

Working Sounds for \$8.10

(ca. 20 minutes)

for Christian in Basel

by Eugene & Young Eun Kim

Program Notes

Guiding thoughts approximating an interpretive frame:

1 It is in our creative interests to bring the materiality of the performance space into conscious perception. Rooms like this help contain what attractive sounds and silences are produced here. But neither the performance nor the protective capabilities of the room may exist optimally without some quiet processes of outsourced labor.

2 The system of elements chosen to embody the identity of this hall are its curtains and windows, and their scheduled maintenance (routine cleaning). They are functional modulations that contribute in retrospect to direct perceptions toward the concert stage. Thus, presented here is a configuration which inverts and re-weaves these relationships, resembling a complementary form of performance situated on the peripheries of musical-social events.

3 Christian Smith is a dear friend. This piece, more than just a portrait of neglected silences, is also a dedication to the modes of solitude between our meetings. He was raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, where the minimum wage is \$8.10 per hour as of 2016.

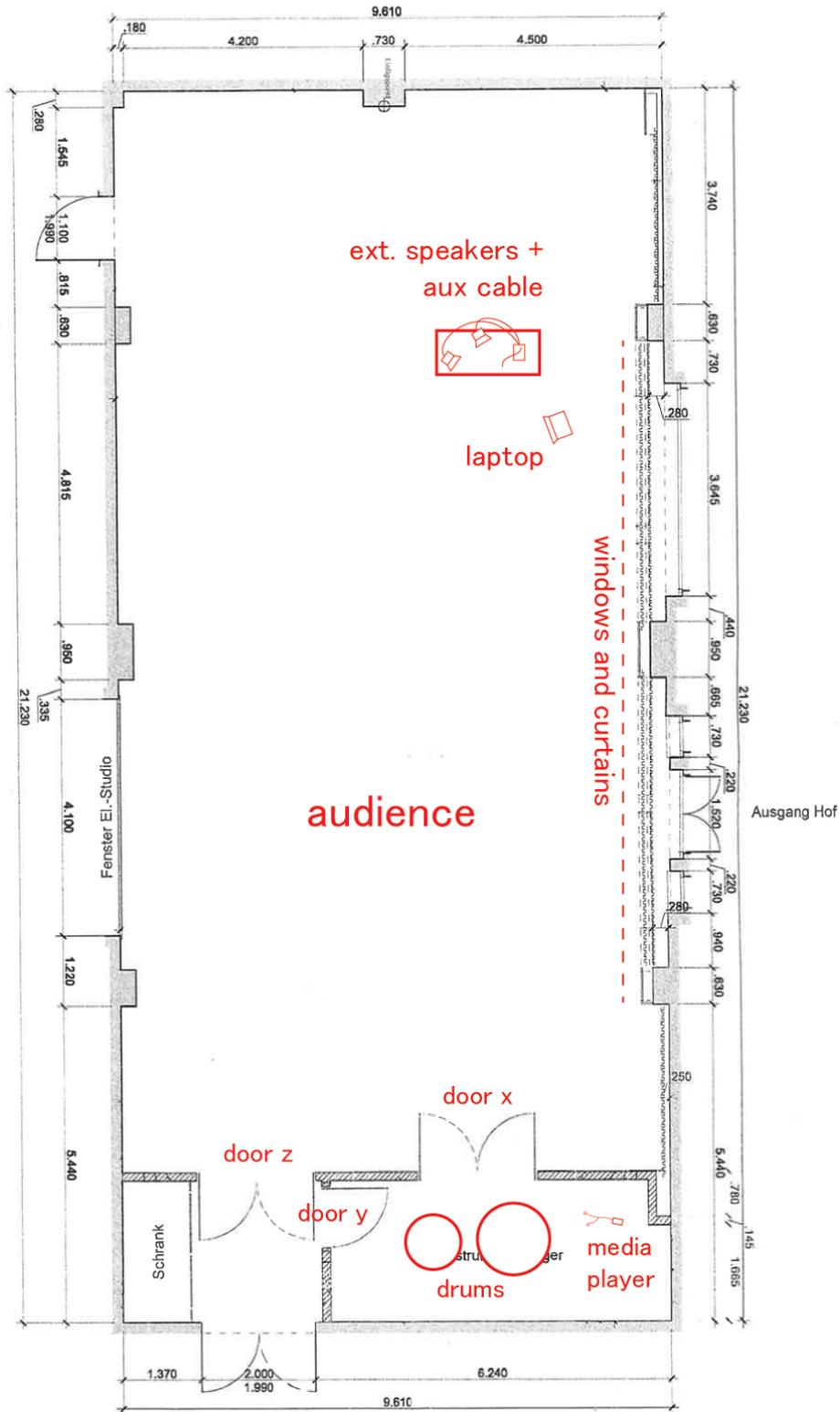
Materials

1. Portable media player + earphones
2. Laptop
3. External speakers + auxiliary mini jack cable (+ mixer/interface if needed)
4. Damp cleaning rag (microfiber cloths work best)
5. Two tracks of audio given by the composer
 - i. Track A contains a radio show, silence, and four edited songs
 - ii. Track B contains instructions, the Intermission piece, and a conversation
6. A medium-sized desk
7. Largest timpani and bass drum in possession + softest mallets available

Initial setup checklist

- Curtains are closed, all windows shut (from the beginning of the program, if possible).
- Levels for all audio playback should be adjusted to the volume of a quiet conversation. The idea is *not* for everything to be heard clearly, nor for the audio to fill the hall. For reference, the Intermission piece on Track B (7:22) should be *barely audible*.
- The portable media player with Track B loaded and earphones should be set and ready in the Instrumentenlager.
- The cleaning rag, external speakers, the score, and aux cable, along with any other equipment, should be placed on a medium-sized table near the windows, towards the back of the hall (see diagram on pg. 3).
- Speakers are angled generally towards the windows, not too close to each other.
- The laptop with Track A loaded should be placed on the floor or on a chair, facing away from the audience.

Floor plan of initial setup



PART ONE

For one performer, media playback, curtains, and windows

1. After finishing the previous piece, turn up all hall lights and walk over into the Instrumentenlager. Shut the doors behind you and prepare to play Track B on your media player. Be sure it contains enough battery power.
2. Begin the piece by starting Track B. Continue to follow instructions on the audio track.

Transcription of instructions on Track B:

Hello Christian, congratulations for everything you've done so far! I'm sure you've read and listened to this even before the performance, I wonder what this does to your mind and body during the actual thing? Throughout the performance, please try not to react theatrically to these instructions. Before going out, be sure that you are only wearing your right earbud, with the left earbud hanging at your chest.

Now open both doors, but don't close them behind you. Walk swiftly, but not hurriedly, to the table setup. I'll give you a moment to get there. They're not clapping, are they?

Go ahead and start Track A on the laptop in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, play. Sound check: make sure it's loud enough that you can hear it while standing near the windows. The voices on the track are ours, talking about the songs on your playlist. Listen for a bit, even if most of it is incomprehensible. Young Eun has insightful things to say.

[when bbymutha starts] Now it's time to clean some windows. Grab the damp cleaning rag and walk over to the leftmost side of the curtain wall. Pull the curtain to the right to reveal just one window (from here on out, I'm referring to the bottommost window). Begin cleaning this window and do not stop until the next cue.

[when Beach House starts] Finish up the cleaning. Open the window lengthwise, from the top—so, if I assume correctly with this type of window, it's when you turn the handle 180° upwards. Do be mindful of what may enter the room (e.g. rainwater, animals, insects, wind, vulgar noises, cigarette smoke, etc.).

Now pull the curtain to the right, revealing the next window. Repeat the procedure thus far.

[when Justin Bieber starts] Good job, Christian. Open, then pull away the curtain, next window to the right...

[when Danny L. Harle starts] Time to open this one. When you pull away the next set of curtains, reveal only the double doors. Swing both doors wide open once you've finished cleaning them.

"Always Remember" should be fading out. Walk quietly over to the table and get ready to unplug your media player. Once the media player is unplugged, you will connect it to the aux cable. You will then hit play on the media player again soon thereafter.

You may unplug the player...now. [end of transcription]

***Note: for optimal alignment, re-start Track B on the media player five seconds after unplugging it.**

PART TWO

For one performer, media playback, curtains, windows, doors, timpani, and bass drum

0. Dim or turn off all hall lights and sit quietly somewhere for the duration of the Intermission piece. You can choose to read over this score or just listen to the room. Move onto the next step once you hear two bells in quick succession from Track B.
1. Head back to the Instrumentenlager and begin cleaning the skin of the bass and timpani drum, just briefly. When ready, execute a roll on the bass or timpani drum with your softest mallets to produce quiet drones. Feel free to use the pedal on the timpani, if needed. Try not to play randomly—take cues from the environment, listening, as always. Do not overpower Track A and B.
2. After a couple of drone phrases, close *door x* (see diagram on pg. 3), and open *door y* and *door z*. Go back to play drones.
3. Inversely to (2), after a couple of phrases, close *door y* and *door z*, and re-open *door x*. Play drones.
4. Similar to (2), after some phrases, close *door x*, and open *door y* and *door z*. Play drones slightly louder. These steps (2-4) should fit within a span of about 10 minutes.
5. To close the piece, exit the Instrumentenlager through *door y*, enter the hall through *door z*, and begin arranging the windows and curtains by opening/closing them to various degrees, producing ambience of a slightly darker quality. This is a listening, smelling, temperature and light-gauging improvisation; use all your senses judiciously.
6. End the piece with whatever acknowledgements and gratitude you've prepared. Thank you, Christian.