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Acoustic Exploration for Prepared Piano

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**ACOUSTIC EXPLORATION FOR
PREPARED PIANO**

Jesse Schaar

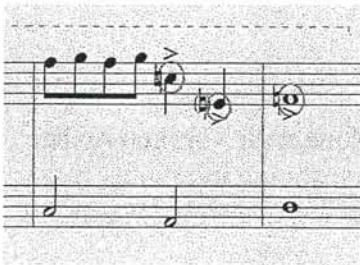
2007

Preparing the Piano

I

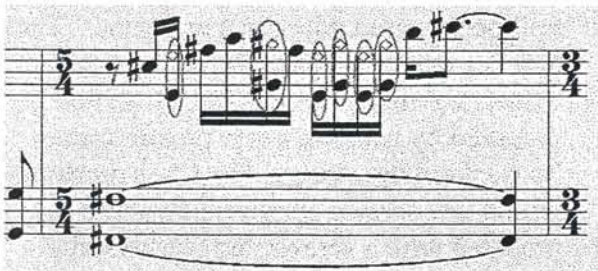


The strings which correspond to the circled pitches are to be prepared with dimes. These notes on the piano have three strings per note, so the dime may be wedged between the three strings. The pitches created will be lower than the written pitch. The target created pitches for d, e# and f# are a, c# and d respectively. The dimes may be adjusted along the length of the string to achieve these target pitches.



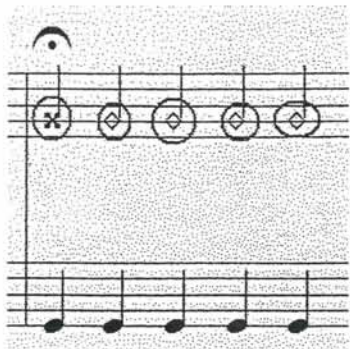
The strings which correspond to these circled pitches (which are an octave above where written) should be prepared with the rubber insulation of a wire. The insulation should be stripped from the wire and then a cut must be length-wise along one side of the remaining insulating tube. These tubes will be wrapped around each of the three strings which create these pitches. The target pitches for c, e, and f are a, c# and d respectively. The pitches may be adjusted by altering the length of the insulation added to the strings, but these pitches may be slightly out of tune to create a more abstract prepared sound.

II



All notes which have a harmonic note-head are to be prepared with rubber bands. The rubber bands should be folded and wedged between the strings at the octave harmonic node, so that when the note is played, the harmonic an octave above sounds.

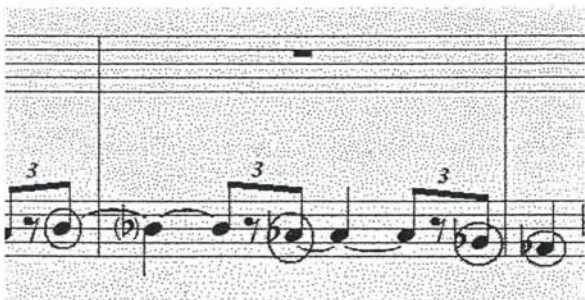
III



In this movement, the harmonics should be achieved by the player touching the string itself with his finger. The held note with the 'x'-shaped note head should be used to play the note while the player adjusts his finger until he finds the target harmonic, and diamond-shaped note heads should be played as normal notes in rhythm while sounding the targeted harmonic. Because of the demand of reaching into the piano and touching the nodes on the string, this piece may be impossible on a full grand piano, and a baby grand piano is recommended.

IV

The improvisation at the beginning of this movement is to be done with a broken rubber band tied to a washer. Many unique sounds may be created by snapping the rubber band against the strings, dragging the washer on the strings, allowing the suspended washer to rattle against a vibrating string etc.



All notes in the fourth movement are prepared sounds. The lowest four notes (which are an octave below where written) will be prepared with rattling sounds. The low Ab will be prepared with tiny hollow cylindrical metal pieces. The Bb should be prepared by hanging a few picture frame hooks from the strings. The Cb is prepared with a few screws appropriately sized to

not fall through the strings, and the Db will be prepared with a screws and washers, the screws are wedged between the strings and the washers, placed on the screws are allowed to rattle. The lowest D of the piano should be prepared with about one dozen question mark hooks hanging from the single string. Middle C should be prepared by wedging a razor blade (a coin may be substituted) in the strings. The Bb above should be prepared with tiny metal clips clipped on to the strings, and the C above this should be prepared with enough screws wedged in the strings that a dead (hardly resonant) sound is created.

With brief breaks between movements, this piece will be approximately 5 minutes long.

I

$\text{♩} = 100$

8^{va}-----

Piano

mp

15^{ma}-----

6

mf

11

17

8^{va}-----

II

$\text{♩} = 40$

Piano

mp

Musical score for Piano, measures 1-11. The score is written in treble and bass staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 40$. The dynamics are marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score consists of four systems of two staves each. Measure 1 is in 3/4 time. Measure 2 is in 5/4 time. Measure 3 is in 4/4 time. Measure 4 is in 3/4 time. Measure 5 is in 5/4 time. Measure 6 is in 4/4 time. Measure 7 is in 3/4 time. Measure 8 is in 4/4 time. Measure 9 is in 3/4 time. Measure 10 is in 4/4 time. Measure 11 is in 4/4 time. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

III

$\text{♩} = 60$

Piano

mf

Musical score for Piano, measures 4-7 and 8-11. The score is written in 5/4 time with a tempo of 60 beats per minute. The first system (measures 4-7) shows the right hand playing a melody of eighth notes and the left hand playing a bass line of eighth notes. The second system (measures 8-11) shows the right hand playing a melody of eighth notes with a fermata over the final note, and the left hand playing a bass line of eighth notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

IV

$\text{♩} = 100$

Piano

f

g^{bb} throughout