

cadenceStudie (2012)

For multiples of two identically pitched percussion instruments
Benjamin O'Brien

cadenceStudie is a minimalist work for multiples of two identically pitched percussion instruments, where each has their own score. The pitch collections in each score are static: One score (1) is the set of pitches in a B minor triad and the other (2) is the set of pitches in an F# dominate seventh chord. (1) is arranged so that the left hand performs a second inversion triad and the right hand performs a root position triad. (2) is arranged so that the left hand performs a root position seventh chord and the right hand performs a first inversion seventh chord.

The first measure of *cadenceStudie* outlines the rhythmic cells utilized throughout the work. Generally speaking, with respect to the first measure, (1) emphasizes a subdivision of the beat into two, whereas the rhythm of (2) gives a sense of dividing three beats into four. Juxtaposing and shifting these rhythms against each other creates a continuous stream of pitches that occasionally result in pitch and pitch class unisons, as well as various diatonic harmonies.

The form of the *cadenceStudie* is $A - B - AB - AB' - B' - A'$. In the A and A' sections, the rhythm of each score shifts horizontally such that in the A section, the first two beats of the rhythm are rotated to the right in the subsequent measure, whereas in A' section, the inverse operation occurs. This process continues until the rhythms of each hand are equivalent to those found in the beginning of the section. In the B and B' sections, the rhythms of each hand shifts vertically such that in section B , the rhythm in the right hand of (1) becomes the rhythm in the left hand of (2) in the subsequent measure, whereas in section B' , the inverse operation occurs. This process continues until the rhythms of each hand are inversional to those found in the beginning of the section. Finally, in the AB and AB' sections, the shifting operations combine, such that in section AB , the operations A and B are applied simultaneously, as are operations A' and B' in section AB' .

The work draws influence from Steve Reich's *Clapping Music* (1972) and Sol Lewitt's *Incomplete Open Cubes* (1974). While Reich's *Clapping* contains no pitch material, the notion of shifting rhythmic cells permeates the structural identity of *cadenceStudie*. In Lewitt's *Cubes*, the sequence of 122 open-sided sculptures embody some of the structural forms possible through the variable process of subtracting one to nine segments from a cube. While *cadenceStudie* does not follow this process of subtraction, the sequential mapping of pitch classes in the 'i' and 'V⁷' chords is tangential to Lewitt's idea that "irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically" (Stiles and Selz, 1996).

Bibliography

Stiles, Kristine, and Peter Selz. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, pp. 824.