

# **Entanglement Laws**

matthew wright (2006)

**“You have this thing about separation and entanglement, and a set of beliefs I find perfectly bizarre and that I can’t anticipate the results of....”**

**“You’re more a creature of habit and ritual than you think you are”**

Entanglement Laws (2006) was written for the Dutch group Ensemble Klang and was premiered at the KORZO theatre, The Hague, on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The work is based on the contradictory tensions between the above quotations from the novel ‘Dead Air’ by Iain Banks.

The piece has built within it a series of conditions or laws that shape the internal structure of exchanges between the performers, creating a complex web of possible readings. Despite this, the work should always have the effect of a brutal, repetitive ritual. There is no score for the work, as the ensemble is split into three independent ensembles - a ‘harmony’ group consisting of two saxophones and alto trombone, a ‘melody’ group consisting of a de-tuned electric guitar and a keyboard and a third group consisting of a percussionist. These three groups simultaneously perform three variations of the same pitch material and are left to determine the pace at which they navigate through this material, apart from when the ‘entanglement laws’ govern that the performers should synchronise in one of three ways.

Thanks for playing - MW

## **ENTANGLEMENT LAWS for the three individual groups:**

There are 3 groups:

- (1) Soprano (or Tenor Sax)  
Soprano (or Tenor Sax)  
Alto Trombone

Changes between soprano and tenor saxes during the piece is essential – make sure this happens!

All instruments should have bells covered by tin foil, and should be amplified.

### PLAYING STYLES:

Long notes : As loud and as long as the breath of the first player, always flutter-tongued.

Hockets: As fast and as loud as possible, with staccatissimo articulation.

1<sup>st</sup> time: All material

2<sup>nd</sup> time: Cue only

3<sup>rd</sup> time: Hockets and Cue

- (2) Guitar  
Keyboard

Some strings should be detuned to produce the microtonal intervals indicated in the guitar part. The amp should be covered in tin foil. A keyboard with electric piano sound should be used - touch sensitivity is not important. The keyboard should be amplified and the amp should be covered in tin foil.

### PLAYING STYLES:

even times: melody only

odd times: melody plus diamond notes.

- (3) Percussionist: 3 small keyboards or drum machines (with unspecified electronic drum patterns), 6 pieces of heavy junk percussion (large tin cans, car parts, etc.), two small but resonant splash cymbals and a kick drum.

When numbers appear in the part, the percussionist should play the number of strikes indicated with a combination of junk and cymbals at her/his discretion. Cymbals should be used sparingly, such as moments of high tension within the music, or when the percussion part is exposed.

At least one of the keyboards / drum machines should be used for the melodic material in the part, and it should ideally be detuned by a  $\frac{1}{4}$  tone and utilise an electric piano sound. The drum patterns themselves are not notated (as these will change from performance to performance) but all should be set to the fastest possible tempo and should consist of cheap synthesised hi-hat and cowbell sounds. Snare drum sounds within the keyboard rhythms should be avoided. Changes of rhythm / tempo throughout the piece are encouraged. All keyboards / drum machines should be amplified. The effect should be noisy, and should sound like cheap 'street techno' as if performed by a busker. If finding cheap keyboards or drum machines is impossible, the effect could be created with a laptop, but this loses the sense of 'rawness' in performance – please consult the composer before using this option.

#### PLAYING STYLES:

1<sup>st</sup> time: All material

2<sup>nd</sup> time: No Keyboard beats

3<sup>rd</sup> time: 'Cue' end of cycle at anytime using the kick drum and the loudest piece of junk, making all players move to the beginning of the next cycle.

## **ENTANGLEMENT LAWS for the whole ensemble:**

Each group plays their music loud and independently of the other groups, apart from:

- when a group reaches the end of its part. When this happens, the 'cue' is sounded, and all groups (even if they haven't all reached the end of their part) go to the beginning of the next cycle.
- when silence occurs. In this case, the whole group should cherish the silence, continuing with the piece only when there is a mutual agreement to continue.
- at the end of the piece, where every group plays its cue and waits for the percussionist to signal the end of the performance with five kick drum / junk or cymbal strikes.