

SOUND/PATH/FIELD in Winter

A talk by Robert Morris

This talk was given in the week preceding the performance of my outdoor composition SOUND/PATH/FIELD at 3 p.m. on September 24, 2006 on the quadrangle of Syracuse University. It introduces the conceptual and aesthetic basis for the piece as well as documents its genesis in the winter and spring of 2006.

I presented it with music-sound and slides at the music department of SUNY Geneseo (9-18-06), the Eastman School of Music Composition Symposium (9-21-06), and the Setnor School of Music, Syracuse University (9-22-06).

The talk is ninety-one pages long, with each page read within a time unit of 30 seconds (although some pages do not have text); thus the talk is 45.5 minutes long. Each page of the talk shows a tone and/or a minimal musical event that accompanies the unit. At the top of some pages is a heading starting with an “S” denoting a slide change, followed by the number of the slide and a brief description of the slide’s image, such as: “S 3a Wales shore.”

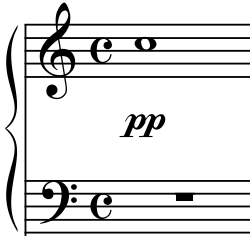
The PowerPoint file and an audio CD of the music-sound for the talk are available from me for a nominal sum.

—Robert Morris

♩ = 12

S 1 title

I



0:00

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I 4-23

Bell



2

The musical score is written for three staves. The top two staves are grouped by a brace on the left. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a whole note on the second line (G4). The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a whole rest. Below the top two staves, the number '2' is written, followed by '4-13'. The third staff is in treble clef and contains a half note on the first line (F4), followed by an ellipsis (...). The word 'Bell' is written to the left of this staff, and the dynamic marking 'mf' is written below it.

S 2 Title with Picture

0:30

This is a talk about the genesis of Sound/Path/Field, written for eight different ensembles, carillon, and outdoor theater and lasting ninety minutes.

My previous outdoor compositions call for music to be performed in natural surroundings, but Sound/Path/Field is different because the occasion and the location are within social and civic space.





S 3a Wales shore

1:00

In a piece this vast and diverse, time and space may be experienced in ways different from music played in concert halls. Perhaps it's like looking at the countryside from a great distance; one sees patterns and connections among things normally far apart.



4

4 4-26

Bell

S 3b Borge's quote

1:30

In Sound/Path/Field the basic unit of time is the minute, with the onset of some minutes announced by the carillon. Minutes are felt rather than measured, being too long to be contained within local memory or the time of a breath. Minute-long units encourage us to experience the music as time, rather than as being within time.



5

pp

5

Bell

S 3c black

2:00

In the winter of 2005, I was approached by Society of New Music to ask if I would compose an outdoor piece to celebrate its thirty-fifth anniversary. Soon I was in touch with Neva Pilgrim, the Society's director. Since the Society is based in Syracuse, New York, Neva asked performing organizations within greater Syracuse if they might support or contribute to the piece.

6

whistle

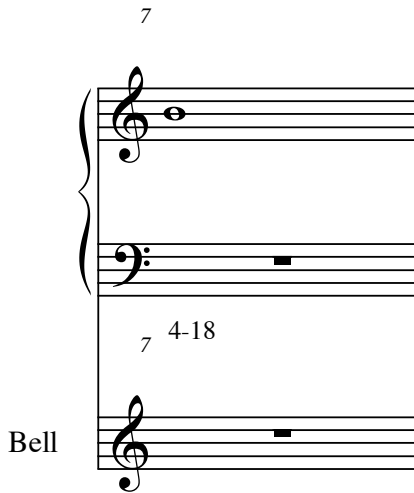
Bell

6 4-17

The image shows musical notation for two instruments. The top staff, labeled 'whistle', is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. It contains two whole notes: one on the first line of the treble staff (F4) and one on the second line of the bass staff (F3). The bottom staff, labeled 'Bell', is a single treble clef staff. It contains one whole note on the first line (F4). Above the bell staff, the number '6' is written, and below it, the range '4-17' is indicated.

2:30

Due to Neva's good work, soon musical ensembles and individuals within the University's Setnor School and the University at large agreed to perform the work so that the location became fixed on the quad. The Syracuse Children's Chorus, the Westhill High School Singers, and the Open Hand Puppet Theatre also signed on.



3:00

My previous outdoor pieces were performed by one ensemble divided up into parts. But here different performing groups that do not usually play together inhabit the same time and space; their music is performed independently except for stop and starting times. Sometimes ensembles play different versions of the same music.



8

ord

Bell

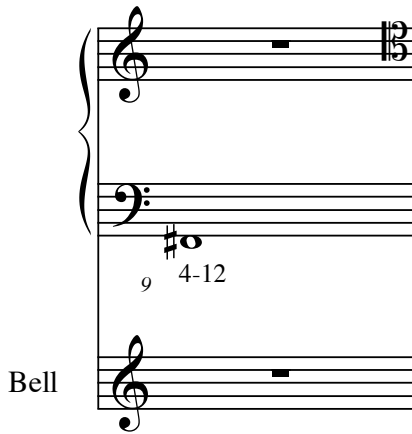
8 4-28

S 4a list

3:30

The screen lists the people and ensembles that perform Sound/Path/Field.





S 4b black

4:00

Although written for traditional music organizations, Sound/Path/Field offers the listener a non-traditional way of perceiving music—indeed a different music—in which space and time are experienced as concomitant, replacing the usual emphasis on unity with a focus on process, on how events change.



10

10

sham ord

Bell

10

S 5 waterfall

4:30 (sham chord at end)

Whether within or without a scientific frame of mind, if you think about it, everything is changing; what we call stasis is just something changing too slowly for it to be noticed in the moment. The idea that there is something that does not change, or underlies change, is a hypothesis, not an axiom.



Shaku

11

mp

11 4-16

Bell

S 6 clouds

5:00

Even on a calm day, when contemplating a body of water or the sky, one often senses a dynamic presence, something that while still, is not static. This may be more apparent in the larger realms of scale than at local levels of perception.

The question is how to suggest—even express—in music what appears to be a dynamic unfolding of energy. What aspects of music will allow it to be heard?

12
12

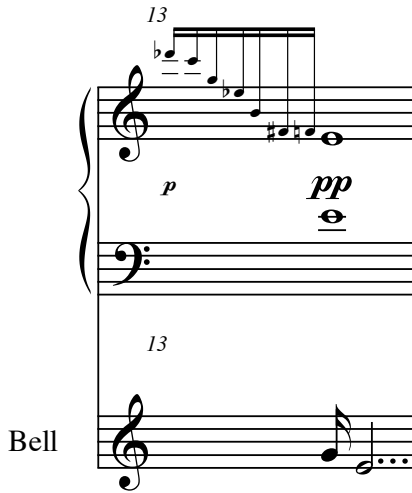
clar

Bell

5:30 (clar upbeat to next)

While large scale helps, the composer Webern, in his beautiful and elegant short compositions was interested in expressing dynamic presence. In my own compositional history, I felt such connections at first intuitively, simply by noticing that titles like “Strata” and “Streams and Willows,” seemed completely appropriate to suggest the content of my music. Slowly I became aware that my compositional technique had a lot to do with this orientation.





S 7a Einstein

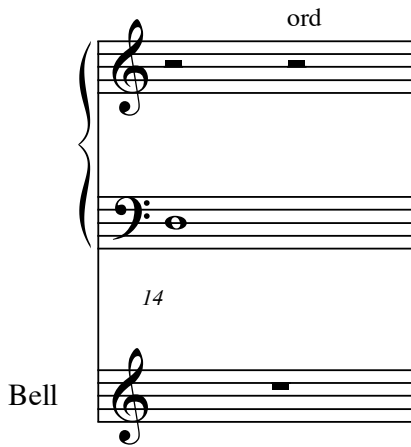
6:00

The following quote comes from the abstract of the scientific paper titled, "On the Effects of External Sensory Input on Time Dilation." by A. Einstein, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J.

“When a man sits with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like a minute; but let him sit on a hot stove for a minute, and it seems longer than any hour. That’s relativity.”



14
14

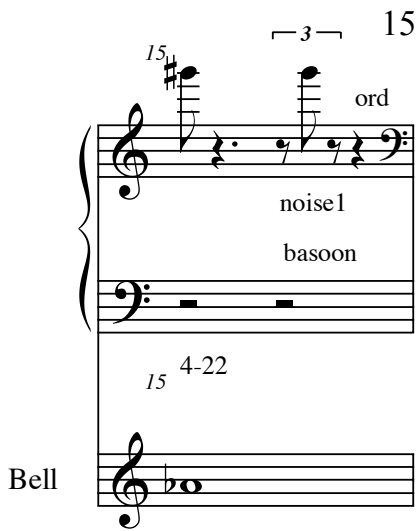


S 7b black

6:30

This talk is composed of text and music-sound; the music-sound consists of a series held tones, once in a while elaborated by chords or other events. These notes change every 30 seconds; nevertheless, these equally spaced stretches of sound seem of different lengths.





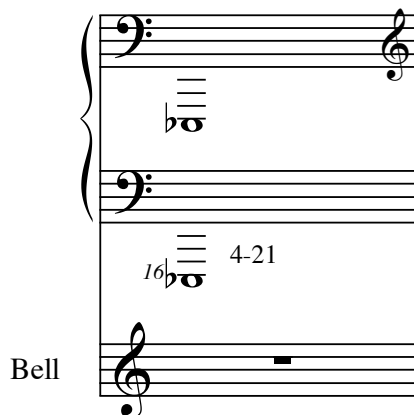
S 8a 90-note on green

7:00 (noise at 17.5")

In fact, this talk is based on the structure of Sound/Path/Field, which is guided by a series of 90 notes, one per unit or minute. I will describe the functions of this series later, but here the same series articulates the talk every 30 seconds.

In this way, this talk is a model or map of the composition, at the scale of 2:1.





Musical score for Bell. The score consists of three staves. The top two staves are connected by a brace and contain a bass clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The bottom staff contains a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The word "Bell" is written to the left of the bottom staff. The notation includes a whole note chord in the top two staves and a whole note chord in the bottom staff, both marked with a 16 and a 4-21.

S 8b green

7:30

Let me continue that quotation from
Borges, a text that I set for one of the
choral ensembles to sing:

“Time is the substance from which I am
made. Time is a river which carries me
along, but I am the river; it is a tiger that
devours me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire
that consumes me, but I am the fire.”

17

ord

17 4-24

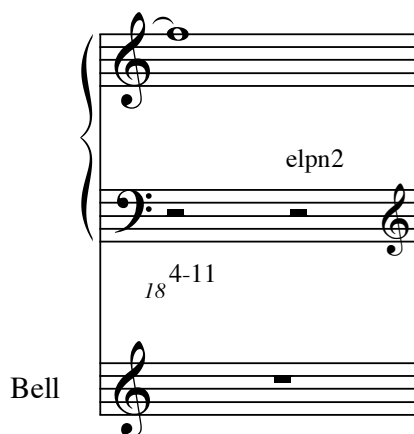
Bell

8:00

Borges' assertions about time can be found more radically reflected in classical sources, such as the philosophical writings of Dogen, a Zen-monk who lived in the 13th-century. For Dogen, being and time are fused.



18
18



The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a whole note on G4. The middle staff is a bass clef with a whole note on G2, labeled 'elpn2'. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a whole note on G4, labeled '18 4-11'. The word 'Bell' is written to the left of the bottom staff.

S 8c Dogen

8:30

Dogen writes: “Time is not separate from you, and as you are present, time does not go away. As time is not marked by coming and going, the moment you [for instance] climbed the mountain is the time-being right now. This is the meaning of the time-being.”

19

ord

19 *p*

Bell

9:00

Another Dogen quote: “Because there is no other time than this very moment, ‘existence-time’ is always the entire time. Existing things, existing phenomena are all times; all existence and the entire world are embraced within the time of every moment. Ponder for a while whether there is any existence or world outside of the present moment.”



20
20

cor an

pad2

piano

ord

>

20

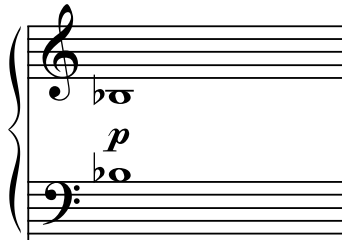
Bell

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'S 8d green'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for 'cor an' and 'pad2', the middle for 'piano' and 'ord', and the bottom for 'Bell'. The 'cor an' and 'pad2' staves have a treble clef, while the 'piano' and 'ord' staves have a bass clef. The 'Bell' staff has a treble clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like '>' and '20'.

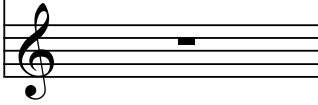
S 8d green

9:30

After many years, it became obvious to me that working with abstract musical materials such as series, arrays, and schema was not a fascination with the abstract for its own sake, but a good way for me to make music that conveys what I sense in natural settings, on outings and hikes.

21*21 pp*

Bell



10:00

--



22

22

Horn

CONT

4-19

22

Bell

S 8e 29-note on green

10:30

The 90-note series determines the tonality and harmony of each unit of Sound/Path/Field. The series is actually a linked succession of three related cycles of 29 notes. These cycles have a remarkable property, taking the notes in overlapping groups of four; all twenty-nine of the four-note harmonies available in the 12-note, equal-tempered system, are found exactly once in the cycle.



pp

4-20
23

Bell

S 9a 29-note on blue

11:00

Thus, as the piece goes on, one hears music based on the present unit's nuclear tone and one of the 29 four-note harmonies. This gives some unity and identity to each unit, no matter how the unit is composed out. Via the isomorphism of pitch and time, the timings of the musical events in each unit are also derived from the harmony of the unit.



24

24

marm.

24

Bell

S 9b blue

11:30 (marm at 45’)

While the composition has many moments where different musics occur together in any relation from correspondence to conflict, this talk is a stripped down model, certainly stark by contrast.

It might be called “Sound/Path/Field in Winter.”

25

ord

clav

ord

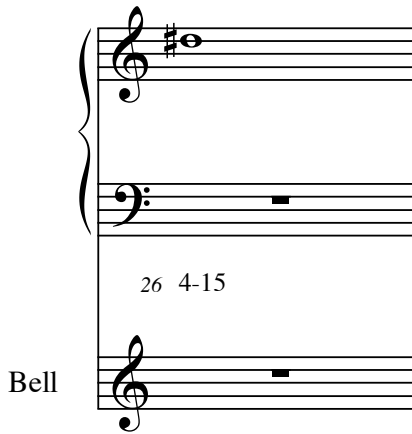
25

Bell

12:00 (arp at 17'')

The title South/Path/Field refers not only to the layout of the University quadrangle, but to a phenomenology of music put forth by Karheintz Stockhausen. Stockhausen suggested that all music-sound might be divided into three categories; points, groups, and fields. Points are single sounds, groups are collections of sounds that hang together somehow, and fields are massive collections of sounds so that one sound is not heard as separate from the whole textural effect.

26
26



26 4-15

Bell

The image shows a musical score for piano and bell. The piano part consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a brace on the left. The treble staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The bass staff has a common time signature (C). The bell part is a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The text '26 4-15' is written below the piano staves, and 'Bell' is written to the left of the bell staff. The piano part has a whole note in the treble staff and a whole rest in the bass staff. The bell part has a whole rest.

12:30

Most traditional music focuses on groups, that is, musical phrases. However, the exploration of sounds and fields as primary musical entities has been the occupation of many composers of my generation. Having so many ensembles and performers available to me made such explorations possible and even idiomatic. Imagine a chord for chorus where every note is of a different pitch.



27

Bell

27

S 9c score of L'allegro

13:00

Thus, as ideas and sound images for the piece began to present themselves, I had to find ways to notate them. I adapted special notations I had used in my other outdoor and improvisational pieces that allow the players to have some choice as to timing and pitch, and to permit textures of the field type to be easily performed.



28

28

guitar

ord

p

28

Bell

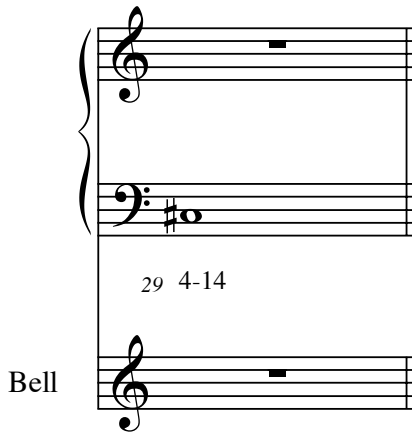
S 9d black

13:30 (guit at 45'')

I continually try to characterize my dynamic conception of music experience using various metaphors and similes.

Two concepts always arise: presencing and place.

Things and events are not just there, they present themselves to us, just as we present ourselves to them when we pay them attention. The result is an experience of place, that is, this is happening here and now.

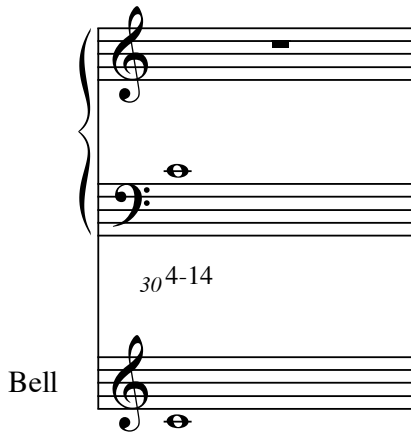


14:00

Being in the moment has two modalities, passage and waking-up. We notice that things change or continue, or that something new has appeared. Our attention is either continuous or changes instantaneously to some other thing. If we attend to the way we attend, it becomes clear that we are continually “changing the subject,” so that our consciousness is really marked by discontinuity as it loses touch with the moment. When we return to awareness, this is waking-up.



30
30



S10 90-note on black

14:30 (start of second string)

With the note you now hear, we are starting into the second part of the 90-note sequence. Every possible four-note harmony has been expressed linearly now. But as you will remember, from time to time there were chords. These chords either recall the pitches immediately presented or presage the next notes to be heard.



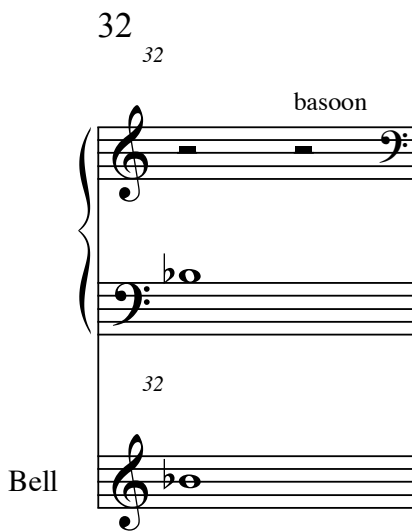
The musical score consists of three staves. The top two staves are grouped by a brace on the left. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a whole note on G4, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The bottom staff of the brace is in bass clef and contains a whole note on G2, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The word 'sham' is written above the bass staff, and 'ord' is written above the final chord. The bottom staff is in treble clef and contains a whole note on G4, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The word 'Bell' is written to the left of this staff. The notation includes a 31-measure rest, followed by a 4-measure rest, and then a 31-measure rest, with the number '31' and the interval '4-8' written above the first rest, and '[2378]' written below it.

S 11 90-note on purple

15:00 (sham near end)

As we continue to listen to the note structure of Sound/Path/Field at double speed, we notice now the continuity of the duration of notes engages continuous awareness of place and the change due to a new note or an interpolated gesture engages wake-up awareness of presencing. As I mentioned at the outset, changes of scale can affect the nature of our attention. The relation of this talk to the piece is just one way I explore scale as a compositional resource.

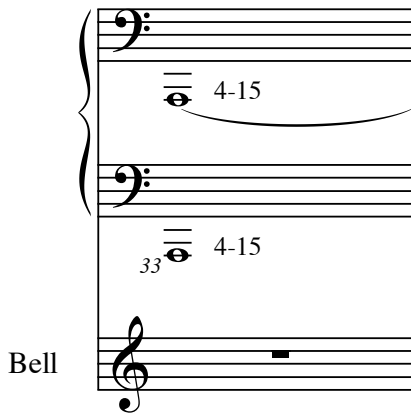




S 12 Hendricks Chapel

15:30

Outdoor and indoor music differ as to kind, not in degree. This is not a distinction between the artificial and the natural, for these concepts interpenetrate each other, especially in the arts. To illustrate this difference, Sound/Path/Field contains two sections of music played inside Hendricks Chapel. These are concert pieces, which also replicate the Sound/Path/Field structure at other ratios of scale.



16:00

I included indoor concert music within of Sound/Path/Field since the entire work will probably only be performed once, whereas the indoor pieces can become part of the concert repertoire. I also wanted to write a piece expressly for the Society for New Music's ensemble that would commemorate this 35th anniversary celebration. The other piece is for organ solo.

34

34

ord

Bell



16:30

I composed the chamber work for the Society, called *Society Sound*, and the organ piece, called *Canonical Minutes*, in my normal way, at a desk and piano. But the outdoor portions of the work were composed outside, at various waterfalls in Western New York State.



35

guitar

35

Bell

S 13a score to Society Sound

17:00 (Society Sound) (guit at 15'')

This point of time corresponds to the moment in Sound/Path/Field at which the indoor piece *Society Sound* begins.

Members of audience may walk into Hendricks Chapel to hear it, or stay outside to hear other sections of the composition. Unlike listening to this talk or a concert piece, the audience is free to choose among alternative actions.



36

36

ord

36

4-20

Bell

S 13b black

17:30

Many sections of music will be played at different locations by different ensembles in the quad either simultaneously or successively. In order to hear them well, one will have to walk and visit them. Or one can sit somewhere and listen to the combinations of different musics. In this way, each member of the audience can individually engage attention freely and actively.

37 4-19

Bell

18:00

I trust I have not given the impression that Sound/Path/Field is like this talk. The talk, while designed to be a musical experience, is a map, not the territory of the outdoor piece.

This applies to the two indoor pieces as well, in as much as they are also maps of the whole.



38

38

whistle

Bell

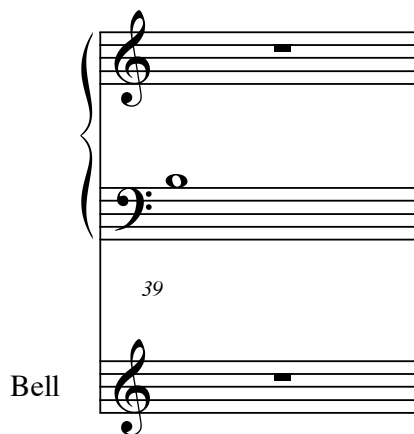
38

S 13c Score to Canonical Minutes

18:30

Originally, I didn't intend to write an organ composition as part of the piece, but since the University organist was interested in participating and we were already using Hendricks Chapel for the chamber piece, I decided to write it. Its structure is based on the harmonies of the 90-note sequence and the notes emanating from the carillon.





The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef, containing a whole note on the treble staff and a whole note on the bass staff. The bottom staff is a single treble clef staff, labeled 'Bell' to its left, containing a whole note. The number '39' is written above the 'Bell' staff.

S 13d black

19:00

The chamber piece, *Society Sound*, is at the ratio of 10:1 with respect to the whole, and the organ piece, *Canonical Minutes*, is at the ratio 15:1. The chamber piece is texturally complex and phrasal while the organ work is canonic throughout.



40

40

ord

ord

40

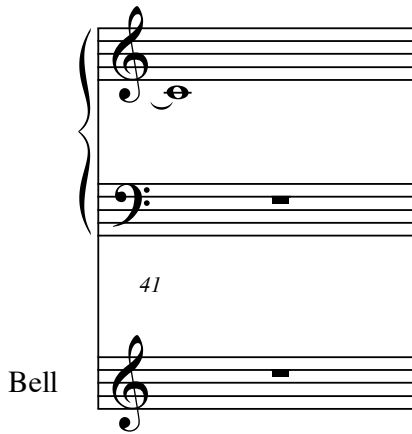
Bell

S 13e Crouse College bells

19:30

The carillon plays notes that issue from the 29-note cycle that generates the 90-note sequence. Moreover, these notes are almost all embedded in order in the 90-note sequence. Thus the carillon also plays the structure of the whole at a ratio of about 3:1. These notes are identical to the ones played on the synthesized chimes you hear during this talk.





S 13f black

20:00

I set a number of texts for the four choruses, most of them echoing the themes of the work. For instance, here are two lines from the poem “Brahma” by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Far or forgot to me is near ;
Shadow and sunlight are the same

This is sung by all the choruses in slightly different versions.



42
42

Bell

BUSY

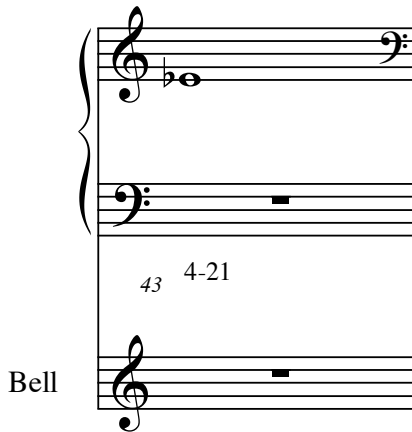
42 4-24

S 13g poem

20:30

William Wordsworth explores the theme of transience, in his poem "Ode to Lycoris." It is sung by Neva Pilgrim accompanied by the String Orchestra in the section called "Autumn Song."





S 13h texts

21:00

Sound/Path/Field is often a lot busier than this talk. For instance, the chorus music may involve multiple text fragments, spoken and sung at once, producing a jumbled, turbulent, babble of sound. This may remind the listener of the sound of swiftly flowing waterfall cascades. There are also units in which the music is very sparse, just a few isolated sounds here and there.



44

44

clav

ord

Bell

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'S 13i black'. The score is written for two instruments: a piano (clav) and a bell (ord). The piano part is in the upper staves, and the bell part is in the lower staff. The score includes a 4:22 time signature and a 44 measure marker. The piano part is in the upper staves, and the bell part is in the lower staff. The score includes a 4:22 time signature and a 44 measure marker.

S 13i black

21:30 (arp at 37.5")

The design of the entire piece often specifies that a unit have certain characteristics, such as busy or sparse, high or low, quantized or continuous. Such musical contrasts not only animate the piece, but also heighten an awareness of place and presencing.



45
Horn

45
Bell

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Horn and Bell. The Horn part is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and begins with a whole note on the first line of the treble clef. The Bell part is written on a single treble clef staff and begins with a whole note on the first line. Both parts are marked with the number 45, indicating the measure number.

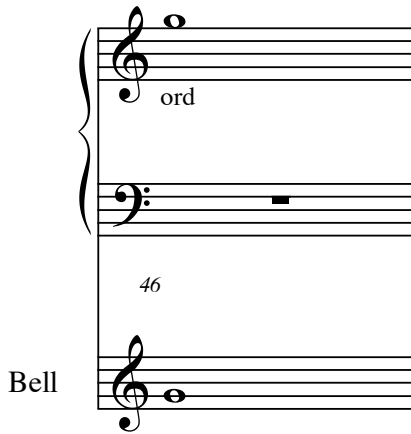
S 14 waterfall

22:00

The sights and sounds one encounters on hikes in the woods—or for that matter, a walk in the city—can produce a discriminating awareness of the open range of experience at different levels of scale; and there are dangers and challenges that can focus such awareness.



46
46



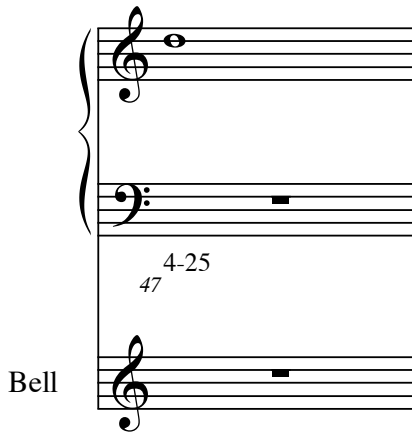
S 15a quad

22:30

Before I hiked to waterfalls to compose the music, I spent a good deal of time structuring the piece. Dividing the duration of the work into minute-long units was a priori, inherited from all of my previous outdoor pieces.

I spent time at the quad getting a feel for the size and character of the space. Then I walked about measuring the amount of time it takes to move from one point on the quad to another.





S 15b map

23:00

The next step involved the selection of locations for the musicians to play, how they would be configured at these locations, and how they would move from one location to another. I remember imagining that the process was something like surveying a tract of land in order to design a garden.

Then came the delicate, context-sensitive decisions as to what ensembles would play what where.



48

48 Shaku

p

clar

48 4-16

Bell

S 16 quad

23:30 (clar upbeat to next)

There were several issues here: how the piece would start and end, the trajectories of musical density and reference, the more local details of contrast and alliance between ensembles, how the musicians would move from place to place without colliding, when the indoor pieces would occur, and so forth. At this point, I had also to determine the nuclear pitch and harmony for each unit.



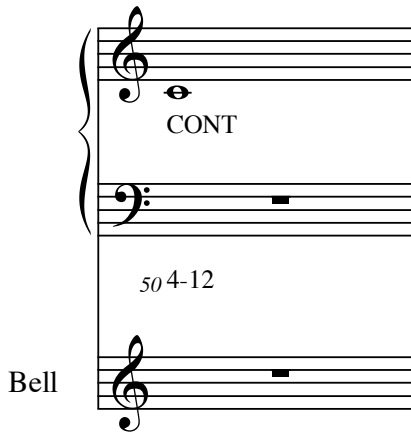
The musical score is for S 17a. It consists of three staves. The top two staves are for a piano, indicated by a brace on the left. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a whole note chord (F#4 and C#5) labeled 'ord' above it, and a piano passage (pp) in the right hand. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a piano passage (pp) in the left hand, marked with '49p' below it. The third staff is for a bell, indicated by the label 'Bell' to its left. It has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), containing a whole note chord (F#4 and C#5).

S 17a print-out on yellow

24:00

The computer program I wrote to generate the 29-note cycle was rewritten to make sure no pitch-class was repeated until nine others had appeared. Then I had to choose which of the many 29-note cycles in the output would be spliced together to produce the 90-note sequence. The choice was based on whether there were ways to embed the 29-note cycle in the 90-note sequence.

50
50



24:30

This wasn't possible with any of the candidates, so I choose the one with the least order or pitch deformations; this became the series of notes in the carillon

My visits to the quad were in January of 2006 so that the lack of foliage and/or people enjoying themselves outside helped me better assess the structural potentials than at warmer times.

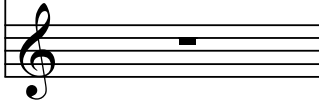


51

noise2
3 ord

51 4-28

Bell



S 17b yellow

25:00 (noise at 10'')

After designing the structure, I began writing the indoor pieces, reinterpreting the structural plan at different time ratios. I therefore built into these pieces exact correlations with the whole work, one's which can be heard and enjoyed.

By the time the indoor pieces were in first draft it was spring.



The musical score is divided into two systems. The top system features a grand staff with a treble and bass clef, bracketed together. The treble staff contains a whole rest on the second line, with the word 'marm.' written below it. The bass staff contains a whole rest on the second line, followed by a quarter note G2 and a quarter rest. The bottom system features a single staff with a treble clef, labeled 'Bell' to its left. It contains a whole note G2. The number '52' is written above the staff.

S 18a waterfall

25:30 (marm at 45'')

While I was structuring the piece, I began collecting texts for the chorus to sing. I chose poems by Wordsworth and other so-called Romantic poets that treat the suchness of natural settings and the lived experience of time. Some of these texts have Platonic overtones, which do not interest me; I do not believe appearance is a shadow of reality. Rather, *how* you see is what you get.



53

piano ord

cor an ord

53 4-17

Bell

S 18b black

26:00

The topics discussed in each unit of this talk are related to Sound/Path/Field, such that each of seven topics was correlated with one of the ensembles. Therefore, the topic associated with a given ensemble occurs in the same units of this talk that the ensemble plays in the piece.

54

54

54

pp

elpn2

Bell

54

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with three triplet markings. The middle staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a bass line with a triplet marking. The bottom staff is a bell staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a bell line with a triplet marking. The tempo is marked *pp* (pianissimo). The rehearsal mark '54' appears at the beginning of the top staff and the middle of the bottom staff. The text 'elpn2' is written below the middle staff.

26:30

For example, this unit of the talk associates with the unit in the piece at minute 57. It has only one topic, which is the listener's immediate experience of space and time, because at minute 57 only the Wind Ensemble plays and that ensemble is associated with this topic.

55 *p*

ord

Bell

27:00

Since many units are scored for more than one ensemble, a unit in the talk may treat many topics at once. The experience of the content of this talk therefore parallels the way the piece unfolds. This is why the talk accumulates information somewhat slowly as topics multiply associate with one another.



56

56

pad2

p

56 4-27

pp

Bell

S 18c waterfall

27:30

--



ord

57 4-13

Bell

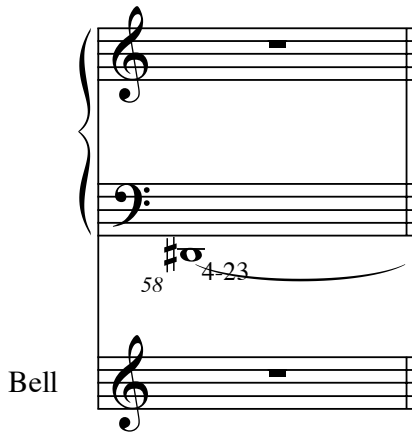
S 18d blank

28:00

Experiencing something isn't divorced from knowing what it is. It's just that the two modalities are different, one sensual the other cognitive.

What we know of something influences how we feel it, and vice-versa.

58
58



28:30

And yet,

if we treat something we experience
with too much emphasis upon what we
know, the experience doesn't teach us
much. By keeping what is called
“beginners mind” in Zen, we consider
our perceptions as primary to thinking.

Even though a lot of planning went
into Sound/Path/Field, it became what it
is only as I composed it.



59

pp

59 4-23

Bell

S 19 me at waterfall

29:00 (start of third string)

During the period I was composing the piece, I received a call from a music critic studying at Syracuse University who was writing a thesis on what composers say in program notes. She asked me about my notes and I replied, “I try to make sure the listeners’ heads are turned the right direction so they don’t miss something important.”



60 whistle

60

elpn2

604-13

Bell

S 20 puppet theatre

29:30

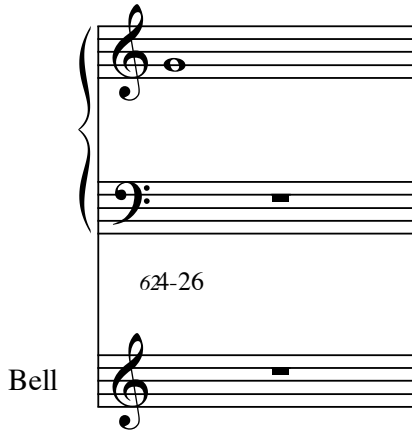
Speaking with Geoffrey Navias, the director of the Open Hand Theater, about its contributions to the piece, we agreed that he would establish installations using huge puppets at various times and places during the piece, some of which may attract people to a particular music event, such as the organ piece within the chapel.



30:00

If one could speed up the experience of the piece, as in time lapse photography, one would see the forming and moving of ensembles playing here, going there, within the continuous reconfigurations of the audience from one location to another.

62
62



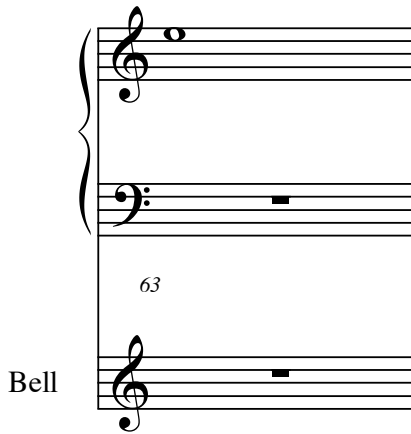
30:30

A kaleidoscopic progression of densities
and attention, not always symmetric.

Topological counterpoint.

Conversations between space and time.





S 21b black

31:00

The outdoor music for Sound/Path/Field was written in order from beginning to end with only a few exceptions. As I composed, I consulted charts and notes spelling out details of the plan. I didn't decide on the texts I was going to set until I was ready to compose a choral section, although I already collected several texts for possible inclusion in the weeks before this stage.



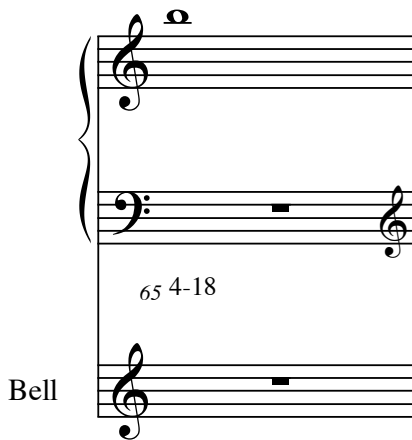


S 22a sketches in notebooks

31:30

I prepared a separate notebook for each ensemble and drafted the music in these books. My compositional practice for writing the outdoor music involved a cycle of three activities. First, the night before, I would prepare the notebooks with information from the charts for the units I would compose in the morning. I would then go to bed and awake with ideas about what and how to write the music for that day.





S 22b waterfall

32:00

Second, I would travel to a trail and hike to a waterfall, settle down and write the music. As I entered the woods, many ideas and sound images would present themselves.

Third, I would return home and copy everything into the computer to make the score. This would take usually a day and a half, so the compositional cycle was two days long.



67 4-12

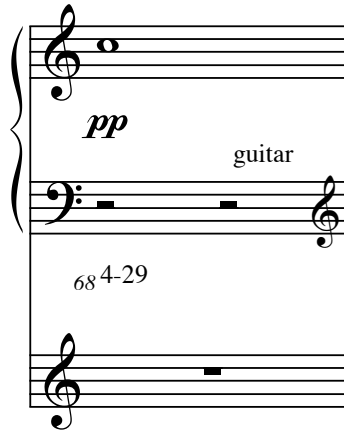
Bell

33:00

I employed many compositional techniques to embellish and project a unit's primary note and harmony. However, these methods of composition were so familiar to me that it would better to characterize the process as spontaneous and even improvisational.



68
68



A musical score for piano and guitar. The piano part is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The guitar part is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The piano part has a *pp* dynamic marking. The guitar part has a 'guitar' label. Below the piano staff, there is a section labeled '68 4-29'. To the left of the guitar staff, there is a section labeled 'Bell'.

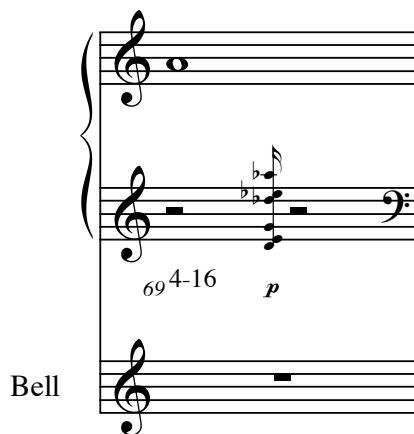
S 23b waterfall

33:30

The woods always provided inspiration:

Place and presencing.





69 4-16 *p*

Bell

The musical score consists of three staves. The top two staves are grouped by a brace on the left. The top staff is a treble clef with a whole note G4. The second staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a whole note chord of G4, Bb4, and D5. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a whole note rest. The text '69 4-16' and '*p*' are written below the second staff. The word 'Bell' is written to the left of the bottom staff.

S 23c waterfall

34:00 (guit at 15")

It was as if I composed the open space and
time into sound.



70

70

marm.

ord

70

4-25

Bell

The musical score is written for piano and bell. The piano part consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 7/10. It contains a melodic line starting with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The bass staff has a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 7/10. It contains a bass line starting with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The bell part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a time signature of 7/10. It contains a single half note. The score is labeled with '70' at the top left, '70' above the piano part, 'marm.' above the piano part, 'ord' above the piano part, '70' above the bell part, and '4-25' above the bell part. The label 'Bell' is to the left of the bell staff.

S 34d waterfall

34:30 (marm at 45'')

Of course the waterfall sound helped,
suggesting continual fecundity. Some
of the falls were small, others quite
tall,

some difficult to reach, others by a
road,

many in parks, a few in uncultivated
woods.



71 ord

Bell

71

S 24a quad

35:00

I'm hoping that my experiences while composing Sound/Path/Field will translate into the listeners' experience. But the social space of a University quadrangle is a different place from the woods even if the architecture of the buildings, paths, and statues can inspire a similar appreciation of space and time.

72

72

72

Bell

sham ord

35:30 (sham near end)

The quadrangle is quite large,
 maybe 600 by 600 feet, so one
 definitely feels the space and sky
 especially in comparison with the
 surrounding university environment
 of various buildings clustered
 together with roads and parking
 lots.



The image shows a musical score snippet. At the top, the number '73' is written above the word 'Shaku'. Below this, there are two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both containing a single note. To the left of these staves is a large curly brace. Below the brace, the number '73' is written above the word '4-22'. At the bottom, the word 'Bell' is written to the left of a single treble clef staff containing a single note.

S 24b "master score"

36:00

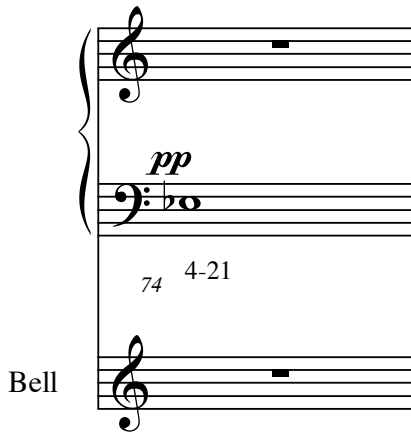
After the score was complete, I went back to revise it, changing details here and there. But I should add that the score is actually twelve scores, for the eight ensembles, the carillon, the two inside pieces and the outdoor theater. When I showed the scores to Bradley Ethington, the director of the Setnor School and conductor of the Symphony Band, he said he wished I could have aligned all the pages of the separate scores into one master score for the piece.

74
74

pp

74 4-21

Bell



36:30

I could do that, but there is no practical reason for it. I am tempted however, for the result would be a curiosity measuring 5 by 75 feet.



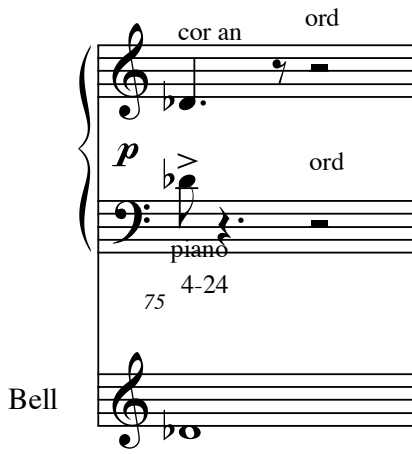
cor an ord

p ord

piano

75 4-24

Bell




S 25a waterfall

37:00



76
76

Bell



BUSY

pp

76 4-11

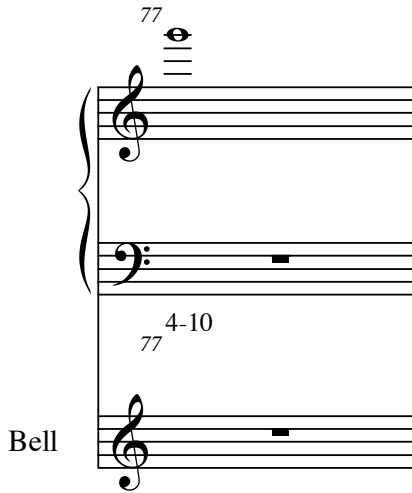
S 25b blank

37:30

The texts I chose not only included poems treating nature but poems about time, Some of these are humorous as in James Merrill's quip:

Always the same old story—
Father Time and Mother Earth,
A marriage on the rocks





S 26a Chinese 1

38:00

I stayed away from setting Eastern writings on nature, which form a literary topic in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese literature, partly because my previous outdoor composition, “Coming Down to Earth,” was inspired by the Taoist writings of Chuang-Tzu, suggesting its themes and method of organization. That piece was performed in the middle of the woods in a park outside Rochester, New York.



78
78

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The treble staff contains a whole note on the second line, labeled 'noise3'. The bass staff contains a quarter note on the second space, labeled 'ord', followed by a triplet of eighth notes on the second space, labeled '3'. The lower staff is a single treble clef staff labeled 'Bell' on the left. It contains a whole note on the second line, labeled '78' below it, followed by a quarter note on the second space, labeled '4-1' below it.

S 26b Chinese 2

38:30 (noise at 50")

As I've hinted a few times now, the space/time experience I am attempting to project is associated with different strands of classical Buddhist philosophy from India, Tibet, China and Japan. But even Buddhist people from those countries may not notice these influences as such; certainly the sound of the piece is not Asian.





79

79

4-2

Bell

S 46c black

39:00

As I began working on this piece, I reminded myself that sounds tend to permeate each other in a large space. In fact, they may not reinforce each other the way we expect in concert halls, which are designed to amplify and send sound from the stage to the audience. In the open air, the nearest sound may not be the one most noticed.



80
80

Musical score for Horn, Clarinet, and Bell. The Horn and Clarinet parts are grouped by a brace. The Horn part has a treble clef and a whole note. The Clarinet part has a bass clef and a whole note. The Bell part has a treble clef and a whole note. The score is marked with a tempo of 80 and a rehearsal mark 4-19.

S 27 waterfall

39:30 (Clar upbeat to next)

As sounds travel over large distances,
they thin out into echoless sonic wisps.
Think of the sound of a flock of birds.
The same sonic stimulus will affect
people in different directions differently.
Such things are built into the sonic design
of the piece.



The musical score is divided into two systems. The top system features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a whole note chord (F4, A4) labeled 'ord'. The bass staff has a melodic line starting on G3, moving up stepwise to D4, with a whole note chord (F4, A4) labeled 'ord' at the end. The bottom system features a bell part on a single treble staff with a whole note chord (F4, A4). The number '81' is written below the piano staff and above the bell staff.

S 28a black

40:00

Asian literature aside, I don't even need to cite or quote European literature to find literary parallels. The American writings of Thoreau, Emerson, Whitman, Stein, Williams, Ginsberg, and literary critics could do the job admirably. Nevertheless, I knew too much Wordsworth and Blake, not to suggest or include their writings, not to mention many other European authors and poets.

82
82



40:30

Sound/Path/Field was designed to allow the listener to find his or her path through the work.

Attention may be intermittent and vary greatly from moment to moment.



83

83

pad2

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef, containing two whole rests. The bottom staff is a single treble clef staff labeled 'Bell' on the left, containing a whole rest. A small '83' is written below the first measure of the bell staff.

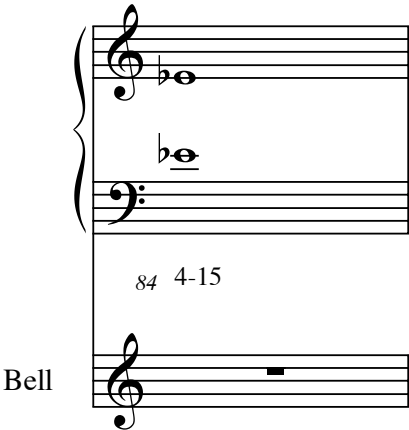
Bell

S 28b waterfall

41:00



84
84



Musical notation for piano and bell. The piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a brace on the left. The treble staff has a whole note chord of Bb2 and D3. The bass staff has a whole note chord of Bb1 and D2. The bell part is a single staff with a whole note chord of Bb2 and D3.

84 4-15

Bell

S 28c waterfall

41:30



85
ord

basoon

85

Bell

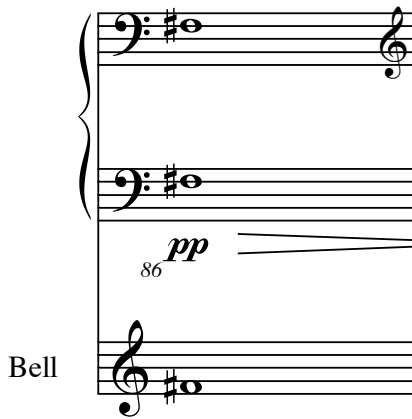
The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'S 28d waterfall'. It features two staves. The top staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clef) with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The bottom staff is a single treble clef staff with a bell (Bell) dynamic marking. Both staves show a single note on the first line of the staff, with a '85' above it. The word 'basoon' is written in the middle of the grand staff. The number '85' appears twice, once above the top staff and once above the bottom staff.

S 28d waterfall

42:00

Music can take a lesson from nature; no plant or animal replicates exactly, there is always variation; symmetry only goes so far; typologies stray into each other.





S 29 Indra's net

42:30

I've often cited the figure of Indra's net as a metaphor for the way to hear my music.

Imagine an infinite net with a jewel at each intersection of strands. Upon examination of any of the jewels we see within it the entire network reflected exactly.

A self-embedded, holographic representation without beginning or end, a gauge invariant fractal.

87

ord

ppp
87 4-14

Bell

43:00

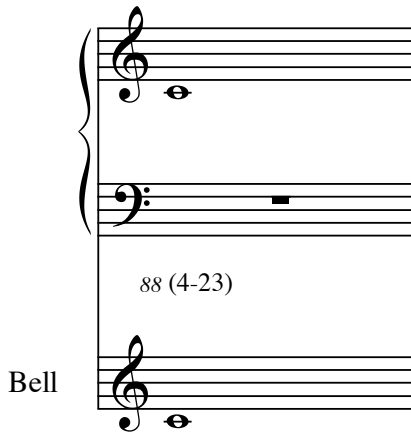
Indra's net:

Everything interpenetrates,

the center and periphery are everywhere.



88
88

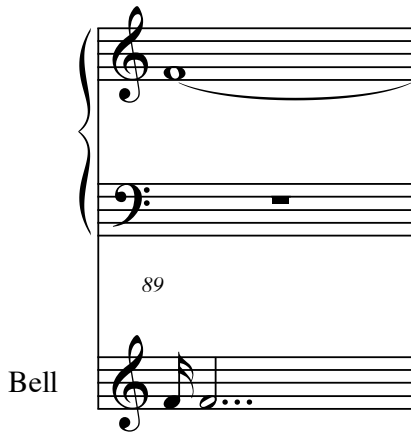


S 30 list

43:30

The audience will be given programs listing each section of the work, its name, location, and performing ensemble; the program will also provide a map of the performance space. There will be guides for those who want a tour through the piece. The outdoor theater will signal events. No one will be able to hear all of it, including me.





S 31 me on quad

44:00

All of what I've said about the concept and structure of Sound/Path/Field is meant to encourage people to come to it with an open mind, there to see and hear things of interest and have a good space/time,

As Milton puts it: "Untwisting all the chains that ty The hidden soul of harmony."



90

90

p

90

Bell

f < ff f m f m p p p

S 32 waterfall

44:30

— —



91

91

Bell

pppp

mp

The image shows a musical score for a piano and a bell. The piano part is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. It features two measures of whole rests, both marked with the dynamic *pppp*. The bell part is on a single staff with a treble clef, starting at measure 91 with a half note in the key of B-flat, marked with the dynamic *mp*. The page number 91 is printed at the top left of the piano staff.

S 33 black