't know a beat if he saw one...in a sense he's rather like a mime artist." If a conductor acts the way they act because they must explain their role as a conductor -i.e. it would not make sense for the conductor to bring us a pizza during this concert (unless of course the score called for it), and if they are simply fulfilling a social function (acting a certain way), and therefore denying their own autonomy (their choice to be a conductor), what can be said about Farley, who steps up to the rostrum to conduct an orchestra, having studied what a conductor looks like, but not how to be a conductor? What Farley does, is ultimately critique the notion of surrendering subjectivity to professionalism on its own terms. He is no more a conductor as I am Jean Paul Sartre,3 who I entirely plagiarized (with a few tense and pronoun changes) in the preceding paragraph.

DAILY EXPRESS Friday March 8 1974

Roll over Beethoven, and make room for the worst conductor in the world

By Jill King

about their failure.

own way.

Lost

Varley, for example, tries very hard to conduct, and recently has learned even to read music. But most of the time the orchestra goes its

"Sometimes," says John, "I have lost them altogether. Then we stop, and start from the beginning.

"The audience don't mind. They're usually killing them-selves with laughter."

selves with laugneer. Today the orchestra that started out as a college joke wins a wider audience, with the release of its first record

THE WORLD'S worst orchestra is returning to London, ignoring popular demand that it stays away. Conductor John Varley, Conductor John Var

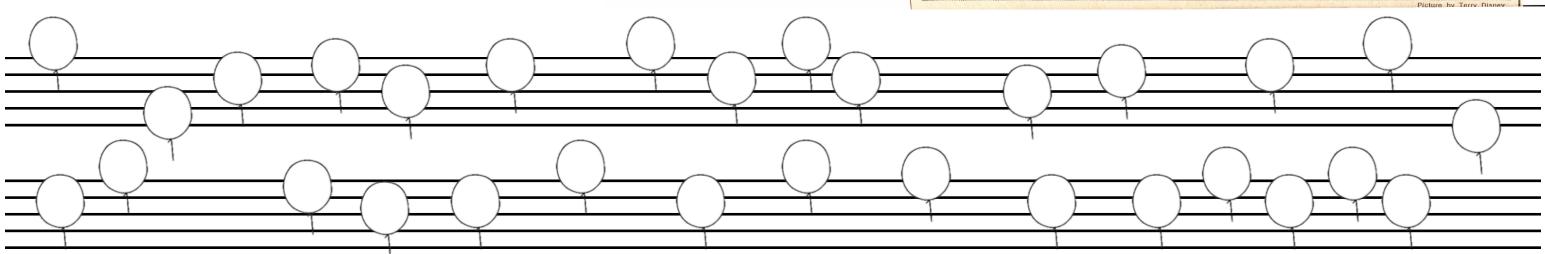
Conductor John Varley, aged 25, will bring the 25 members of the Portsmouth Sinfonia to the Mermaid Theatre next Sunday for what he describes as a "major concert."

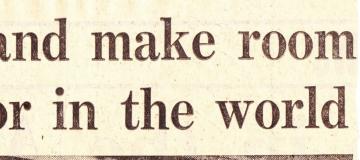
"major concert." Most music lovers think of it as a major disaster. For the orchestra members are not only totally untrained in their instruments—but as soon as they start showing signs of improving they face the sack. The odd thing is, however, that the Mermaid will prob-ably be packed with people enjoying the sound of the Portsmouth Sinfonia murder-ing Mozart. Beethoven, and any other of the greats they can think of. It has happened before—a

A Daily Mirror article on "the worst conductor in the world," John "Varley" (misprint or name changed for the sake of protection?)

Article courtesy of the collection of Suzette Worden







A constant in 21st century life, is this inability to distinguish our own freedom from our performed labor. Unlike Sartre's glib diagnosis however, an awareness of one's performativity, our exquisite precariousness, can and does lead to other possibilities. Farley's (or any of the number of individuals in the mid-20th century onwards who recalibrate the idea of "conductor" or "orchestra" either conceptually, or just by their marginalization from its tenets) gesture reflects an undesirable image of something desired. This is not strictly as a critique of that position, although it does comment on how the social function is mediated by those in power (the same way that citing Sartre might show the signs of a good, intellectually curious writer working in the European tradition of the humanities, but writing his ideas down verbatim and publishing them as one's own are not). Yet, that this is achieved by Farley truly trying to be the best conductor he can possibly be, which isn't simply mimicry, but caring enough to be risky. The fruits of that risk open up a line of analysis and inquiry: what could it mean to be a conductor who can't conduct, and how might that, like any good art, possibly subvert expectations - of the ruling classes or otherwise - and show other possibilities? 4

In a later episode of Seinfeld, Cobb returns, boasting an "old conductor's trick I learned from Leonard Bernstein" (note, Cobb does not ever call Bernstein 'Maestro' himself). The trick: not wearing pants before a performance. Hanging the pants from a clothes hanger beforehand, keeps a "perfect crease." So distracted is Cobb by (yet again) his own attempt at conductor mimicry, that he fails to notice his crooked baton (used as pool cue in a close quarters billiards game earlier in the episode.) He attempts to press onward, raising the baton, and the small orchestra dutifully follows (playing the music convincingly). Yet, this symbol, non-coincidentally flaccid, becomes too much for the Maestro, and he exasperatedly gives up. So obsessed is he, with the image of performativity – in title, clothing, baton - that he cannot fulfill any number of functions without them. As a metaphor for our own contemporary situation, in which we continually reevaluate the various forms of our performed labor, we must remember not to lose sight of the image of this labor, not to valorize it (and thus the systems behind it), but to remember what it is a stand-in for.

Notes

1. Frank Strauss recounts, "On numerous backstage visits, I was always told that I should address Lenny as Maestro, which I dutifully did." As this quote suggests, "Lenny" might have been just as intimate a nomenclature.

2. Jacques Attali, Noise: The Political Economy of Music. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977: 67.

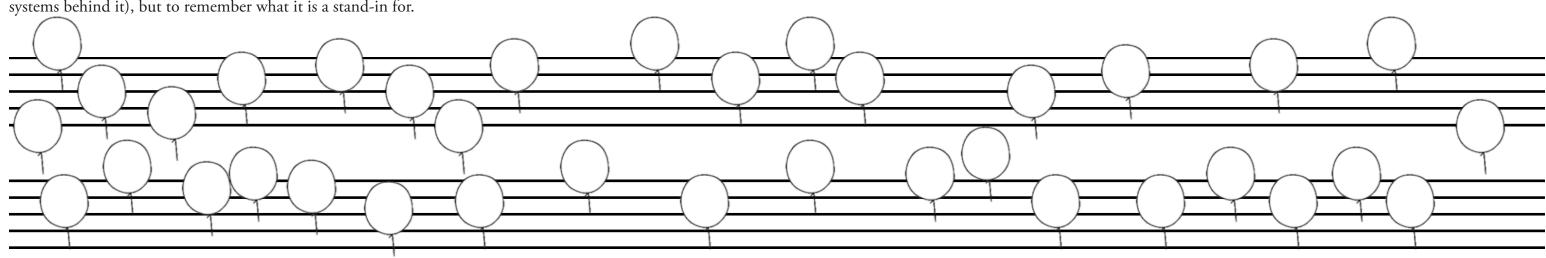
3. This paragraph is a slightly reworked version of the story of the waiter in the "Bad Faith" segment of Being and Nothingness. Here is the original text:

Let us consider this waiter in the cafe. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Finally there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tight-rope-walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually re-establishes by a light movement of the arm and hand. All his behavior seems to us a game. He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures and even his voice seem to be mechanisms; he gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter in a cafe. There is nothing there to surprise us. The game is a kind of marking out and investigation. The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the waiter in the cafe plays with his condition in order to realize it.

Further, what sets Farley apart from a conductor Sartre explicates himself: "It is not that I do not wish to be this person or that I want this person to be different. But rather there is no common measure between his being and mine." Farley, we could argue, wants the conductor to be different. As a further editorial, Sartre's classism in this particular essay is something astounding.

4. There may be a tendency to see amateurism in our contemporary moment, in which deskilling is a virtue good enough to be President of the United States, as a wholly negative approach. The difference between Donald Trump and John Farley is that the latter isn't attempting to convince anyone that they are actually the one in power. Farley may look like a conductor but it is clear he cannot conduct – the point being perhaps a reconsideration of the nature and expectations of the role. Trump, while a terrible leader, is not questioning the tenets of leadership (although his inabilities raise constant debate on what being a "good" leader is, but this is an effect of Trump not his aim). What I am getting at by advocating self-awareness of one's performed labors is the possibility of rediscovering one's potential freedoms through, like Sartre, an awareness of their labor choices but, unlike Sartre, how these choices do not have to dictate their (performed) behavior. Using one's inabilities to recalibrate ruling class desire could be one way of doing this.





Conductor archetype as seen as in the standard bearer of archetypes: The New Yorker cartoon.

Lauren Sudbrink

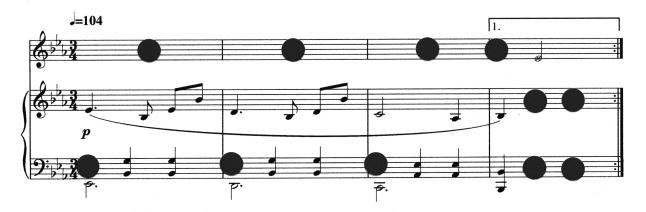


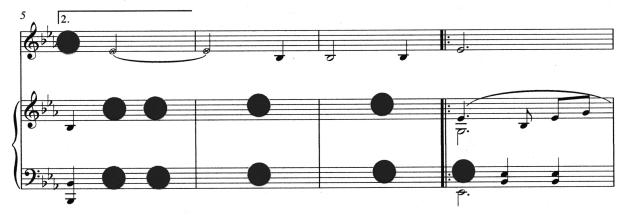
Lauren Sudbrink hails from the upper mid-west of the United States, where she completed her MFA in photograph at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her work looks at the ways in which embodiment attains shape and form through such cultural mediations as art practices, performative labor, and music making. Recent investigative works include "Wish Piece," a meditation on the possibilities and limits of gift economies via the public burning of Joss wish paper, and various ongoing approaches to Erik Satie's seminal composition, "Vexations," that calls for the performer to play the work 840 times. Her work has been shown in venues as varied as Blue Star Company Art Museum in San Antonio, TX, The Littlest Gallery in Corvallis, OR, and the publications Average Art, the Dialogist, and Art Ascent. She was a member of the ROOMS performance group, and contributes yearly to Egresswasm, an annual publication and performance event centered on a faux naif political institution.

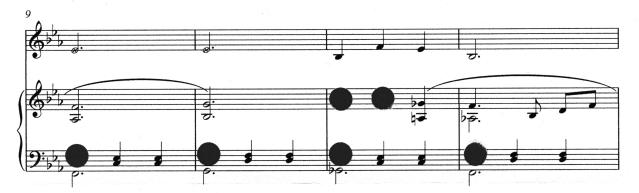
At Rest

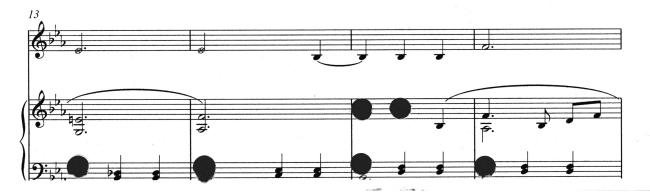
The "At Rest" series is an extension of major thematic concerns of "Escape Orchestra." Through an arduous process of hole punching, the rests of a select score are removed, rendering the composition without any silence, and thus taking on an erratic and zany character, perhaps indicative of the soundtrack of our ongoing demand to always perform.

Hans Lang, Bert Reisfeld and Erich Meder





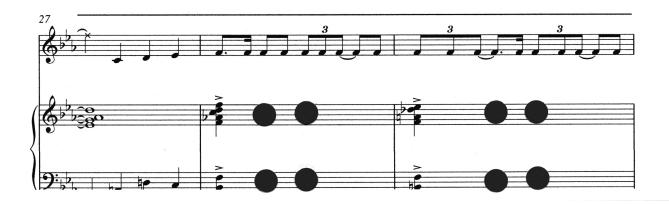


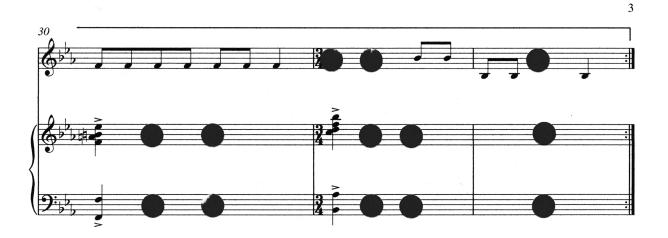


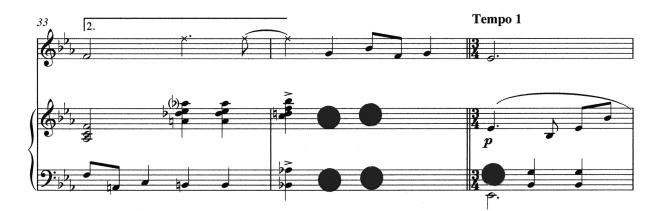


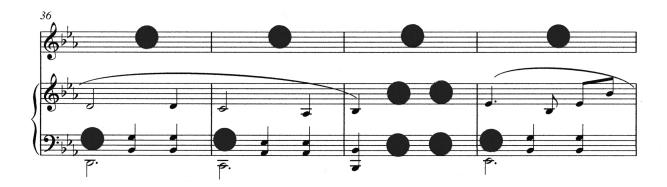


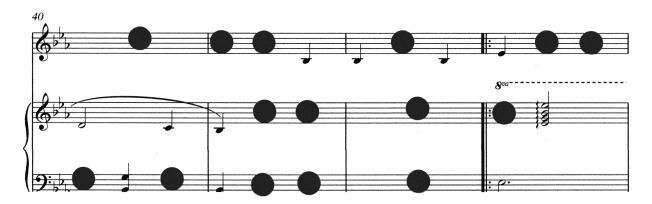


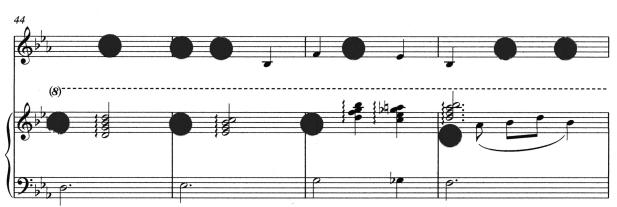


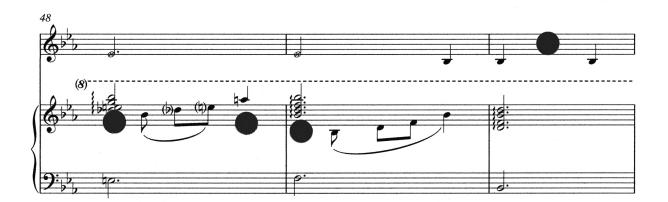


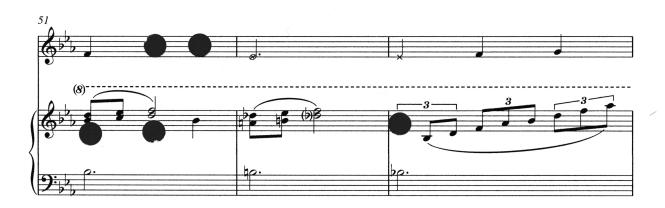


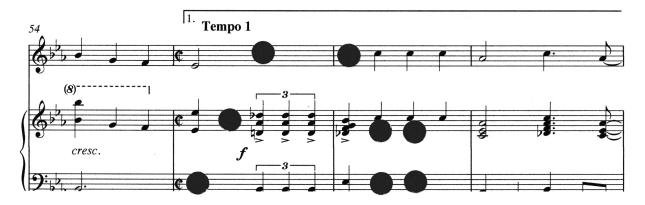




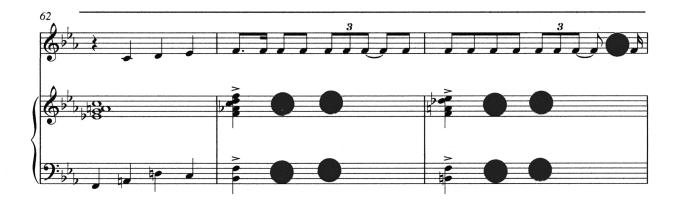


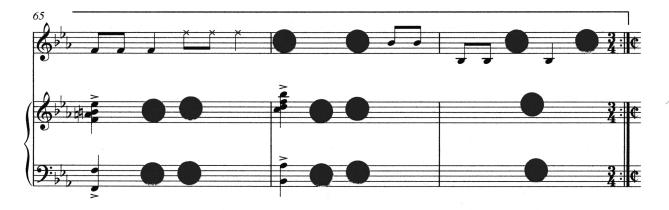






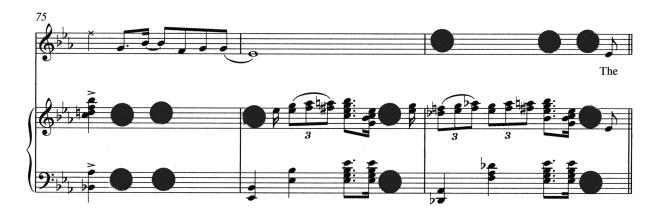




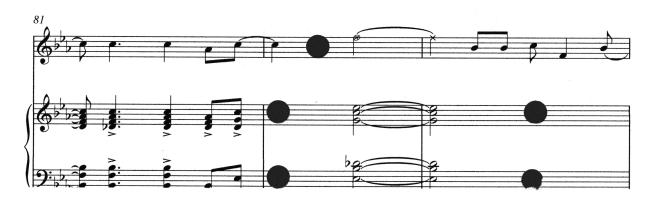


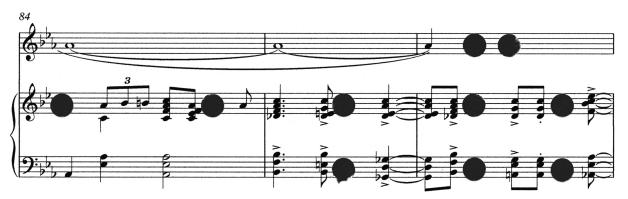


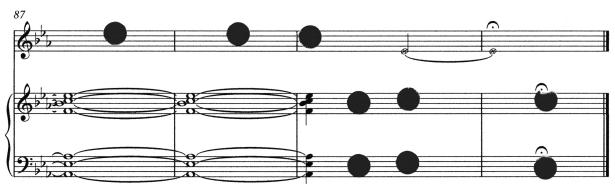






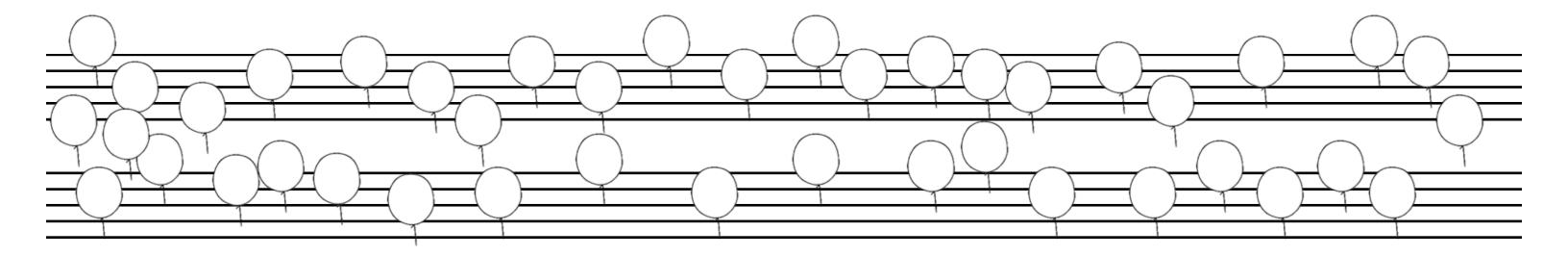




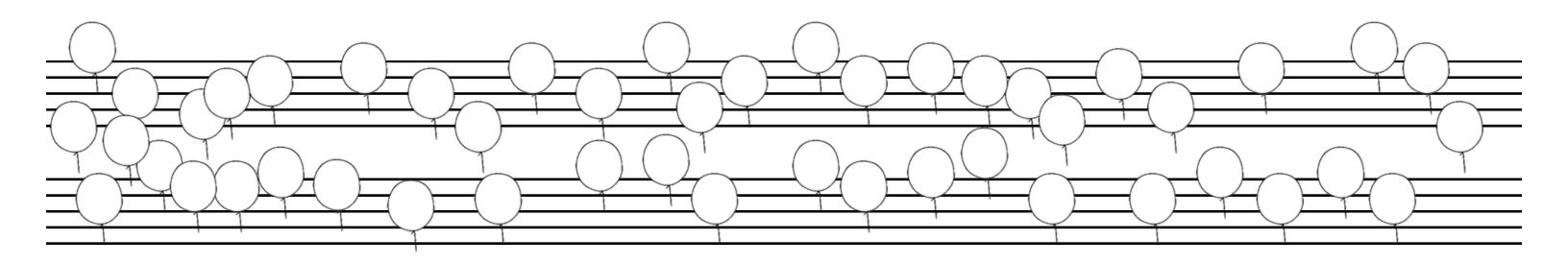


SORRIA AZADI

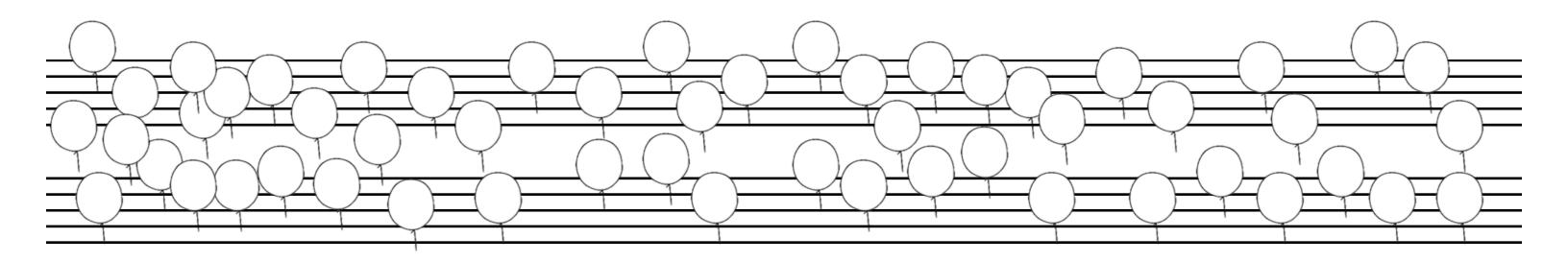
Garden of Evil





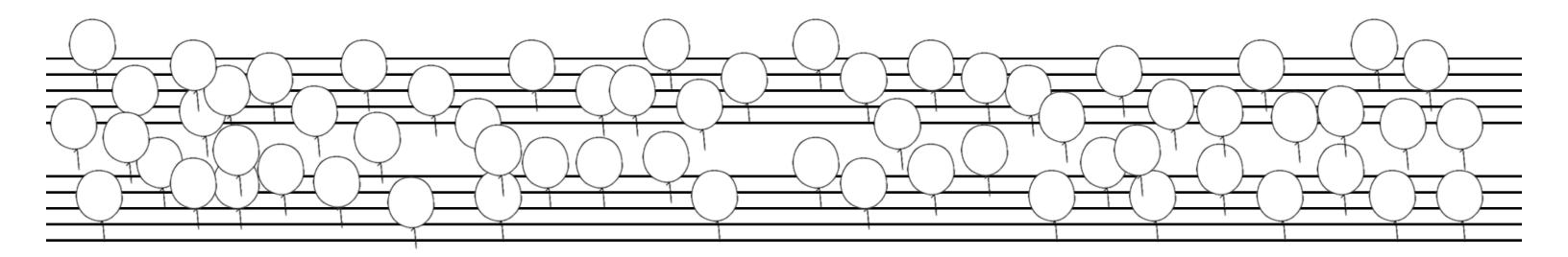






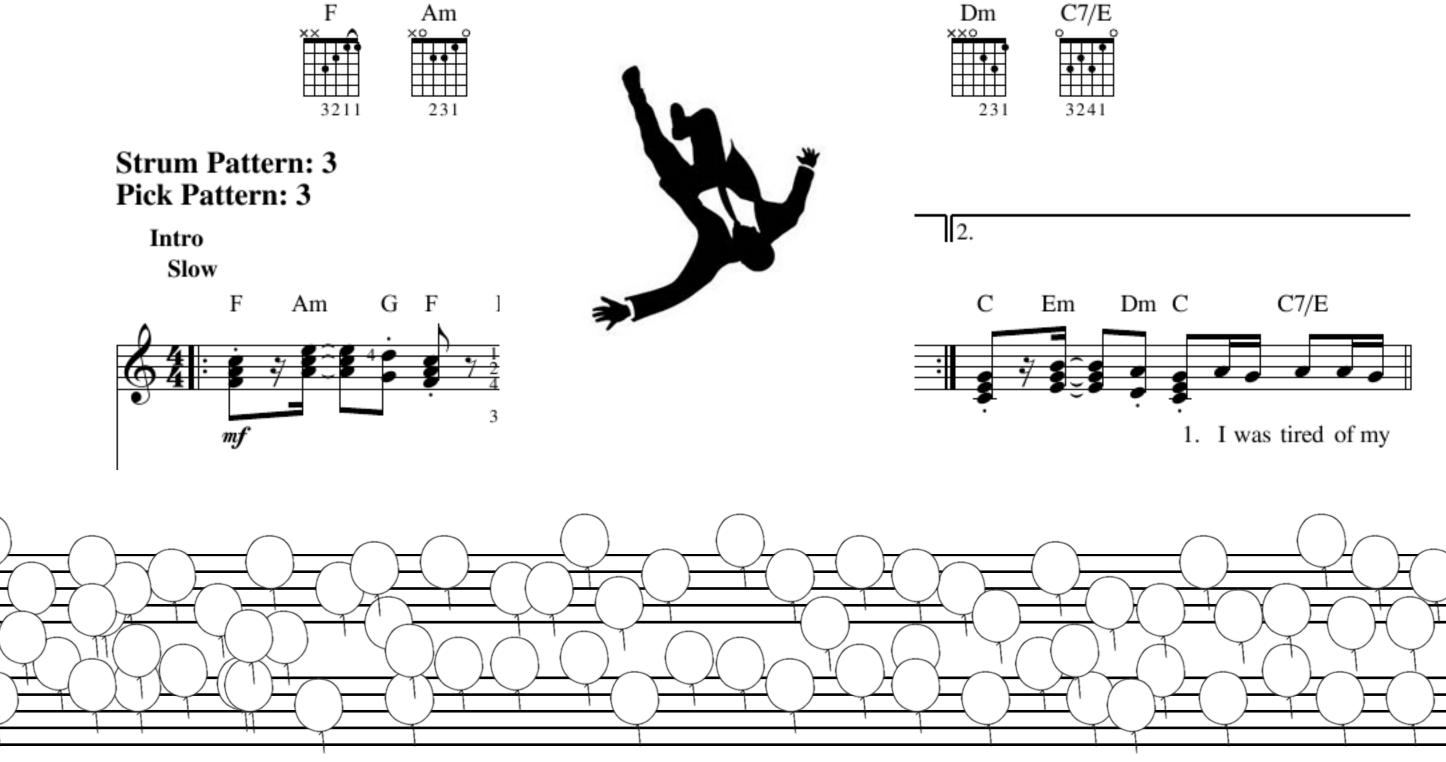
"The garden of evil" is an ever-changing painting project that uses craft as a way to push against masculinity. Thinking about the history of painting and its male dominate nature, Azadi introduces a "feminine" form (craft) that could potentially replace the masculine form (Oil Painting). Stitches are replacing brush strokes while needles are replacing brushes. The humorous nature of this work aims to critique masculinity by referencing body parts as well as feminizing the masculine mind. Over time when balloons deflate or pop we loose the reference of masculinity and what we are left with is CRAFT.

> Material: Yarn, pingpong balls, tennis balls, and balloons. In collaboration with Zohreh Pasandi



Escape (The Piña Colada Song)

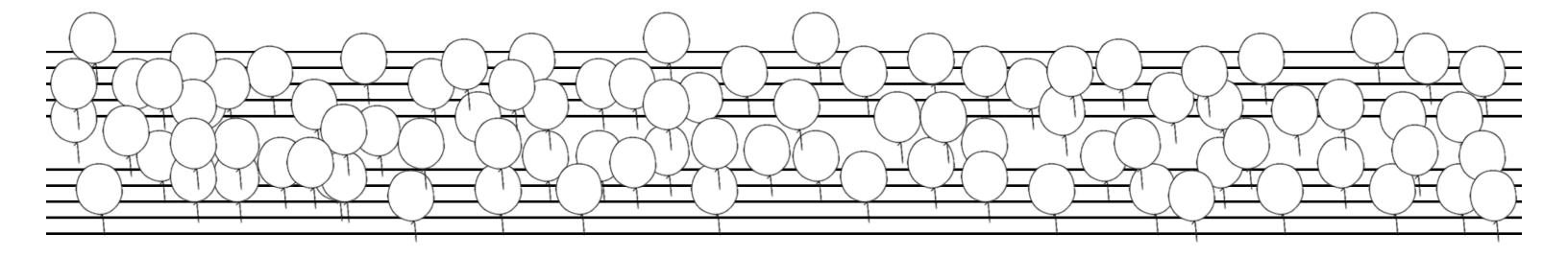
Words and Music by Rupert Holmes







ANDRE ALVES



Eu vivo a sonhar, não pensem mal de mim Quanto mais não vale viver a vida assim? Nas asas do sonho é bom andar sem norte Não preciso vistos nem uso passaporte

Não tenho limites, parar não é comigo Se ouço o meu amor, dizer: "Eu vou contigo!" Ter essa certeza é luz dum novo dia Vai, meu balão d'oiro envolto em fantasia

Sobe, sobe, balão sobe Vai pedir àquela estrela Que me deixe lá viver e sonhar Levo o meu amor comigo Pois eu sei que encontrei O lugar ideal para amar

> Levo o meu amor comigo Pois eu sei que encontrei O lugar ideal para amar

> > Sobe, sobe, balão sobe Balão sobe (La la la la la la la la...) (La la la la la la la la...)

I carry on daydreaming, don't bad-think me Why is not worth to live life like this? It's good to lose the north in the wings of dreams With no need of visa or passport

I have no limits, to stop is not with me If I hear my love saying "I'll go with you!" That assurance is light of a new day Go, my golden balloon

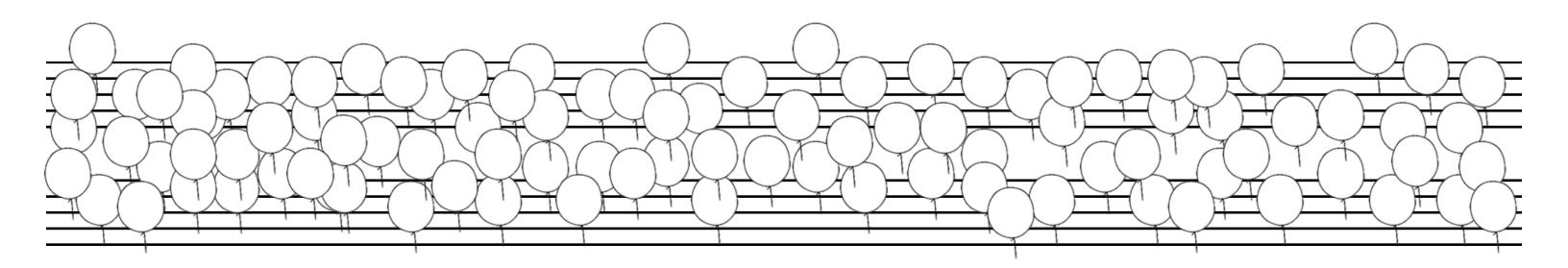
covered in fantasy

> Rise, rise, balloon rise Go and ask that star to let me live there and dream I'll take my love with me Because I know I've found the ideal place to love

I'll take my love with me Because I know I've found the ideal place to love

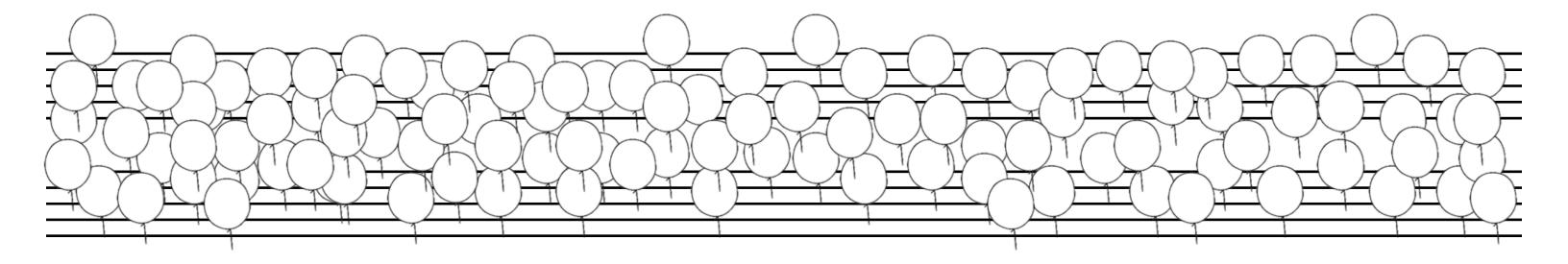
Rise, rise, balloon rise Rise balloon

(La la la la la la la...) (La la la la la la la la...) (La la la...)

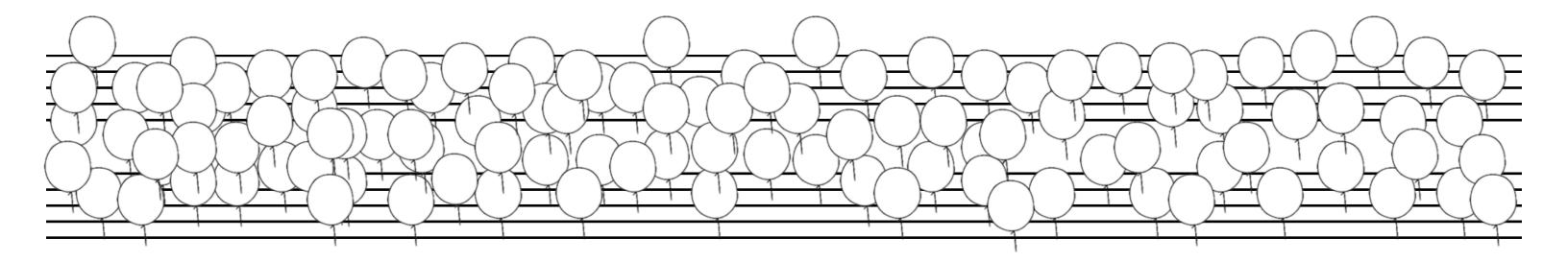




Manuela Bravo Sobe, sobe, balão sobe 1979



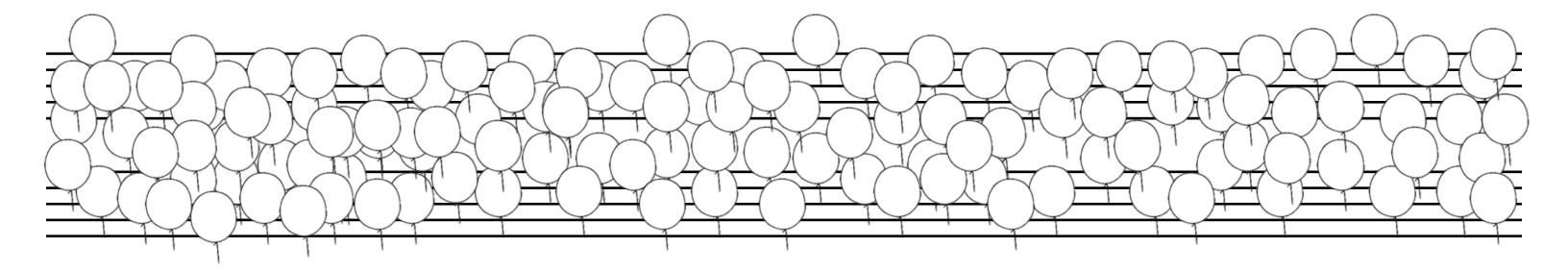
ALRIANDRO ACIRRIO





Your body in relation to a body of exhibitions we more like signet (a nutual understanding) where your contrined breath holds you So you cannot fill









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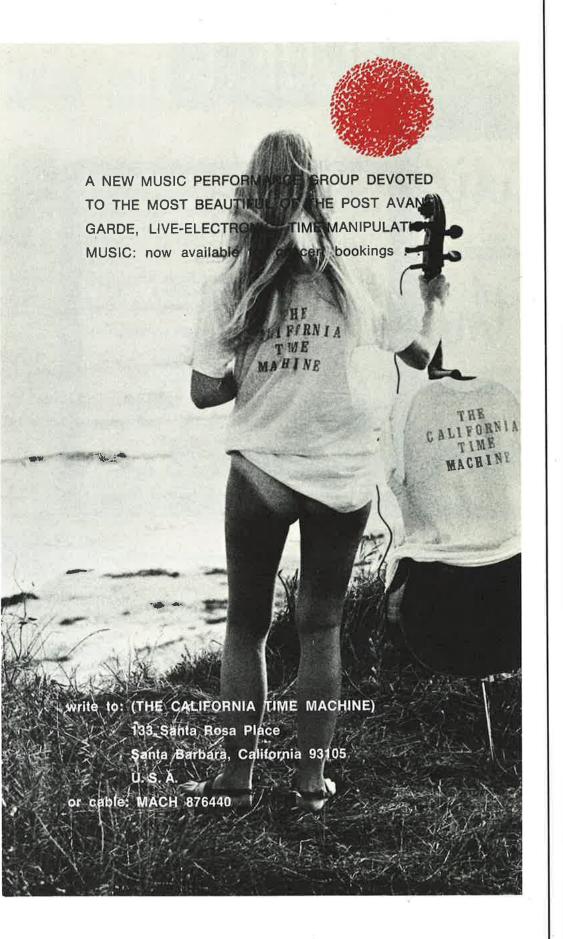
Mr. Machine A player attached to a black box, surrounded by white balloons . . .

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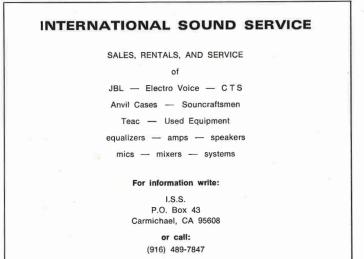


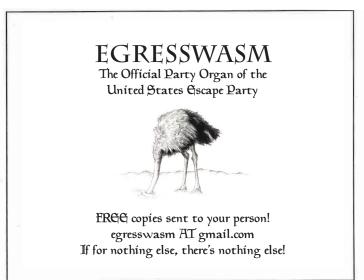
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'This Is the Job': Great Balloon Pop Follows Democratic National Convention in Philly

How do they pop all those balloons? By Dan Stamm

Published at 10:44 AM EDT on Jul 29, 2016 | Updated at 1:40 PM EDT on Jul 29, 2016 \neq

A massive drop of red, white and blue balloons capped off four days of Democratic National Convention at the Wells Fargo Center in South Philadelphia late Thursday night.

But once the balloons dropped and the delegates began to leave the arena, the arena operations crews -- used to normally transition the arena from Sixers to Flyers games -- armed with sharp points began cleaning up by popping the patriotic balloons.



"We have the job," said Brian, wearing a Flyers cap and a smile as he bent over to pop balloon after balloon.

"There's a lot of work to do," said co-worker Odeen, wearing a Phillies cap.

"We do a lot. We do the breakdown, setup of the court, setup for concerts, basketball, hockey. We do a little bit of everything, we're operations," said Brian.

But the operations team had the unique task overnight of balloon poppers.

"This is the job to have right now, all you gotta do is 'pop, pop, " said Brian.



So what's the tool of the trade for these building-converting experts? Brian, bent down, used a 2016 Twitter pin to pop some of the

thousands of balloons scattered over the arena floor.

A fine pin will bust all these balloons," Brian said.

Brian showed off his pin while shouting "Hillary!"





After about an hour, the crew of balloon poppers expanded as people carrying long poles with pins on the end attacked the balloons.

"Pop, pop, pop," rang throughout the arena and then all the balloons were gone after about two hours. Somewhere, Nena must be singing.



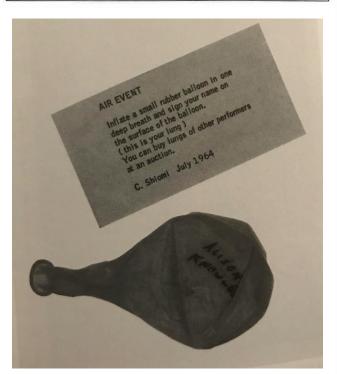


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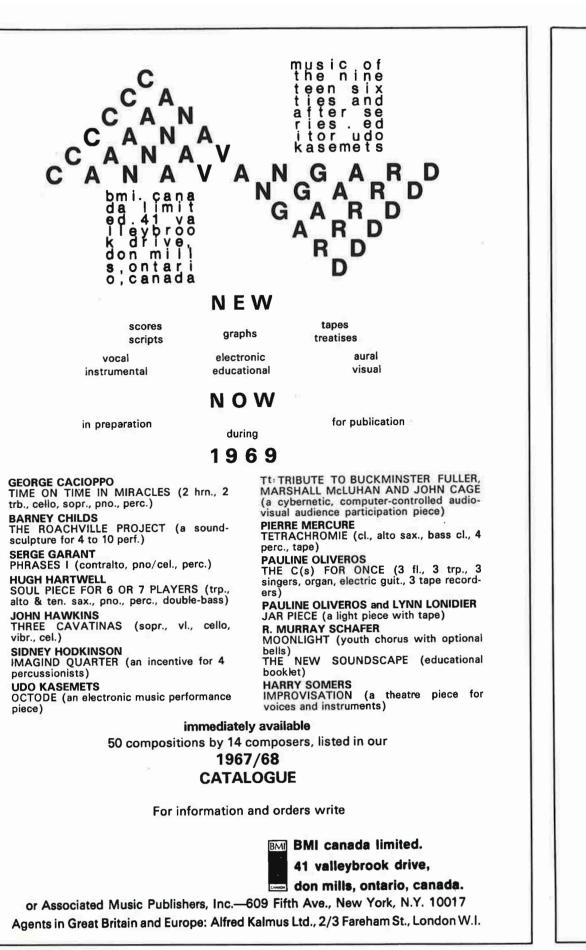
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