

Words of nothing

for piano players

//Alexis Porfiriadis

//2010

Words of Nothing (2010) is a verbal score consisting of 20 different verbally instructed parts. Performers (at least two persons) are invited to make a group realization of the composition using any amount of this material. The order of actions and their respective timings should be decided collectively prior to the performance. The resultant realization should be the product of a conversation between the performers and it should by no means be decided by one single person. In the case of a large group (more than 10 persons) the players should at first collectively decide the duration of their performance and then they should form subgroups. Each of these should decide for themselves upon the material to be played in the predetermined duration. It is not necessary for each sub-group to know prior to the performance what any other is going to play.

The actions of *Words of Nothing* may be combined in any manner (based on the performers' choice), so that an action can continue while another starts, more than one action can be performed simultaneously etc. An action can be repeated by the same person provided that one or more other actions are inserted between repetitions to avoid successive appearances of the same action. The order in which the actions are presented in this score is random and reflects no structural preference on the part of the composer. The duration of the performance of the piece is indeterminate but it should not be less than 5 minutes.

Words of Nothing may be performed on its own, or together with *Aria for voice(s)*. In this case both pieces can be performed as solo pieces (one performer for each piece) but all decisions regarding the combination of the performance of the two pieces should be discussed and agreed between the participating performers, and should by no means be made individually.

In order to perform a realisation of *Words of Nothing*, a grand or baby grand piano is required. You are encouraged to perform your chosen action(s) as naturally as possible. Extreme displays and theatrics should be avoided at all costs.

Each version should be agreed on for the specific performance; it may not be rehearsed or played at an earlier performance.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

One

one sound
one minute

Flashlight

Illuminate the piano with a flashlight for 5 sec at a time, from 5 different angles

switch off the flashlight between actions
perform calmly, without unnecessary movements

Air

close your eyes
feel the air above your head

leave all walls behind you until you reach the sky

feel the air
hold on

keep your eyes shut
feel the air

play the air directly over the keyboard, without touching the keys

Seven

1

2

5 quickly!

1

1

2

7 too slow

Alexis Porfiriadis, 2010

Words of Nothing (One, Flashlight, Air, Seven)



Life

close your eyes

let your life up to now flash before you like a film in quick motion

freeze a point

let it act inside you

play

Rechaud

place, with the utmost care and concentration

15 lighted tea candles (rechauds) along the entire interior surface of the piano

turn off all the lights in the room

position yourself opposite the piano interior and observe it for 2 minutes without the slightest movement

take the candles, one by one, and place them in front of the audience

Heart

feel your heartbeat on your neck with one hand

play 60 different sounds with the other hand,

closely following your heart rate

Face

close your eyes

and think that a small part of the piano interior is the face of a loved one

stroke it once with the tenderness it deserves

(continuously pressing on the right pedal until the sound disappears)

Alexis Porfiriadis, 2010

Words of Nothing (Life, Rechaud, Heart, Face)



Numbers

close your eyes

put your hands on the keyboard

count

1

2

3

4

5

6

open your eyes

Blow

close your eyes

Imagine that you can move the piano by a single blow of your mouth

take a deep breath and blow towards the piano for as long as you can

Imagine that the instrument has moved to a spot of your choice within the performance space, where it would be practically impossible to have a piano

open your eyes and direct yourself towards that spot

stay there motionless for 1 minute

return to the piano

Walk

walk slowly, steadily, focused and without stops

three times around the piano

maintaining CONSTANT physical and psychological contact

Alexis Porfiriadis, 2010

Words of Nothing (Numbers, Blow, Walk)



Rage

close your eyes

gather up all your rage against the system that controls you

wait

don't rush

gather all the rage

strike the piano once, on the strings or keyboard

keep your hand(s) on that spot

until all the rage is channeled through you

If you are not capable of rage, do not attempt this

Mallets

stand up in front of the piano

take a mallet

lift your arm and hold it up in the air using as much force as you can
as if you were about to strike the strings down violently

keep your arm there for 1 minute

Cluster

try to play a cluster with the entire keyboard

sustain it until it fades

repeat 10 times from a different position each time

Alexis Porfiriadis, 2010

Words of Nothing (Rage, Mallets, Cluster)



Touch

touch all the piano strings one by one
without making the slightest noise
slowly and with the utmost dedication

Keys

touch the keys silently
until you feel that your fingers have acquired the same temperature as the keys
then, and only then, depress them

repeat as many times as necessary

Strings

prior to the performance,
label 88 small stickers with the name of each piano string

during the performance stick the labels carefully, slowly and with the utmost dedication,
to the corresponding strings.

Friends

close your eyes
count carefully, quietly and without any gesture your true friends

open your eyes
play as many notes or chords as the number of your friends

Song

place your hands on the instrument as if you are going to play in the next second

keep them there while mentally going through one of your favorite songs
take your hands off when you finish the song

Alexis Porfiriadis, 2010

Words of Nothing (Touch, Keys, Strings, Friends, Song)



Slow

depress the key as slowly as possible

hold it

let it come back up as slowly as possible

withdraw your hand

perform the same procedure with two, then with three, four and five fingers (- keys).

Alexis Porfiriadis, 2010

Words of Nothing (*Slow*)

