לִעַל
(v’ya‘al)
(and he ascended)

for Steven Miller

nine pitched instruments

Larry Polansky
2014
(and he ascended)

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for any nine pitched instruments

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Each instrument’s part consists of one pitch. The performer may also play octaves of that pitch occasionally, ad lib. Each instrument should be able to comfortably realize the indicated pitch in his part (in the notated register), as well as at least one octave of that pitch.

Intonations (per instrument number) are derived from the harmonic series on C (from low to high):

9: C(0¢)  6: Bb(-31¢)  3: C#(+5¢)
8: G(+2¢)  5: F#(-49)  2: D#(-2¢)
7: E(-14¢)  4: G#(+41¢)  1: Gb(+28¢)

Equal-tempered instruments may play parts 9, 8, 4 and 2 (C, G, C#, and Eb).

The indicated constant tempo (60) yields a duration of 17 minutes. A faster (but not slower) constant tempo may be used, not to exceed 120 (8.5 minutes), depending on performance situation and ensemble preference. Dynamics are quiet and flexible, and may increase gradually over the course of the piece, as the density also increases.

Individual attack times should be precise. Sustained durations are less critical with respect to their exact length—they may be increased or decreased slightly in performance according to “feel” and instrument practicalities. Non-sustaining instruments (guitar, piano, marimba, etc.) may also participate, and ignore the sustained durations.
x-noteheads occur in the few places where two or more instruments share an attack (are coincident). At those points the indicated performers play one of (at most) 8 small sounds, pitched or non-pitched, instead of playing their usual note. Each player should have his own array of 8 small resonant sounds: small bells or cymbals; a toy piano; a glockenspiel; electronic sounds; etc. Each instrument in that array is used uniquely for a shared attack with another (specific) player. Two players might also share a set of 9.

The number(s) of coincident instrument(s) appear below x-noteheads, and indicate the sound to be used as well as the coincident instrument. For example, if instrument 1 has the number 3, instrument 3 will likewise have a 1, signifying that instruments 1 and 3 should play small sounds 3 and 1 respectively. Two or more numbers signifies multiple coincidences. In that case, performers can pick any of the designated sounds (or, if possible, more than one).

וְיַעַל is a nine-voice non-coincident canon, formally similar to my catchaiku (2013) for two instruments. Each instrument plays the same rhythmic sequence, or configuration, of 85 notes. The nine voices are in mensuration canon, integrally proportional to the longest, voice 5 (and to each other). The durations and pitches of voices (1–9) are related to the prime numbers 2,3,5,7,11,13,17,19,23. The configuration shared by all the instruments (in different “tempi”), is chosen so as to have the minimal possible number of coincidental attacks. Unless otherwise indicated by an x-notehead, there should be no simultaneous attacks.

וְיַעַל is written for and dedicated to my friend of many years, Steven Miller, with great respect and affection for him and his music.

Larry Polansky
Santa Cruz, California
12/30/14
(v'y'aal)
(and he ascended)

for composer and friend, Steven Miller