

GONG DANCE à 7

by Daniel Goode

--for seven performers with hand-held gongs--

Line up in order of pitches, high to low.

In a march-like tempo, each plays their gong in order, high to low, one per beat with the eighth beat as a rest:

- 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,(rest). During the next 8 beats, #'s 1 - 6 exchange places in pairs while #7 improvises an 8-beat rhythmic solo:
1,2,3,4,5,6,(7 solos)
- 2,1,4,3,6,5,7,(rest). Play this resulting new pattern as before.
- 2,4,1,6,3,7,5,(rest) While #2 solos, the remaining 6 players exchange places in pairs and this resulting pattern is played. This process continues with the solo alternating between one end of the line and the other. The 8th time is:
- 7,6,5,4,3,2,1,(rest). After this phrase, instead of one solo, all improvise together rhythmically for 8 beats while turning in place. Then repeat this line, after which #7 solos and the rest exchange places. The process continues as before until the original series re-appears the 8th time:
- 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,(rest) In the next 8 beats, the players turn in place silently and on the 9th beat play one note together, not loud.

The piece can be performed as a stationary line or as a moving line (a processional). If the latter, the performers should have their shoulders facing the audience. In order for the line to move, the rear of each exchanging pair must move ahead of the other. Room must be kept between each person in line. During the tutti improvisation, the direction of the line can be reversed, so the line ends where it began. If on a march, the line could simply continue in one direction.

A well-rehearsed style of performance is necessary. One suggestion is to have each person develop a consistent style of movement and gesture which is unique and continued throughout the performance. There should also be some group gestures in common, for example turning the head in the direction the sound is moving before, during, or after one has played one's note.

The piece may last one complete cycle, or many. If many, the ensemble might develop some variants such as occasional syncopation during the playing of the series.

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Daniel Goode is a composer, clarinetist and a gamelan player since 1976 with Gamelan Son of Lion in New York. Some of his works can be heard on the group's two Folkways recordings, "Gamelan in the New World."