

# We Dare You to Play These Scores!



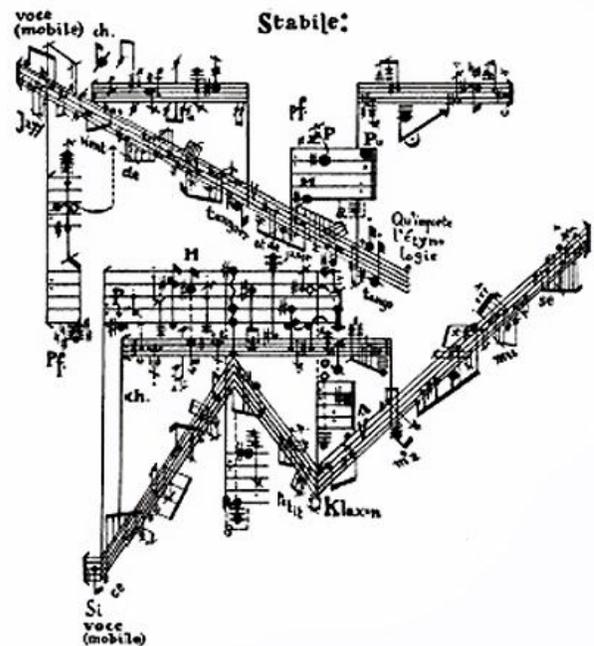
"QUANTUM SHOT" #124(rev)

[Link](#) - article by Avi Abrams

## **Play them at your own risk: Exploring the extremes of conventional music notation**

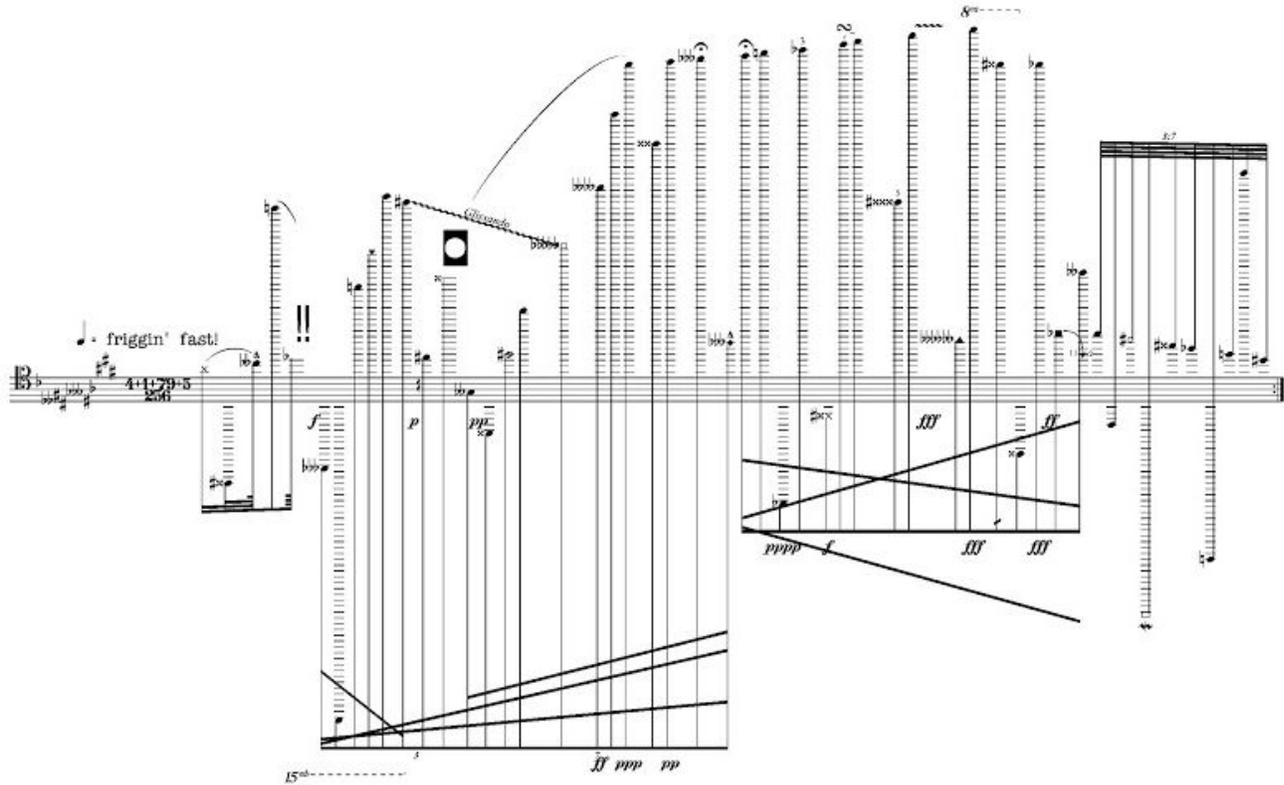
It seems that no amount of automated computer scoring can replace a personal, deliciously wicked human touch. Many composers are preferring non-standard music notation, and some musicians are ambitious enough to perform these impossible pieces, for the enjoyment of increasingly dumbfounded listeners.

So, we dare you to play these scores!... although it may be hazardous to your mental health.



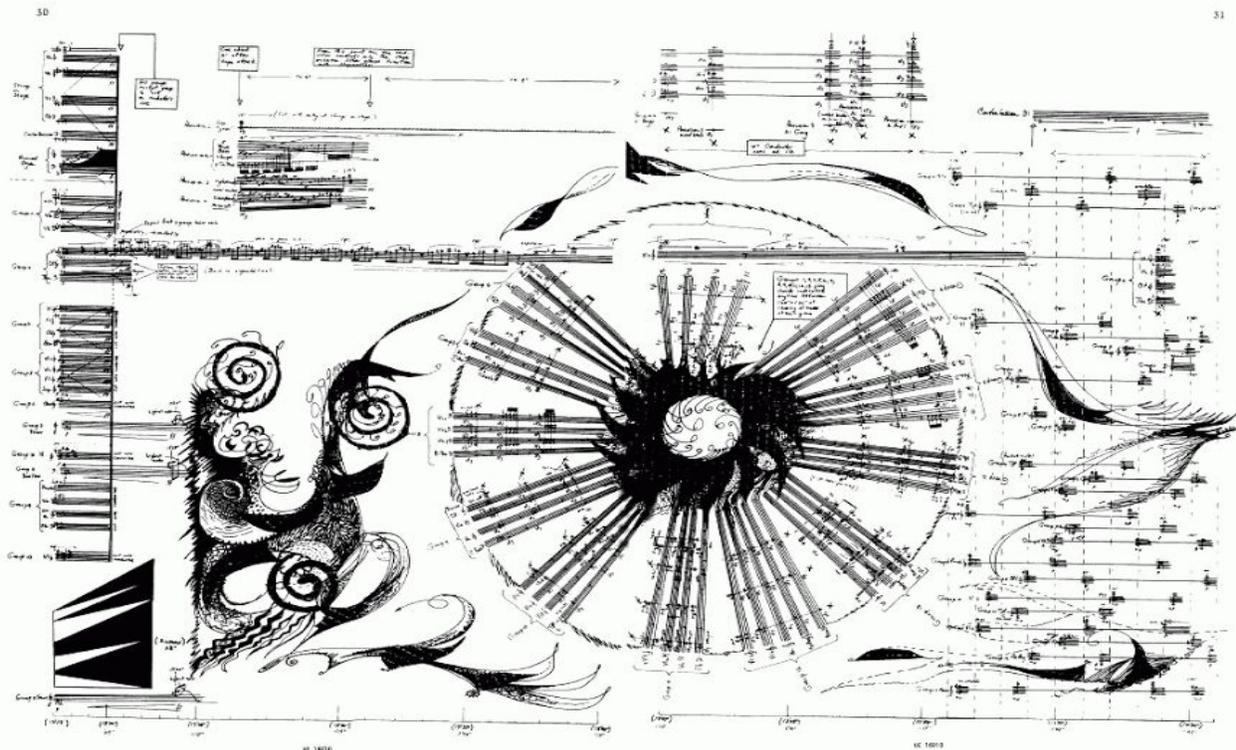
(right: Sylvano Bussotti's "Mobile-Stabile per Chitarre, Canto e Piano", see below)

We'll start with this piece, which is supposed to be played "friggin' fast", so you'd better get crackin' -



(image [via](#))

Here is a Canadian composer Murray Schafer's "Divan I Shams I Tabriz" (for Orchestra, seven singers and electronic sounds) - more info:



(image [via](#))





Besides many references to a mysterious "frog" that has "left the building", and mad requests like "INFLATE THE CIRCUS CLOWNS!", there are bizarre notations like:

"If you can't play this, why don't you call your mommy?"

"With Pesto... With much passionfruit..."

"There is no wrong way to play this"

"Justin, wake up!", "Damelle, did you have a burrito for lunch?"

Don't forget to "leap over cellist", and make "glissando using tip of nose".

It comes with helpful advice: "if arm falls off, re-attach and play much slower", "shock therapy may be necessary to finish"... Musicians are not supposed to fly over the audience, but they are expected to "Pluck with Dignity", and additionally - "Any players from Wisconsin are free to roam among the audience members and look for Mr. Howigg"

Also, notice the fine print: "Really big notes do not exist", and the 23/4 measure (which is officially unplayable).

The final verdict on this piece? "Musically, this is not very challenging" (by Isaac Stern).

Another bizarre score: "Atushi Ojisama and Ijigen Waltz":

## ATUSHI OJISAMA and IJIGEN WALTZ

(from "A Tribute to Yamasaki Atushi")

Words and Music by  
Yamasaki Atushi  
Arranged by Accident

Based on a Cro-magnon skinning chant

DaDa Domuw (rotate embouchures)  $\frac{5}{8}$

Slippery when wet

VOID LUMPING  
Like a Zudobanuuuuun

from the frog  $mf$   $p$

What's important

If you can't play this, why don't you call Atushi

As a Ojisama

There is no wrong way to ryumin

Like a Ojisama

Remain instrument if it says "Muttel"  $\text{©}$

Play real zuppy-like

Like (or as) the Atushi

Damelle, did you have a burrito for lunch?

Ijigen-style

Move those chubby little fingers !!

Sweedishly

Swedishly

far away from the frog

1 saw 45ms in the 4th row!

Bowing is mandatory

without the frog

Finger with right hand and bow with left hand

Beethoven this ain't

Ijigen Fuita.

Who's through the frog

AIKAWARAZU YOI UGOKIWO SHITEIRUNE

Everyone rotate one chair

WET REED SLEEP FOR TWO BARS

START OVER

OUCH! Stop putting your bow

divisi

Re-coat! with marm

Most of the have discover of anti-matteers into some darbie

Here, Anya Garba

divisi

Use a semi-full pitching wedge to back of green

Remove Cultural Ironice

TURN MUSIC UP SIDE-DOWN

Phonicians must leave the car pit sooo

perpendicular to the frog strings being

Lean forward

Cantinflas

ryumin

Credenza

A

W

B

A

fff

fff

This music really sinks!

without the frog

Finger with right hand and bow with left hand

TURN MUSIC UP SIDE-DOWN

Phonicians must leave the car pit sooo

(image via)

"Lament of the Introspective Turnbuckle", by Andrew Fielding

Dedicated to a swimsuit model, and played by... blondes? -

**LAMENT OF THE INTROSPECTIVE TURNBUCKLE**

Theme of the 1979 Miss Albuquerque, New Mexico Swimsuit and Short Fiction Writing Competition

BICUSPO N. BEHEMOUTH  
Op. 7 15/16

Lento vivace  
♩ = 0.5 *Fine* 3

TAKE CODA EXCEPT  
TUE. 7-9 A.M.  
STREET CLEANING

Piccolo tpt. *al nuncio noncarborundum*  
Bassoons *falsetto*  
Quad-rangle  
Fluid Drive

*cresc. 3 dim.* *Con amore unirequitutto*  
*basso marinaro*  
Tenderly  
*dim.*

Not available in all areas

Act II  
*glissando lasvegasoso*  
LAXLY  
DC *al* *Perdido interminando*  
Prepared piano *cresc.* Geldings  
*con brie*  
Triptych  
chimes

Buy the Bantam paperback  
52 *snorzando*  
pickup small pepperoni  
refuso non biodegradabile  
B12 DIRECTED Clayinova also on laser disc  
cocktail drums  
Vocal in  
nonet

peck horn *\* fppsf p*  
BHT 28  
*quasi intellectuo*  
Wait for conductor  
\*remove shoes  
strike zone *accl=1*  
Excitedly  
cuttlefish  
PLACE MUTE ON HEAD

you mf!!  
Organ  
Some assembly required  
*con las naranjas cerridas*  
unannounced layoff  
*dim. sum*  
*ffff*

© 1992 Andrew Fielding

All rights reserved including public performance for profit, private performance for snackfoods, parties, yachting, bolo-tie manufacturing, plea-bargaining in antebellum cubicalae, Neo-Calvinist photoplays and semi-formal peanut-butter performance art. All models over 18. Made in Altoona.

(image via)

Sylvano Bussotti's "Sette Fogli: Mobile-Stabile per Chitarre, Canto e Piano" -

voce (mobile) ch.  
Stabile:  
Pf  
H  
Qu'importe l'etymologie  
Klassen  
Si voce (mobile)

(image [via](#))

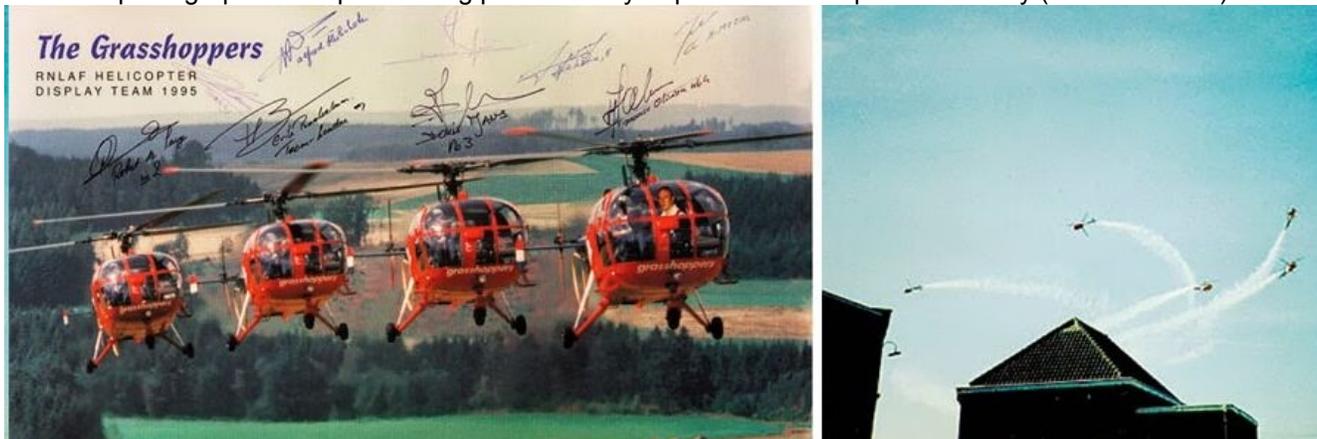
Here is another fragment of Sylvano Bussotti's score: "Pour Clavier" (apres Pieces de Chair II), published in 1961. It does not seem as crazy as the previous one - perhaps even (oh, perish the thought!) ALMOST possible to play! -

19  
toujours  
"strin  
gen  
do

(image [via](#))



Here is a photograph of this piece being performed by a quartet of helicopters in the sky (see more here):



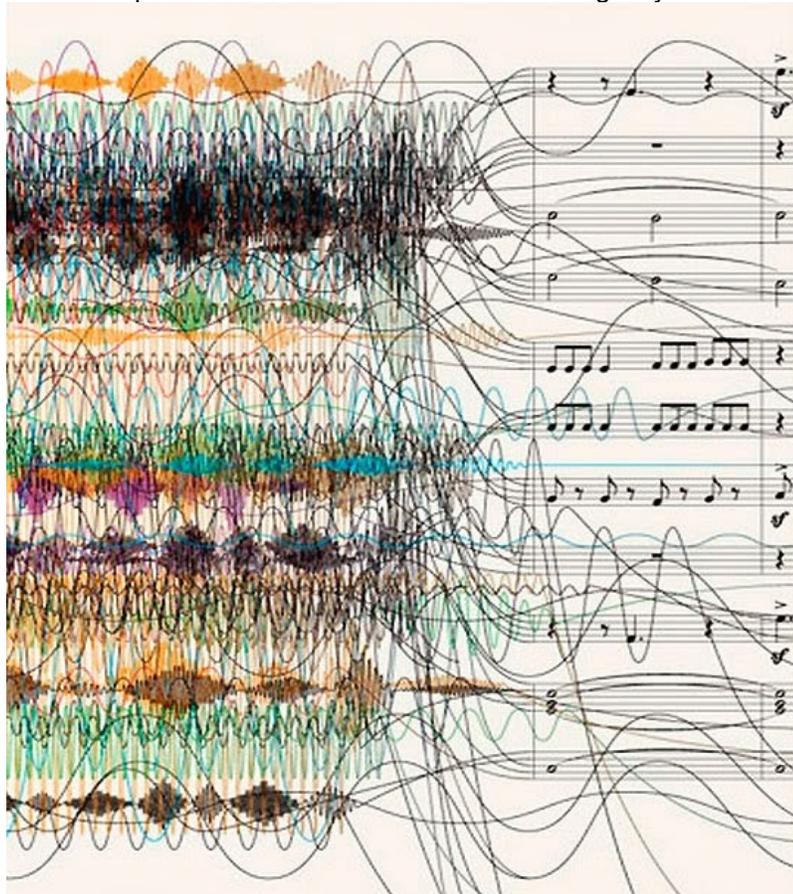
(images credit: [Kathinka Pasveer](#))

Stockhausen describes how he came up with this piece: "I had a dream: I heard and saw the four string players in four helicopters flying in the air and playing. At the same time I saw people on the ground seated in an audio-visual hall, others were standing outdoors on a large public plaza. In front of them, four towers of television screens and loudspeakers had been set up: at the left, half-left, half-right, right. At each of the four positions one of the four string players could be heard and seen in close-up." Read [more](#).

The "HELICOPTER STRING QUARTET" is dedicated to all astronauts. Click [here](#) to listen to part of the performance.

**Don't Panic! Tackle it note-by-note.**

Another impossible score looks like a bunch of tangled yarn in a stash of a knitter:



(image [via](#))



[Mark Jacobsen](#) makes collages on top of his Steinway piano, here is one of them:



(image courtesy [Mark Jacobsen](#))

A subtle advice to improve your performance? -



(original unknown)

If your brain overheats trying to figure out how to play all that, we suggest you take a break and try to play something simpler:



(original unknown)

Article by [Avi Abrams](#). Dark Roasted Blend.

## It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Music

In [Part 1](#) we saw music notation from hell, from the fringes of sanity and straight outside of this mortal coil... Music written by aliens to be played by aliens (who will have a few extra limbs to spare).

We did not exhaust this subject by any means, however, as new examples of this highly-ordered and extremely sophisticated madness (a secret vice for many a composer, perhaps...) kept popping up.

### Pavane of the Reconstituted Visigoths

Andy Fielding sent us his new creation (he says "I do this kind of thing each time I change notation apps"):

**Pavane of the Reconstituted Visigoths**  
*Dedicated to the Guelph, Ontario Lawn Bowling Society*

**Db Canola Horn** Rankworth P. LaFon  
(1948 - 1902)

*Plagiarismo*  
*pppppp*  
*1 2 tr*  
*5.,6.*  
*loco*  
*my loco*

*Ilva*  
*Cattle drums*  
*nauseoso*  
*ff*  
*Condescendingly*

*p 1*  
*si.....*  
*N*  
*con flautenza bombastica en la noche*

KEEP WALLET AWAY  
FROM TROMBONISTS

© 2005 for all countries except those with the letters E and R. Do not perform this music while operating heavy machinery or even medium-weight machinery. Contains cellulite. Any resemblance to actual celebrities is purely confidential. Do not drive an SUV. Yes, you are a robot. We reserve the right to serve refuse to anyone. Did you practice? Go outside and do something till I'm off the phone. Be Kind, Rewind. Fill your sitzmarks. For more details, consult someone with a bad toupee.

*Semi-prepared by  
Andy Fielding  
anderwriter@gmail.com*

*B.C. al Vancouver*

- Starting with a "Plagiarismo" tempo, the notes are increasingly bizarre: you are advised to play it -
- "fast enough to impress other musicians..."
  - "condescendingly"
  - slow down to "nauseoso" tempo...
  - "keep wallet away from trombonists"
  - emitting blood-curdling screams from time to time.
  - keep repeating some sections to relieve the painful itch
  - and even include a special "Pop Music Section", details of which are mercifully withheld.

Gotta love his copyright / disclaimer note:

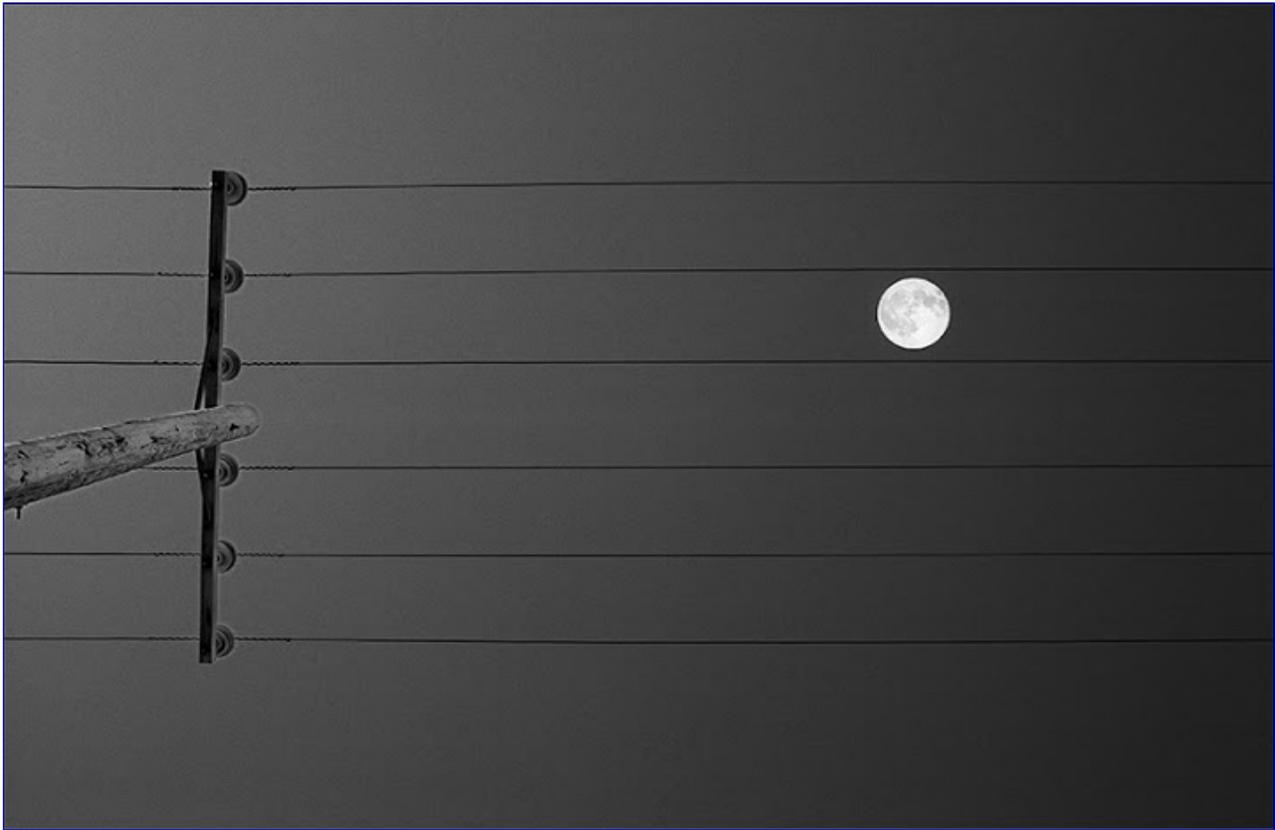
© 2005 for all countries except those with the letters E and R. Do not perform this music while operating heavy machinery or even medium-weight machinery. Contains cellulite. Any resemblance to actual celebrities is purely confidential. Do not drive an SUV. Yes, you are a robot. We reserve the right to serve refuse to anyone. Did you practice? Go outside and do something till I'm off the phone. Be Kind, Rewind. Fill your sitzmarks. For more details, consult someone with a bad toupee.

(score credit: Andy Fielding, Musician, Composer, Music Editor, Richmond, BC)

Be careful when performing this piece, you may find that your audience will **start** climbing up the walls, so aim your instrument gradually toward the ceiling to improve acoustics.

## Simplicity itself!

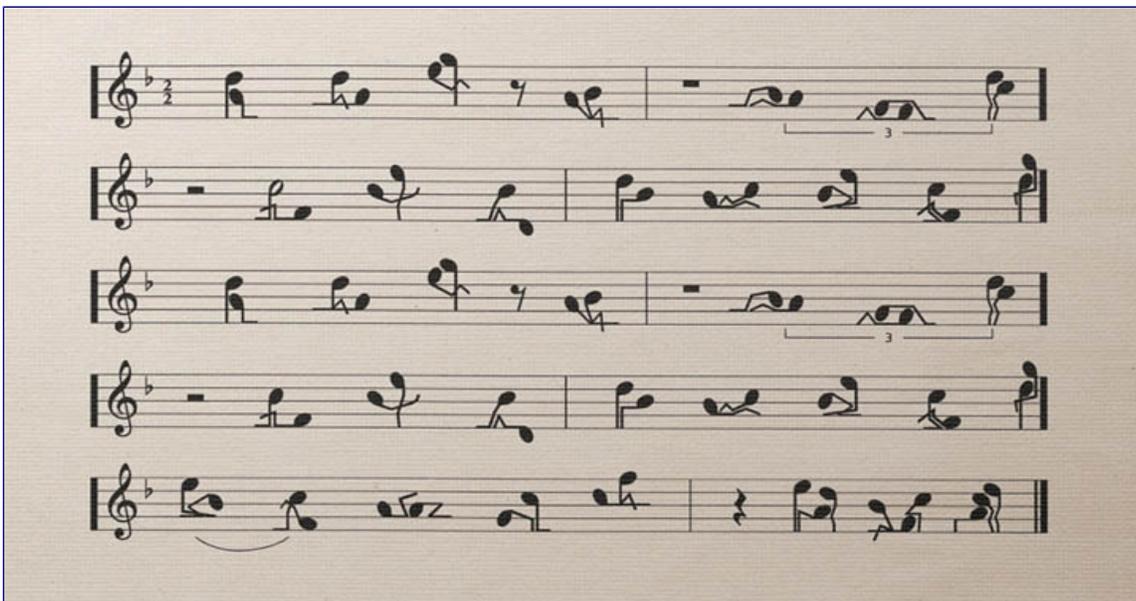
Sometimes less is more, and the absence of notation could be even better, when accompanied by the moonlit night:



(image via)

## A Tribute to Serge Gainsbourg

Remember the highly sublime and scandalously sensual song by Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin [Je t'aime... moi non plus](#)? This is how it translates in appropriate notation (which might take a little longer to play) -



(image credit: [Scary Ideas](#))

Yoko Ono's "Voice Piece for Soprano":



## VOICE PIECE FOR SOPRANO



**Scream.**

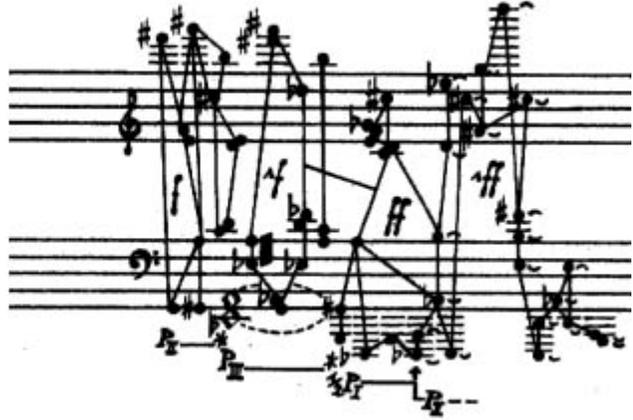
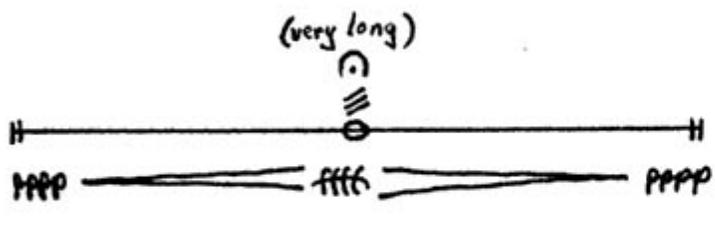
1. against the wind
2. against the wall
3. against the sky

1961 autumn

(image via)

James Tenney invents a note for percussion (left), while a very strange note structure convulses in death throes on the right (taken from Sylvano Bussotti's "Pour Clavier", 1961):

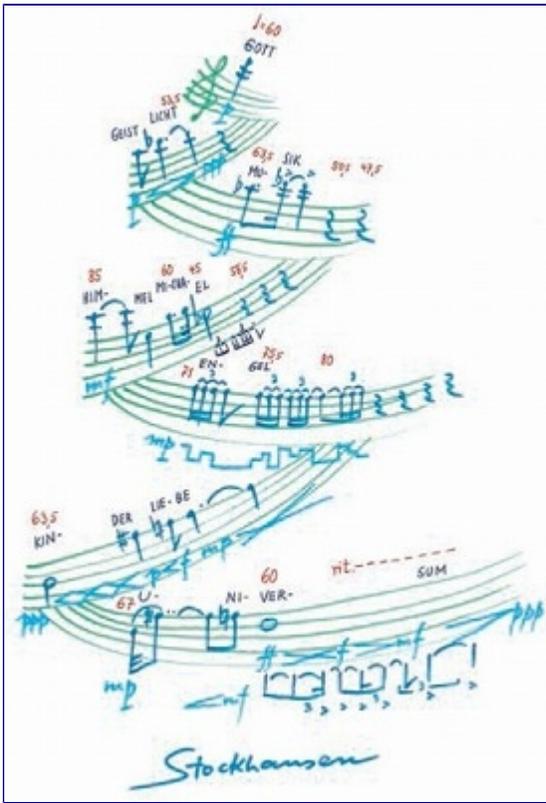
HAVING NEVER WRITTEN A NOTE FOR PERCUSSION  
for John Bergamo



James Tenney  
8/6/71

(images via)

Christmas time is here!  
(Stockhausen, "Die zehn wichtigsten Wörter", 1991)



(image via)

Nikos Skalkottas "Four Etudes [No.2](1941)" - (check out these chords... powerful!)



(image via)

Speaking about even more cryptic notation, here is "Play II" for harpsichord and synthesizer, from John Stead (with just a hint of spermatozoids in there, dancing) -

*PLAY II - for Harpsichord and Synthesizer - written for Nigel Britton and dedicated to John Kowal.*

(image via)

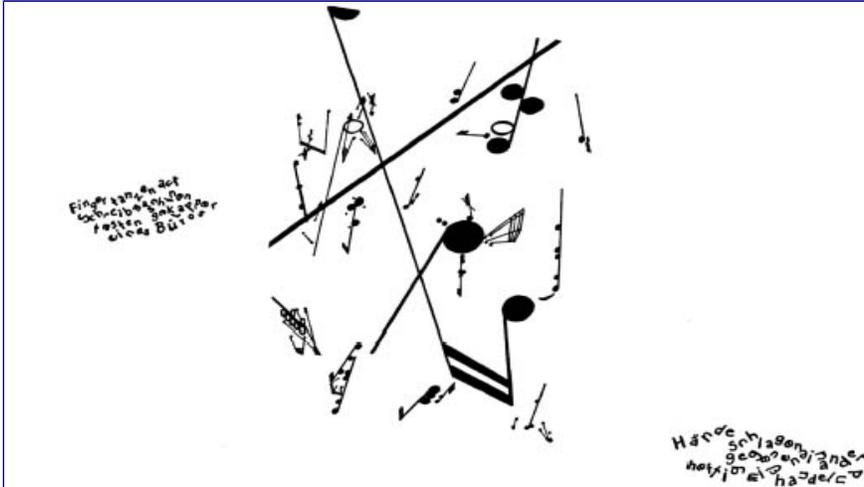
OK, so how would you play the "Syncopated Texture" shown on the left image below? No wonder it's been called the "Imaginary Music" (though I suspect I may like it... may sound somewhat like spring, grass growing, etc.). But then, there is an even more puzzling score: Takehisa Kosugi's "+ -" (1987), shown on the right:

*+ - Takehisa Kosugi - 1987 -*

+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
+	+		+	-	+	+	-
-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
+	+	+	-		+	+	-
+	+	+	-	-	-		+
+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+
+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-

Tom Johnson "Imaginary Music", No. 65. "Syncopated Texture"; Takehisa Kosugi "+ -" (1987)

Trying to perform the next piece may result in something loosely described as a "musical train crash" -



Dieter Schnebel: MO-NO. Musik z. Lesen (1969)

This is not notation, but certainly a creative use of the favorite media of nostalgic fans of Jimi Hendrix: a bunch of good old tape (art by [iRI5](#), Erika Iris Simmons):



"Ghost in the Machine" - art by [Erika Iris Simmons](#)

In the meantime, good old Johann Sebastian Bach sends his regards across the centuries and musical styles:



(image credit: [Worth1000](#))

<http://www.darkroastedblend.com/2013/08/we-dare-you-to-play-these-scores.html>

<http://www.darkroastedblend.com/2009/03/strangest-music-scores-part-2.html>