

## Composition 3

**a work for four performers  
or for solo performer and multitrack recorder**

by Charles Rice Goff III

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Page 1

### **Composition 3**

Composition 3 is intended to create a performance or recording which, through the inclusion of random elements, will sound different each time it is executed. There are some slight differences in the execution of a live performance vs. a solo performance, which are explained on page two.

#### **These materials are needed to execute Composition 3:**

A pair of dice.

A small bowl.

A small rag.

A deck of cards.

Three non-percussion musical instruments.

Two portable radios (specifics described in Instructions for Part III).

Six hand held non-instruments (specifics described in Instructions for Part IV).

A performance space and work surfaces large enough to accommodate the execution of all aspects of the work.

Page 2

## Execution

### **For Live Performance**

Four performers each simultaneously perform one of four parts outlined in the following pages. The performers need not be skilled musicians. Each follows the instructions for his or her part until completed. The performers should not necessarily be interacting with each other during the performance but instead focusing on their own particular parts and adhering to their own instructions. Sound interactivity should be more coincidental than intuitive. A longer version of the work can be accomplished by having the performers switch parts after all of them have completed their full instructions. (Having each performer perform each of all four parts would create the most obvious and balanced version for an audience, but no matter how the performers organize themselves, no two executions of *Composition 3* will sound the same.)

### **For Solo Performer And Multitrack Recorder**

One performer records each part separately and then mixes all four parts together. A longer version of the work can be accomplished by repeating all four parts multiple times. The mix should be executed in such a way that all four parts overlap during the majority of the recording, although it is not required that all four parts start at the same time. Creativity in the mixing is encouraged.

The recordings need not take place in a sterile studio, but ambient background noises should not overshadow the sounds of the performance. (Recording outside in the open air may provide some interesting elements to the recordings, but it would be best not to set up right next to a busy road or in the middle of a construction site.)

Stereo recording is preferable, but monophonic is acceptable. No sound effects should be used for the recording to change the sounds dramatically, although some light reverb might be used to enhance the sound qualities a bit.

## Instructions For Part I

**Needed:** Two Dice, Small Bowl, Small Thin Rag, *Page Of Numbered Lines* (provided on page four), *Pictures* (provided on pages five and six).

**Preparation:** Place rag into the bowl so that one layer of cloth covers the bowl's interior (see picture). The purpose of this is solely to deaden the sound of the dice being tossed into the bowl.



- 1) Toss the dice into the bowl. Using the "*Page Of Numbered Lines*" on page four, select the line which corresponds to the number of the roll of the dice. **Whisper the line as loud as you can whisper.**
- 2) Toss the dice again. Read the corresponding line in a **normal speaking voice.**
- 3) Toss the dice again. Turn your back to the audience or away from the microphone and **loudly shout** the corresponding line. Turn again to face the audience.
- 4) Toss the dice again. **Sing** the corresponding line.
- 5) Toss the dice again. **Speak very quickly** the corresponding line.
- 6) Describe the **picture on page 5** in detail. Your description may be executed in a normal speaking voice, whispered, shouted, sung, etc., or by using any combination of vocal execution styles. Creativity is encouraged. Describe the picture as completely as possible.
- 7) Repeat instructions 1-5.
- 8) Describe the **picture on page 6** in detail. Your description may be executed in a normal speaking voice, whispered, shouted, sung, etc., or by using any combination of vocal execution styles. Creativity is encouraged. Describe the picture as completely as possible.
- 9) Repeat instructions 1-5.
- 10) Stop and wait until the other three parts of the composition are completed.

## Page Of Numbered Lines

- 1) No sound remains from the time of Nostradamus.
- 2) Crinkled notes litter the landscape of song.
- 3) So sweet to hear the laughter before the joke
- 4) God has returned to the vineyard
- 5) Tourists! Collect your postcards!
- 6) The future comes early today.
- 7) The deaf waves are listening to the beach.
- 8) Porous and malleable rocks erode under the wristwatch.
- 9) Did Tolstoy want to be Tolstoy when he was twenty-five?
- 10) Dignity's sour honey drips from a cup of hot earthworms.
- 11) A poodle's X-ray makes me think of Harvest time.
- 12) I always order the infinite paradox with jelly icing.





## Instructions for Part II

**Needed:** A deck of cards, 3 non-percussion instruments, A place to lay down the cards where they will be easy for the performer to see.

**Preparation:** Remove the jokers and face cards from the deck of cards. Shuffle the deck.

- 1) Pick a card from the top of the deck. Play any note (the same note) as many times as the value of the card indicates. The duration and volume of each note are up to the performer and can be varied.
- 2) Pick another card. Play a succession of different notes as many times as the value of the card indicates. Each note should be different than the note it follows or precedes. The duration and volume of each note are up to the performer and can be varied.
- 3) Pick another card. Play any note (the same note) as many times as the value of the card indicates very rapidly. The volume of each note is up to the performer and can be varied.
- 4) Pick another card. Play a succession of different notes as many times as the value of the card indicates very slowly. The volume of each note is up to the performer and can be varied.
- 5) Pick another card. Play a succession of different notes as many times as the value of the card indicates at a varying tempo. The volume of each note is up to the performer and can be varied.
- 6) Switch to another non-percussive instrument and repeat instructions 1-5.
- 7) Switch to another non-percussive instrument and repeat instructions 1-5.
- 8) Stop and wait until the other three parts of the composition are completed.

### Instructions for Part III

**Needed:** A deck of cards, Two portable radios with AM and FM bands and volume and frequency controls (preferably knobs, radios with digital search features that mute weak signals will not work for this performance), A surface on which to place the radios which is easy to reach for the performer.

**Preparation:** Place one radio at each end of the working surface. Select one radio as an AM transmitter and the other as an FM transmitter. Turn the radios on. Set the frequencies on each radio so that some audible sound is coming from the radio speaker. Turn the volume all the way down on both radios. Remove the jokers and face cards from the deck of cards. Shuffle the deck.

- 1) Pick a card from the top of the deck. Turn up the volume on the **left-hand radio** to any audible level and count to yourself from zero to the number indicated by the card's value. Turn the volume down until it is inaudible. Change the frequency (channel) of the radio (done while volume is down, so you do not know what sounds will come out when it is again turned up).
- 2) Pick another card. Turn up the volume on the **right-hand radio** to any audible level and count to yourself from zero to the number indicated by the card's value. Turn the volume down until it is inaudible. Change the frequency (channel) of the radio (done while volume is down, so you do not know what sounds will come out when it is again turned up).
- 3) Pick another card. Turn up the volume on the **both radios** to any audible level and count to yourself from zero to the number indicated by the card's value. Turn the volume down on both radios until it is inaudible. Change the frequency (channel) of each radio (done while volume is down, so you do not know what sounds will come out when it is again turned up).
- 4) Pick another card. Turn up the volume on the **both radios** and **vary** the audible levels while counting to yourself from zero to the number indicated by the card's value. Turn the volume down on both radios until it is inaudible. Change the frequency (channel) of each radio (done while volume is down, so you do not know what sounds will come out when it is again turned up).
- 5) Pick another card. Turn up the volume on the **both radios** to any audible level and **vary** the frequencies (constantly change channels) while counting to yourself from zero to the number indicated by the card's value. Turn the volume down on both radios until it is inaudible. Change the frequency (channel) of each radio (done while volume is down, so you do not know what sounds will come out when it is again turned up).
- 6) Repeat instructions 1-5 three more times (a total of 4 cycles of instructions concludes the performance).
- 7) Stop and wait until the other three parts of the composition are completed.

## Instructions for Part IV

**Needed:** Six hand held non-instruments (Anything that resonates sound when struck, is blown into, or is otherwise disturbed by a performer. The non-instrument should not be so fragile that its capacity for making sound is destroyed during use. Examples would include but not be limited to: water in deep metal pan, a spoon in a glass, a newspaper, a container with an easily removable lid, a variable speed drill, a basketball, a rope tied through a hole in a large board, etc. Creativity for the selection of non-instruments is encouraged.), A table large enough to accommodate all 6 instruments, Cards A ce-6 from a deck of cards, One die, A small bowl, A small thin rag.

**Preparation:** Line up the six non-instruments from left to right. Mark each instrument by placing a card next to it, in order of A ce-6 from left to right. Place rag into the bowl so that one layer of cloth covers the bowl's interior (see picture page 3). The purpose of this is solely to deaden the sound of the die being tossed into the bowl.

- 1) Toss the die into the bowl. Make 3 **quiet** sounds with the non-instrument corresponding to the number on the die.
- 2) Toss the die again. Make 3 **louder** sounds with the non-instrument corresponding to the number on the die.
- 3) Toss the die again. Make **varying** sounds of any type with the non-instrument corresponding to the number on the die while counting to yourself from 1-15.
- 4) Toss the die again. Make 5 sounds, each as **distinct and individual** as possible from each other with the non-instrument corresponding to the number on the die.
- 5) Toss the die again. Make one **continuous** sound with the non-instrument corresponding to the number on the die while counting to yourself from 1-15.
- 6) Repeat instructions 1-5 three more times (a total of 4 cycles of instructions concludes the performance).
- 7) Stop and wait until the other three parts of the composition are completed.

The composer of **Composition 3** encourages everyone interested to take a shot at executing the piece, recording it, and sending an audio CD or cassette tape of the results to:

Taped Rugs Productions  
PO BOX 146  
Lawrence, KS, 66044, USA

A compilation of the recordings will be produced sometime before the end of 2004 for release by Taped Rugs Productions. Send contact information with submission. Only submissions that follow the instructions will be accepted for the compilation.

Questions, comments, etc., can be emailed to Charles Rice Goff III at

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[www.geocities.com/padukem](http://www.geocities.com/padukem)

Printed copies of **Composition 3** are available by request.