

lissatoods

solo trumpet

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lissatood #1 **(fingers, bell)**

Repeat each measure as often as desired. This piece should be played as a kind of dance, with some rhythmic freedom, but with a steady tempo.

Notation

The letter name beneath each pitch is the fingering of the fundamental over which that pitch is sounded. That is, each of the seven letter names (C-B-Bb-A-Ab-G-F#) is one of the fingerings for the lowest octave of trumpet notes, and all pitches in this piece are specified as harmonics (up to the 11th) above those fundamental fingerings. For example, the first note in the piece is fingered as a low C, but overblown at the 11th harmonic to produce the F#.

When a note has no stem, it may be held as part of the duration of the previous note, re-attacked, or treated as a rest. Each “measure” may be repeated as many times as desired before moving on. The pulse should be constant, but does not need to be metronomic (the performers should enjoy some natural give and take).

Score is in C.

Trumpet

Fingerings and accidentals hold till end of the measure, unless changed during the measure. In other words, fingerings are treated exactly as “conventional” accidentals (holding through the measure until superceded). Do not try to minimize intonational differences between alternate fingerings of the same written pitch.

Percussion

The percussion part should consist of 4 small, metallic, resonant instruments, or families of instruments. For example, four different pitched triangles, or one set of triangles, four notes on a glockenspiel, four tuned metal bowls, four notes on a vibraphone.

Each one of the four sounds should be used with a specific rhythmic grouping (2, 3, 4, 5). That is, if only four triangles are used, each one sounds at the beginning of a rhythmic grouping specifically associated with it. If a set of sounds is used for a given grouping (for example, the vibraphone with 2, the glockenspiel with 3, etc.) then the performers may choose pitches for different notes in the trumpet part (in any way they like). The percussion pitches may ring freely, or be damped, again, in any way the performer likes. The percussionist part should observe the accent on the first pitch of each “measure,” but after that, try to match the volume of the trumpet notes.

(Thanks to Tom Dambly for advice on this piece).

lissatood #2

(Sweet Betsy from Pike)

arrangement by Ruth Crawford Seeger

from *Twenty-two American Folk Tunes*, arranged for Piano, Elementary Grades, 1938 (mss. Courtesy of the Library of Congress and the Estate of Ruth Crawford Seeger)

Sing/play the 8 verses of this song. For each verse create, from the duet (trumpet, voice) some combination of sung pitches and played pitches. That is, notes are either sung (with the correct lyric), or played (from the trumpet part).

Create your own version in any way you like, for example:

- randomly (say, by flipping a coin for each beat; or writing a computer program to randomly select more and more of either part towards the end, or middle; or some other probabilistic or statistical or deterministic method to determine the form).
- with some simple, direct plan of your own devising (for example, start out Verse 1 all singing, gradually replace with pitches from the trumpet by verse 8).
- live in performance, improvisationally; or, perhaps in response to some designated “conductor”; or, using environmental stimulus, like the sequence of genders in the front row of the audience (male for trumpet, female for voice, or something even odder).
- using some strategic idea (play the trumpet when you feel the words are getting too intelligible; when you don’t like the lyrics; on all the verbs, or prepositions, or nouns, or names, or phonemes with certain vowels);
- by some other compositional design of your own.

Try not to be dramatic in any way in the singing, playing of this piece. Avoid the overtly theatrical, and in no way try to emotionally amplify the lyrics.

“Sweet Betsy from Pike”

Ruth Crawford Seeger, 1938

Library of Congress Manuscript

O don't you remember sweet Betsy from Pike
Who crossed the wide prairies with her lover Ike,
With two yoke of cattle and one spotted hog
A tall shanghai rooster and an old yeller dog?

The shanghai ran off and the cattle all died;
The last piece of bacon that morning was fried.
Poor Ike got discouraged and Betsy got mad,

And the dog wagged his tail and looked wonderful
sad.

The alkali desert was burning and bare,
And Isaac's soul shrank from the death that was
there;
“Dear old Pike county, I'll go back to you”
Said Betsy “You'll go by yo'self if you do”

They soon reached the desert where Betsy gave out,
And down in the sand she lay rolling about;
When Ike in great terror looked on in surprise,
Saying, “Betsy, get up you'll get sand in your eyes”

Sweet Betsy got up in a great deal of pain,
And declared she'd go back to Pike Country again;
Then Ike heaved a sigh and they fondly embraced
And she traveled along with his arm round her waist.

They swam the wide rivers and crossed the tall
peaks
And camped on the prairies for weeks upon weeks,
Starvation and cholera and hard work and slaughter
They reached California spite of hell and high water.

One morning they climbed up a very high hill,

And with wonder looked down on old Placerville;
Ike shouted and said, as he cast his eyes down,
"Sweet Betsy, my darling, we've got to Hangtown".

Long Ike and sweet Betsy attended a dance,
Where Ike wore a pair of his Pike Country pants,
Sweet Betsy was covered with ribbons and rings,
Quote Ike "You're an angel, but were are your
wings?"

lissatood #3 **(try everything once)**

Play this melody once, as beautifully as possible. Start at the beginning, or at any note in the piece (at the beginning of a note, not in the middle of a duration or tie).

(lissatood #3 is written in the Java programming language using Nick Didkovsky's JMSL).

lissatood #4 **(flatland)**

Start with a simple folk melody, and gradually, over the course of a number of repetitions, "flatten" the melody toward some pitch which is the average of all the pitches (which does not have to be one of the pitches). Pitches below it will be raised, pitches above it lowered. Try to do this evenly, changing each interval on each repetition proportionately to its distance from the average pitch. In other words, if the pitch is far away, move it a lot, if its close to the middle, move it less. Try to avoid tempered pitches in this trajectory whenever possible.

Take as many repetitions as you can to get where you're going.

It would be nice, but not necessary, to have a drone which is that central pitch. The audience may hear that drone or not (it can be in the performer's headphones). The drone may be played live by some other performer.

There are several other ways to play this piece:

- Go in the opposite direction: start with the average pitch and move outward towards the melody.
- Go in both directions, starting at either end.
- Do it rhythmically
- Do it both rhythmically and melodically (the piece ends up, or starts out, with a single pulse on the same pitch, which is the average duration and average pitch of the tune).
- Any combination of the above (that is, go one direction rhythmically, the other melodically; go back and forth in melody, while only going one direction rhythmically in the same number of repetitions).