

Friday, May 18 at a distance

a (semi-fully)composed event for three or more performers

Michael Boyd & Stephen F. Lilly

2020

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General Information

- The original work, *Friday May 18*, was created for the Bay Players' performance on the same date at Artomatic 2007 in Crystal City, Virginia. But realizations of *Friday, May 18 at a distance* need not adhere to historical precedent. In fact, performances of the current work, in opposition to the original, should be virtual and avoid Fridays, the 18th of any month, and the entire month of May. That being said, performances not meeting this criteria will be tolerated.
- The event should take place virtually, in real time. Performers may choose to collaborate in a single video conferencing or live streaming platform, or they may simultaneously operate in multiple applications (e.g. with some performers operating in Zoom while others work in Facebook Live).
- The core of the piece is the section titled Participatory Instructions below, which can be executed by the hosting ensemble (hereafter referred to as the performers) alone or in some collaborative arrangement of performers and audience. All other sections are optional.
- The minimum total duration for this event is 10 minutes. There is no upper duration limit.

Electro-acoustic Performances (optional)

- In the background, i.e. played separately from the device used for conferencing/streaming, soundfiles provided by Michael Boyd & Stephen Lilly (hereafter referred to as the composers) are curated by the performers—randomly selected and arranged or personally selected and arranged by the performers—and played back via old school boombox, smart phone, a second computer, or DIY playback device—fidelity is not a concern.
- In addition to selecting from the composer-supplied soundfiles, performers should include one excerpt of banal, overplayed, highly recognizable popular music; for example, the premiere of *Friday May 18* included an excerpt of Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog."

Extra-musical Performances (optional)

- Any performer may take screenshots and/or draw the performance situation and share this as they see fit and are able.
- Any performer may perform readings of any writings (including social media posts) by the composers.
- Any graphic score by either one of the composers can be reinterpreted choreographically and performed as modern dance.
- Slideshows (e.g. PowerPoint, Google Slides, etc.) authored by anyone other than the performer can be presented. It is preferred that the performer have little or no expertise in the slideshow being presented.
- Any performer may attempt to lead a meeting using an actual agenda for a meeting (business, institutional, municipal, etc.) that they did not attend or take part in.
- Any performer may introduce a child or pet to the other performers and audience.
- Any performer may take and answer questions from the audience. An answer should not address any aspect of the question and ideally will take the form of a question. Such exchanges may occur verbally or through chat, text, email, etc.

Parallel Performances (option for longer performances of half an hour or longer)

- Performances of experimental, preferably indeterminate, compositions can occur simultaneously.
- The performed compositions can be works by the authors, by performer participants, or others (e.g. Alison Knowles, John Cage, Wadada Leo Smith, etc.).

Participatory Instructions

- The pages that follow contain instructions most of which consist of a performative action, an ending trigger, and a post-execution response.
- The instructions may be performed in any order and repeated as desired.
- These instructions may be restricted to the performers (i.e. with a passive audience) or open to audience participation—the audience may begin simultaneously with the performers, join after a prearranged performer-only duration, or start after the performers have completed their contribution.
- If the audience is to join the performers, the instructions should be distributed to the audience (potential or actual) by text, email, chat, or some other method in advance of or during the performance.
- It should be made clear that when an instruction indicates “share,” this should be done electronically via group text, direct message, video feed (handwritten messages, verbal, etc.), or other method, and may be limited to people present at the current performance (i.e. performers and audience) or it may extend to people external to the performance. If the recipients are external to the performance, the recipients should be invited to join the performance or have the option of opting out of receiving any more messages about the performance.
- The performance of each instruction should be self-explanatory.

Mumble incoherently about mushrooms to yourself until you have named every type of mushroom you have eaten. Then share your favorite mushroom.

Loudly imitate ambient room noise. Then share your favorite background noise.

Hum prominently your least favorite song until you have hummed the chorus. Then share your least favorite band or artist.

Rave crazily about email spam as it relates to Spam the processed meat until you have framed them as different manifestations of the same thing. Then share your favorite meat analog or substitute.

Bark sharply like a dog at a trash can. Then share the contents of your trash.

Sing out about any vegetable towards the ceiling until the vegetable's name loses all meaning to you. Then share the ingredients of the last salad you ate.

Speak as slowly as possible about your childhood to your hand for 5 minutes. Then share a single powerful word from your childhood.

Vocalize repeatedly the word "canoe" until someone says "canoe" back to you. Then share your least favorite watercraft.

Say confidently something complimentary about people who wear brown shoes. Then share your shoe design preferences.

Intone steadily a diatribe about traffic until you use the word “rage.” Then share your favorite road rage insult.

Whisper discretely a fake family secret for 30 to 60 seconds. Then share an invented aunt or uncle whose politics you despise.

Yell passionately about your laundry until you have thoroughly addressed the topic. Then share about the clothing of a person whose sartorial style you admire.

Read aloud all physical writing, i.e. non-digital, in your field of vision until there is nothing else to read. Then share your favorite passage.

Ramble on and on about the “prepared piano” until someone else mentions or asks about prepared pianos. Then share your least favorite piano extended technique.

Plead desperately for an explanation of Euclidean geometry until anyone answers your call or logs off the performance. Then share your interpretation of the Pythagorean theorem.

Interacting with someone else, vehemently disagree with everything they say until you find a point of concordance. Then share your favorite emoticon.

Listen to someone else, nodding along enthusiastically until they say something untenable. Then share a frowny face emoticon.

Take a second to comment on or respond to what any of the other performers or audience are doing. Then sit silently for a few moments.

Using a musical instrument, provide a complementary, albeit minimal, accompaniment to any (or all) other performer(s) until you are “in the zone.” Then sit and nod quietly with your eyes closed for as long as you wish.

Focusing on one other performer, repeat everything they say in a whisper but with opposing body language until you need a drink of water. Then sip your beverage until satiated.

Find a performer or audience member with a distinctive vocal cadence, repeatedly clap the most distinctive rhythm from that cadence until someone smiles. Then hide your hands for one minute.

Seek out a performer or audience member who is desperately in need of their ending cue and provide it for them. Then share thanks on their behalf.

Mindfully meditate on the performance’s current state. Once you are as close to being in the moment as possible, echo the most distinctive element in the melee. Then return to your meditation until you are ready to move on.

Sing an unintentional melody created by the performance. Then smile with smug satisfaction.