overlay (with transience)   James Saunders

programme note

overlay (with transience) (2014) is a piece for recorded realisation. It asks the performer to make a specified number of sounds throughout a 15-minute duration. The performer makes many additional recordings over a period of months, each time attempting to match what was played the first time, but without reference to any of the previous recordings. The piece actively explores the performer's memory, and especially the way in which transience–how we forget information over time–shapes the resultant sequence of sounds. The final recording is a trace of this process.

instructions

Select one of the score pages.
Each page comprises a row of 15 digits between one and eight; the piece lasts for 15 minutes.
The digits refer to the number of sounds to be made in each one-minute duration.

Select eight sounds sources.
Each sound source must be different in some way.
Sounds made by each source may vary during the realisation.
Sounds may be of any duration and may be made sequentially and/or simultaneously with other sounds.

Record a realisation of the selected page.
A realisation involves making the specified number of sounds, each from a different source, at some point in each minute of the overall duration.
Sounds may be distributed throughout the minute in any configuration; sustained sounds may continue into the following minute.
Keep a copy of the recording.

Over a period of months, record many additional realisations of the same page in the same location and at the same time of day.
Try to remember and repeat what you played in the first realisation as accurately as you can.
Do not listen to any previous recordings.

On completing the final realisation, layer all the recordings into a single synchronised track.

5   3   7   8   7   2   8   7   8   7   7   8   5   4   4

7 5 7 2 7 6 4 2 5 2 1 2 4 3 2

5 8 8 2 6 7 5 2 8 2 6 2 7 7 4

4 8 1 3 8 7 7 4 1 7 4 5 7 7 4

7 8 8 3 8 8 5 7 2 2 1 1 4 3 1

2 2 2 7 3 3 3 6 8 3 6 8 2 4 6