

***Composition Machine #1***

Mark Applebaum, 2014  
for solo performer

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for solo performer

*Dedicated to Terry Longshore.*

## Commissioned by:

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Ross Karre  
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Ruben Martinez Orio  
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Dan Morphy  
Kevin O'Connor  
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Tomm Roland  
Adam Rosenblatt  
Bill Sallak  
Steven Schick  
Kevin Schlossman  
Leah Scholes  
Elizabeth Soflin  
Speak Percussion  
Ben Stiers  
Vanessa Tomlinson  
Mike Truesdell  
Bonnie Whiting  
Tracy Wiggins  
Eric Willie  
Tyler Willoughby  
Andrew B. Wright  
Chia-Ying Wu 吳佳穎

## Duration

Approximately 10 minutes.

## Instrumentation & Equipment

- Two instrumental setups of the performer's selection—one modest and the other comparatively elaborate—are placed downstage left and right. These instruments are played from a seated position (e.g., on drum thrones) with the performer's back to the audience. Approximately three or four adjacent music stands—extended with cardboard as needed—(or a substitute for music stands) are placed upstage of each instrumental setup in a manner that allows a wide, scrolled score to be displayed in view of both the performer and audience. The score may be held in place with clothespins or equivalent as needed.
- Rolled score prepared in advance (discussed in *Section II*).
- Rubber band.
- A wide, amplified table (e.g., with piezo contact pickups on its bottom surface, and/or PZM microphones).
- A length of white roll paper (e.g., butcher paper) stretched across the amplified table's surface.
- Thick black chisel-tip marker.
- Stands from which items will be retrieved and relocated to the amplified table with alacrity:

metal “beer” bottle caps (12-15, divided into two unequal groups)  
three L-shaped allen wrenches, larger, heavier  
length of heavy chain, approximately 2-3 feet  
modest tree branch or twig with at least one fork, with or without leaves (ossia: metal shirt hanger bent in the shape of a tree branch)

length of aluminum foil, approximately 1 meter  
butcher paper score, crumpled (taken from *Section I*; this object is applied directly to the amplified table)

plastic cup, inverted (e.g., collectible ball game soda cup or picnic “beer” cup)  
“tin” can, medium (e.g., 28 oz. tomato can), inverted  
metal pie pan, inverted  
small or medium-small stainless steel mixing bowl, inverted

cassette tape in plastic case (or just the cassette or just the plastic case; ossia: deck of playing cards)  
plastic CD jewel box, conventional size (e.g., as used in the late 1980s)  
small or medium hardcover book (e.g., Walter Piston's *Harmony*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1941)

Cautious, judicious substitutions can be made by an empathetic performer motivated by sincere fidelity. And, for that matter, the composer thanks the performer in advance for any and all changes that make the composer look smarter and more creative than he actually is.

## Lighting

The performance space should afford the audience a view of the scores for *Sections I* and *III* (as displayed on music stands). As such, appropriate lighting should be employed. The audience will also benefit from seeing the performer's actions during *Section II* (at the table). Therefore, the performer should avoid hiding behind music stands, choosing instead to memorize *Section II*, place music stands at the corners of the table, or some other strategy.

## Optional Video & Electronic Processing

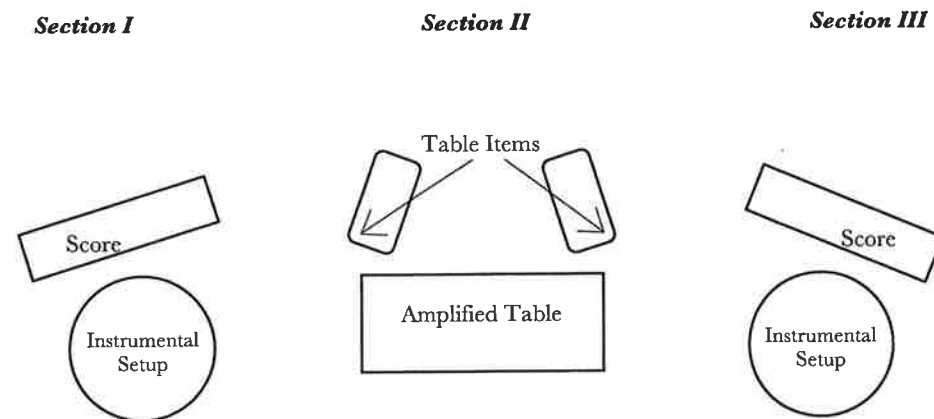
An overhead video camera may capture the activities of the performer at the table (*Section II*) for simultaneous display on a large projection screen.

The amplified sounds of objects placed and moved on the table may be transformed by imaginative electronic signal processing—whether static or dynamic, prosaic (e.g., modest reverberation) or fanciful, controlled by the performer or by a separate audio engineer—so long as the direct “dry” sound is still represented in part.

## Synopsis

This piece deserves a synopsis:

The performance begins at stage right where the performer unfurls a scroll of pictographic notation and plays it according to a personal but predetermined interpretation system. The scroll is then ingloriously compacted and dropped onto an amplified table covered in paper at center stage. A miscellaneous bevy of prescribed objects is placed on the table and moved in given rhythmic fashion. At the conclusion of this ritual the outlines of the objects are traced on the paper in marker. This paper—a new scroll—is then taken to a stage left position where it is performed on different instruments but according to the same fastidious interpretation system. The piece concludes after the player has rolled up the scroll and deposited it at the original stage right position, conceptually preparing for a subsequent performance. This is a piece that produces its own score; as such, the performer will notice that rehearsals should commence with the objects on the table in order to produce a germinal scroll.



## Detailed Section Descriptions

### *Section I: Stage right.*

After entering and bowing, the performer unfurls Score #1 (which, before the performance, is rolled up and rubber-banded as a scroll and deposited on a row of three or four music stands—or equivalent—at stage right). The music stands are fairly high and face the audience so that when the scroll is placed across them (and perhaps held in place with clothespins, as needed) the audience can view it. The area should be adequately lit.

The performer is then seated in front of the stands at an instrumental setup—with back to the audience—in a position from which the score can be read. (The *Section I* instrumental setup is modest or elaborate; a contrasting one will be employed in *Section III*.) The score, which is pictographic, is then performed according to a strict interpretation: circles, lines, squiggles, etc. always mean the same thing. That said, the instrumentation is completely indeterminate and left up to the player. Similarly, the assignation system of notational glyphs to musical sounds and actions is also left up to the player; however, it must be pre-determined and assiduously learned, not improvised.

The music should sound really good. It should not sound or look comical. The fundamental essence of the piece already comprises sufficient playfulness and levity. Attempts at humor will simply counteract or cheapen the inherent idiosyncrasy of the enterprise.

The performance of the score should take between one and three minutes. That said, the player may have reason to make a performance that is *much* shorter, or *much* longer. (As a starting point, the player might aspire to a duration of two and one-half minutes when first exploring the piece.) *Section I* may end with a cadence, but the player should take care to hold the musical tension in such a way that does not invite applause.

### *Section IIa: Center stage.*

At the conclusion of *Section I* the score should be quickly taken up and ingloriously compacted—crumpled, squished, wadded up into a “ball”—while walking to a table located at center stage. The table is modestly amplified (with piezo contact pick-ups or PZM microphones, possibly affixed to the underside), and covered with a length of white paper (e.g., rolled paper such as butcher paper). The player stands behind the table and faces the audience; if not memorized, the score for *Section II* should be located on stands at the corners of the table so that the majority of the player's actions are visible. To each side of the player are smaller, unamplified tables (e.g., “mallet” trays, flattened music stands) from which various objects will be retrieved and placed on the amplified table.

*Section II* is then performed, beginning with the action of formally, deliberately (not a casual non-musical action, but a crisp musical articulation) dropping of the now-compacted Score #1 onto the table. During *Section II* various objects are placed on the table and moved according to the given rhythms. Although the musical rhetoric and its temporal qualities are strictly defined in the score, there are two inherent indeterminacies that are left up to the performer. First, the list of objects is given, but each player will find his or her own version of the objects, thereby engendering a unique size and sound. (Furthermore, the player may make tasteful, judicious changes to the prescribed list, within reason.) Second, the placement of objects on the table is left

to the performer's discretion: a given object may be introduced by the left hand or right hand; during the performance it may be relocated to a nearby or distant position; it may end up in the center or side of the table; it may push another object to an unpredicted destination or partially cover it; etc. By extension, a particular player may choose to deliberately vary such details from performance to performance.

Objects should not be knocked off the table deliberately. But if one should fall it should be left on the floor.

### **Section IIb: Center stage.**

At the conclusion of *Section IIa*, the player, after pausing for "a beat," should hastily, perfunctorily, mechanically (but not carelessly) trace the outline of each object (with a jumbo size, black; chisel-tip marker) and remove it with alacrity from the table. The goal is to accomplish this as swiftly as possible, yet gracefully; it should look as practiced as a percussionist's mallet stroke and as routine as a mallet change. The amplified sound of the tracing on paper is handsome and welcome. But as a dramatic act the audience habituates it rather quickly, so the player should aspire to finish the job in short order. The resulting drawing should be legible, clear, and fairly neat; but it need not be fussy and punctilious. The player should sacrifice exactitude for brevity: concision is more important than precision.

The objects are not all traced in full. A set of guidelines—*The Tracing Rules*—govern how objects are transcribed to the paper.

Should optional electronic "enhancement" be employed, the performer will consider whether to apply it only during *Section IIa*; only during *Section IIb*; or during both *IIa* and *IIb*. That said, at least some of the "dry" amplification of the table should be heard throughout *Section II*. Care should also be taken to avoid feedback during all sections of the performance.

### **Section III: Stage left.**

The paper is then carried to and placed upon a set of three or four music stands at stage left that parallels that of the stage right setup. Again the score is visible to the audience and the player is seated with back to the audience. Again the score (this one freshly produced during *Section II*) is realized according to *the same interpretation system*: it might almost be possible for the most alert audience member to read the score and predict the musical articulations having "learned" the system during *Section I*. The duration is again between one and three minutes by default. However, the instrumentation contrasts *Section I* in two regards: first, none of the same instruments are repeated; and second, if *Section I* employed a modest setup, *Section III* comprises a comparatively elaborate and diverse one, and vice versa.

### **Section IV: Coda.**

At the conclusion of *Section III* the player, despite coming to a cadence, should imply that the piece is not finished, thereby avoiding applause. He or she should then take the score from *Section III* and, while walking back to the stage right setup for *Section I*, roll it into a scroll, rubber-band it, and deposit it on the music stands in the precise location of where Score #1 was found, thus conceptually preparing for a subsequent performance. At this point the performer can make clear that the ritual is complete and enjoy thunderous applause.

## **Linked Performances**

Two or more performances of *Composition Machine #1* may be linked in immediate succession. In this case the first performer, having completed *Section III* and rolled and rubber-banded the score into a scroll, will hand it to the subsequent performer at the stage right setup position before exiting the stage—a passing of the "baton" in tag-team fashion (to provide *two* metaphors).

If the performance space cannot accommodate a duplicate setup (e.g., a second amplified table with optional video camera, four more music stands per side) there will be staging challenges to solve. In the case of two performers, some simple principles may be considered as follows.

The music stands in *Section I* may be shared and the music stands in *Section III* may be shared. But to accommodate different instrumental setups (in acknowledgement of the fact that the individual performers may not prefer to employ the same instruments), the players may choose to combine one modest and one elaborate setup at stage right and one modest and one elaborate setup at stage left. (For example, if the first player performs on a modest setup in *Section I* and an elaborate one in *Section III*, the second player will choose the reverse: an elaborate setup in *Section I* and a modest one in *Section III*.) Neither player will have the benefit of sitting directly in front of the center of the music stands; but both will be able to locate themselves only marginally to the side of the midpoint.

The amplified table can be shared. The players may prepare individual (unshared) stands for their personal objects (cup, can, book, etc.), the first player briefly moving his or her stands out of the way before alighting to *Section III* and the second player quickly moving his or her stands into place before beginning *Section II*; this can be accomplished especially elegantly if the stands are on wheels. In addition, the second player's butcher paper should be prepared in advance and quickly affixed to the table, or possibly hidden beneath the first player's paper (assuming that the ink does not bleed through—or assuming that such bleed-through is *desirable*).

## **Sections I & III: A Note on Pictographs and Improvisation**

Improvisation does not play an explicit role in this piece. The pictographs come unencumbered by definitions. It is the performer who will develop a practice by which they may be read and interpreted. As in any notational specification, sounds and physical actions are guided by the visual rhetoric on the page. But in this piece the player will determine what the notation specifies.

The player must develop and fix this system *prior to performance*. The interpretation of pictographs is not—in this particular piece—subject to spontaneous improvisation in front of an audience. The system may very well be developed through improvisational enterprise in private, actions taken in route to a non-improvised system. But this activity takes place off stage.

Each player, therefore, will invent a unique and personal system of notational interpretation. It may have a kinship with extant systems or not (e.g., the x-axis may or may not represent time). In any case, learning a new system, however intimate, is an arduous undertaking. It represents significant commitment. To change that system from performance to performance—so long as the change is planned, not improvised—is allowed. But the player will note that such changes—which rightly are motivated by artistic goals—do represent a cost in the form of a kind of cognitive tax. Or expressed conversely, the player probably benefits from the mental continuity that a "common" practice (however hermetic) represents. The challenge then is to balance the need to congeal a system with the desire to evolve it in response to new creative needs. In that regard, the venture has a kinship with all debates about tradition and progress, convention and idiosyncrasy.

## Section II: A Note on Object Placement

Players will have different approaches to *Section II*. Each will find solutions that enable its realization and afford unique musical outcomes.

The placement of objects is a primary riddle to be deciphered. The manner in which objects are placed on stands in advance of the performance is critical, as is the manner in which they are picked up during performance. These decisions deserve careful planning. Of equal significance is the location of objects when first placed on the table, as well as their positions when they are relocated during the performance.

As such, the performer will consider several issues:

In what order do the objects first appear? For example, objects can be stacked (in one or more piles) before performance, but only if the topmost object is next to be handled.

Note: the order of appearance is:

*score...tape...CD...chain...can/cup...bowl...1/2 caps...pan...book...wrenches...foil...1/2 caps...branch*

And what hand (left or right) is sourcing the objects? Perhaps this governs the careful location of stands from which objects are retrieved (i.e., the proximity and orientation of stands with respect to the table), and on which stand a given object is placed before performance.

During passages in which multiple objects are played together, where will they reside on the table? If they are spread too far apart it may not be possible to reach them during the same musical passage. If two instruments are to be articulated at the same time by one hand, they must be proximate. And “sticking” patterns (left-right alternations) might govern that objects are grouped accordingly.

In these regards, various “scenes” might be devised in which instruments are laid out for the purpose of accommodating the corresponding passages of musical rhetoric. Alongside this, the player will resolve how the objects will migrate from scene to scene via relocation—those moments in which the score calls for an object to be picked up and deposited in a new location or slid to one. All the while the player may consider what the table looks like at a given moment (as a sculptural tableau), what the body in motion looks like during a given passage (as a corporeal or choreographic idea), and what the final destination of objects looks like at the conclusion (as the cause of a pictographic score). It is a puzzle—albeit with an infinite number of solutions—that governs ergonomics, sound, appearance, and aesthetics.

The player should note that although the system by which pictographs are interpreted may not be improvised, there is no prohibition on improvising the location of objects during the performance of *Section IIa* (so long as the given musical rhetoric can be realized). Of course, if the player changes the location of an object markedly from rehearsal, a given passage may not be playable. But if slight changes are made from performance to performance—or gross ones that do not have adverse consequences—then the outcome will be very desirable: a pictographic notation that varies from performance to performance; or, equally important, a notation that varies from *Section I* to *Section III*. So while the manner in which pictographs are interpreted must be fixed, variations in the visual content of scores is welcome.

## Learning to Trace

The tracing of objects must be fast, habitual, and unpretentious. The player is admonished to memorize the inking rules (below) and metabolize the ritual of tracing, perhaps as if preparing a traditional piece of music whose nimble rendering profits from impeccable memorization, dedicated rehearsal, and supple physical agility. The point is that tracing is not an enterprise *between* passages of music; it *is* music.

The player should devise a tracing order in advance according to personal needs and affinities (what object is traced and removed first, second, and so on), but be prepared to revise that order in the face of unpredicted performance exigencies. How objects will be swiftly removed and relocated to their original stands should be a considered factor. The goal is not only to produce a score for *Section III* but to clear the table so that the score can be removed and quickly carried to the next instrumental setup.

## Tracing Objects: The Inking Rules

At the conclusion of *Section IIa* the objects will reside at various places on the table. Their shapes—their outlines or another marking as given below—should be traced onto the paper at the final position they occupy.

There are four categories of inking rules:

- (A) **Basic Shapes:** organized by score system into *miscellaneous* (top line), *triangular* (second line), *circular* (third line), and *rectilinear* (bottom line);
- (B) **Embellishments;**
- (C) **Connecting Lines;** and
- (D) **Alphanumeric Values.**

### A. BASIC SHAPES

#### SYSTEM 1: MISCELLANEOUS

metal “beer” bottle caps: an X is marked next to each cap before its removal.  
three L-shaped allen wrenches: L-shaped tracing of the “inside” of each wrench.  
length of heavy chain: curled, swirly line approximating chain’s path.  
modest tree branch or twig: lines follow the “trunk” plus two or three forks.

#### SYSTEM 2: TRIANGULAR

length of aluminum foil: a triangle is marked at the site of the balled foil.  
butcher paper score, crumpled: a triangle is marked at the site of the crumpled score.

#### SYSTEM 3: CIRCULAR

plastic cup, inverted: circle, then quickly shaded with crosshatching.  
“tin” can, medium: circle.  
metal pie pan, inverted: half-circle (that is, half of the pan is traced).  
small or medium-small stainless steel mixing bowl, inverted: half-circle (half of the bowl is traced).

#### SYSTEM 4: RECTILINEAR

cassette tape in plastic case: rectangle.  
plastic CD jewel box, conventional size: rectangle.  
small or medium hardcover book: three sides of a rectangle (that is, one side of the book is not traced).

## B. EMBELLISHMENTS

1. Three of the X's (marked next to bottle caps) should be surrounded by diamond shapes (squares rotated 45 degrees); two of these should be near one another while the third should be distant from them.
2. A short (4-8 inch) arrow should extend from the periphery of either circle (empty or crosshatched) toward the direction of the CD jewel case rectangle (which will eventually display a letter in it; see *Alphanumeric Values* below). Preferably, the arrow will terminate long before it reaches the rectangle.

## C. CONNECTING LINES

1. The two triangles are connected by "straight" dashed lines.
2. The crosshatched circle and rectangle from the tracing of the cassette tape (which will eventually display a number in it; see *Alphanumeric Values* below) are connected by a "straight" solid line.
3. Three shapes (e.g., circles, rectangles, X's) should be identified. Imagining the triangle that they suggest (i.e., points in a triangular constellation), wavy lines (like a sinusoidal or sawtooth waveform) should be drawn on *two* of the imagined triangle's sides.

## D. ALPHANUMERIC VALUES

1. A letter corresponding to the current day of the week should be written in the CD jewel box rectangle:
  - A=Saturday
  - B=Sunday
  - C=Monday
  - D=Tuesday
  - E=Wednesday
  - F=Thursday
  - G=Friday
2. The number corresponding to the current day of the month (1-31) should be written in the empty (non-crosshatched) circle.
3. The number of bottle caps (X's) that reside on the left hand side of the table should be written inside one of the two triangles. The number of bottle caps that reside on the right side of the table should be written inside the cassette tape rectangle. (A bottle cap count should be nearly instantaneous; it can be approximate.)

Additional inking notes:

- For the sake of remembering the tracing rules and completing the tracing in the shortest possible duration, the player will likely benefit from tracing and removing objects in the same order each time the piece is played.
- The letter corresponding to the day of the week and the number corresponding to the day of the month can be prepared in advance mentally or jotted down in a concealed location.
- Straight edges are not used. The "straight" lines are expected to be charmingly imperfect.

- Dashed lines, wavy lines, "straight" lines, swirly lines, and arrows should not cross the interior of closed polygons (i.e., circles, triangles, rectangles/diamonds). Instead they should touch a polygon's edge, temporarily discontinue, and then resume at the opposing edge. Whereas lines may cross other unclosed lines (i.e., semi-circle, three sides of a rectangle, L-shapes, branch tracing, arrows, and other dashed, wavy, "straight," and swirly lines).

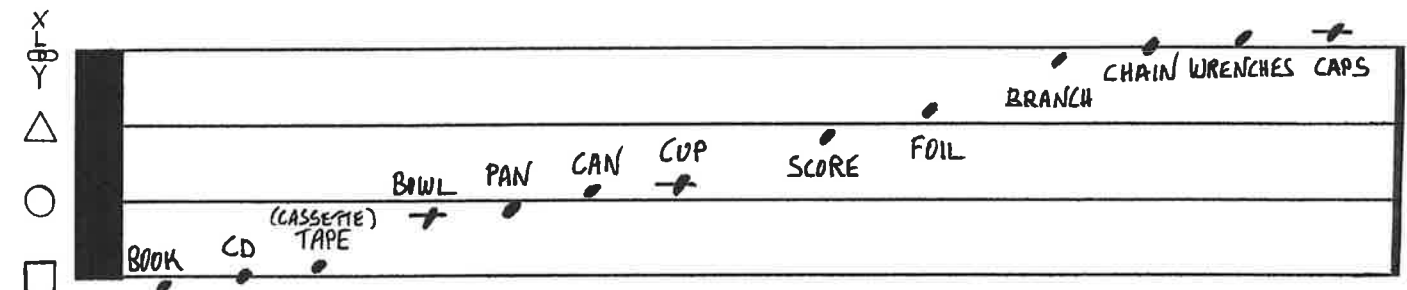
- It is anticipated that some objects (e.g., chains, aluminum foil) may be unintentionally relocated as the consequence of moving other objects. It is also acceptable if some objects extend partially beyond the edge of the paper and, consequently, receive only partial treatment when tracing. Other objects (e.g., bottle caps in particular) may fall off the table. This is permitted; they should be left on the floor and not traced at the conclusion. However, the goal is to keep objects on the table. They should not be coaxed off the table in a deliberate or comical manner.

- Some objects will need to be removed first and, based on the player's memory of their final location on the table, traced immediately afterward or a short time later (e.g., tree branch, chain).

- Judicious changes—when uncommonly sagacious—are allowed when tracing the outlines of objects. For example, the drawn path of a tree branch or chain may be slightly adjusted on paper. Two objects that nearly (but not quite) elide may nonetheless result in tracing lines that touch one another on paper. And a line that doesn't quite reach a polygon might be extended in order to terminate in the polygon's edge. Conversely, objects may be slightly "unpacked" or separated—within reason. The player will take care not to nurse these decisions through delay or by the application of extensive mental energy. Such changes, if any and however discriminating, will be executed spontaneously, almost capriciously.

### Legend

The player will note that *Section II* systems are grouped according to their tracing geometries: *miscellaneous* (top line), *triangular* (second line), *circular* (third line), and *rectilinear* (bottom line).



⊠ The first appearance of an object on the table. The object is audibly placed or dropped on the table at the given moment.

⊗ The object is picked up and audibly placed or dropped elsewhere on the table. The player will pick up the object before the articulation; the given temporal moment denotes the placing or dropping of the object in its new destination.

— The object is audibly moved (dragged, pushed, slid) across the table's surface to another location during the given duration. (Stems denote the passage of time and do not suggest accents or additional articulations.) The object may move a long distance or a short one, by a direct or circuitous path. Note the presence of a circular rather than ovoid notehead.



Tremolo: the object is rubbed back and forth on the table in a rapid (unmeasured) reciprocal motion. The object travels only a few centimeters back and forth.



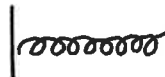
The object is “played,” tapped. The fleshy part of the fingertip is used by default. But the player is welcome to substitute fingernails, knuckles, open palms, etc. As such, the object may be conceived as a tabla, a conga, or another drum—or, for that matter, an unconventional instrument such as a telegraph tapper, hotel reception desk bell, game show buzzer, etc.



Trill: the object is tapped repeatedly by two fingers in rapid oscillating motion. This can be achieved in the manner of playing a two-finger trill on the piano keyboard (for example, a trill on adjacent white notes played by the index and middle fingers, or a thumb and pinkie trill covering the interval of an octave). The sound of a trill employing fingers from different hands (e.g., single stroke roll, double stroke roll) is welcome; however, there are no passages in which this is practical.



Crumple the length of aluminum foil—fashioning it into a large very loosely compacted and irregular ball—during the given duration. The duration marks the time the foil is handled from its pre-performance position until it is dropped onto the table.



Circular rubbing of the object’s surface with fingers or palm.



Grace note figure to be played as fast as possible. Immediate iterations on the same object may be played by one hand with multiple fingers, or by two hands (e.g., flam, drag, ruff).

## Genealogy

*Composition Machine #1* is a logical response to—almost a synthesis of—two prior works.

*The Metaphysics of Notation* is an elaborate graphic score that included no instruction about the interpretation of its various pictographs. In this regard it was an open-ended provocation or stimulus for intrepid performers. The score was fixed, but the resulting sound was indeterminate, diverse, and personal.

The fourth and final movement of *Straitjacket*—in which players draw given pictures on amplified easels in a specified rhythm—is conceptually the reverse: the performers’ strictly guided drawing actions are sonic events whose consequence is a picture—a score that could potentially be interpreted (but never is during *Straitjacket*).

*Composition Machine #1* includes both aspects in a causal, looping narrative: the performer draws his or her own score and then interprets it. Where most composers supply a score and its method of interpretation (whether explicit or via cultural implication), I provide neither. I simply tell the performer how to draw a score and then leave them to interpret it.

## Microculture

The composer is grateful to the many intrepid performers who co-commissioned the piece. Why so many players? The very concept of this piece—its layered indeterminate attributes that suggest multiform interpretation—invites a significant cohort of players, ideally ones who will eventually experience one another’s interpretations, share ideas, etc. Will a small “culture of the piece” evolve around it? Will exegetic orientations coalesce around one or more conceptual loci, or will approaches remain steadfastly discrete? What does the knowledge of the existence of other interpretations do to one’s own concept? Does a player’s fidelity remain bound to the original text or increasingly to an emerging community? What does one do with an awareness of being radical or mainstream?

With time—and given the extraordinary and rather unprecedentedly large number of foundationally committed players whose resources are embodied in the vast, unimaginable imagination, creative capacity, musical sensitivity, and artistic agendas of this immense cast of commissioners—I hope to learn the answer to these questions and, undoubtedly, pose a few more.

I wish to thank Terry Longshore for (once again) championing my music with heroic dedication and remarkable artistry; for taking the lead on this project; and for gently nudging me out of the muteness engendered by my most recent (but surely not final) artistic crisis. It’s good to have good friends.

## A Welcome Problem

Do you want to sound like *you*? I mean, isn’t that a bit boring? You can sound like *you* anytime you compose your own music or improvise something. Shouldn’t this piece function as an occasion, as a stimulus for you to sound different? If your response to the pictographs sounds like *you*, what is the point of the enterprise? And moreover, if you sound like *you*, then maybe you are the composer. People will think that you are doing all the “heavy lifting” (even if in reality it might take less “effort” for you to sound like *you*). Then a crisis of authorship will arise and you’ll resent me.

But why sound like *me*? That seems worse. If you sound like *me* then everyone who plays this piece will sound like *me*. And that makes one piece, whereas I want this provocation—this impetus—to sound like many pieces. And besides, I’m bored of *me*; I need less *me* in my life, not more. I could stand a little bit of *you*. (Or a lot of *you*.)

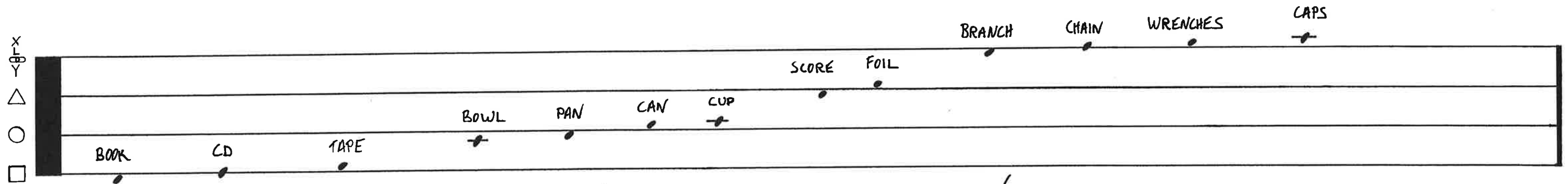
So let’s have *you*. The whole point is to hear more of *you*.

But we’ve already established that there is something underachieving about using this piece to sound like *you*. So now what?

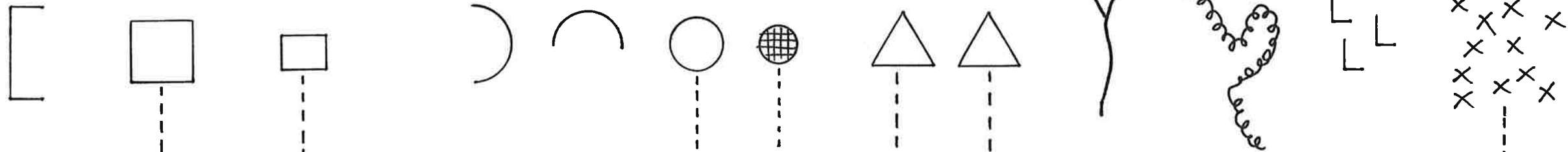
What are *we* going to do?

Dear performer—intrepid partner—I offer you this modest irritant disguised as a piece of music. But it is not a piece of music. It is a composition machine. And the composition it makes is not a sound world. (Those vibrations are merely evidence that you’ve activated the machine.) The contraption is an invitation to interact with the very question of invention and interpretation. And your resulting aural vibrations and visual frequencies are the sonic and ocular detritus of an inquiry, proof that we were here asking not the eternally hackneyed question “why are we here?” but the more consequential “so what are we going to do?”

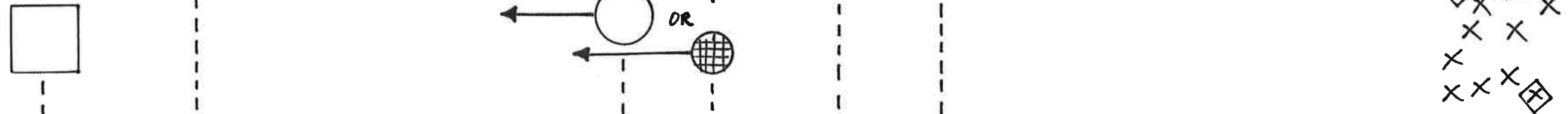
**Pictorial Distillation of Inking Rules**



**A. BASIC SHAPES**



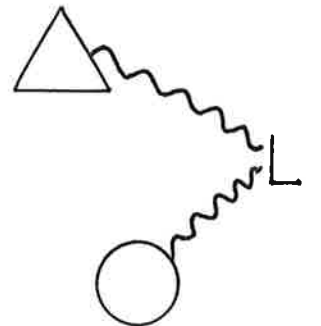
**B. EMBELLISHMENTS\***



**C. CONNECTING LINES**



THREE SHAPES IN TRIANGULAR CONSTELLATION. FOR EXAMPLE:



**D. ALPHANUMERIC VALUES**



\* THE CD RECTANGLE IS REPRODUCED AS AN "EMBELLISHMENT" ONLY TO SHOW THAT IT IS THE "TARGET" OF THE ARROW EXTENDING FROM THE CUP OR CAN CIRCLE.





30  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$

TRAM  
BOWL  
TAPE  
PAN  
FOIL  
CRUMPLE  
DROP  
BOOK

39  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

TRAM  
CAN  
CUP  
PAN  
BOWL  
CD  
FOIL  
SCORE  
CHAIN  
TAP  
BOOK  
TAP  
BOOK  
TAP  
BOOK

47  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{7}{4}$   $\frac{7}{4}$   $\frac{1}{4}$

CAPS  
CHAIN  
PAN  
BOOK  
CIRCULAR RUBBING (ON BOOK)

52  $\frac{1}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{7}{4}$   $\frac{7}{4}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{1}{4}$

ONE CAP  
FOIL  
BRANCH  
NYC  
MEND PARK