

MATMOS/PLORK “Ganzfeld experiment” piece.

Over the past few months, we have been re-enacting a famous parapsychological experiment known as the “Ganzfeld” experiment, which is designed to supposedly provide a scientifically verifiable way of detecting ESP. In our version, a test subject is isolated in a dark room and resting on a mattress, wearing headphones playing white noise over their ears and halved ping-pong balls over their eyes. At a set signal, they are asked to “open their minds” and try to receive a psychic signal that I attempt to send from my mind into their mind. I try to transmit a “musical idea” and the test subject is asked to describe any sounds they “hear” in their minds, and to describe any objects or actions or events that they seem to see or hear. I have taken the collected transcripts so far, eliminated visual descriptions that were purely abstract, and collected together all the references made in the sessions to: 1) musical ideas about form or instrumentation, 2) sonic ideas about particular textures, timbres, or noises and 3) “objects” which could be used to create sounds. Look over this list and select an item from the list, or a small group of items. You may choose from just one column, or bring together elements from a few columns. Then acquire the objects/sources/materials, and construct a sonic expression of some of these psychically transmitted “musical ideas”. I want you to create a short example of the content generated by the transcript of the psychic session (we could term this example a “sonic event”). By short, I mean 10-15 seconds. You could acquire a lemon and make sounds out of the lemon: chopping it, bouncing it, scraping it, drumming upon it, and then build that into your “sonic event”. You could also try to fuse an object from the “object” list with a musical idea from the “music” list: layer a looped noise sourced from the sound of a wagon wheel into a tone upon which you then play a “chord . . . like a major triad” as your “sonic event”. The point here is to see the musical forms, textures, and object/sources as modular components that can be overlaid upon or multiplied by each other. Ideally, try to create two or three examples of “sonic events” from this list. In addition to your chosen elements from these lists you select, also construct a short example of the “triangle” idea and a short example of the “wave” idea. In performance, each player will be drawing upon and manipulating the realizations of the list in a distributed way that we will work out in group rehearsal, and there will be also an occasional kind of “chorus” effect when everyone in the ensemble will play their “triangle” events and another occasional chorus effect when everyone in the ensemble will play their “wave” event.

Musical:

An ostinato.

A three note rhythm.

The bowing of really high strings.

chromatic or microtonally cluster-y.

A jumpy pulse.

chord...like a major triad

a jew's harp

bass harmonica

Triangle / triangle / triangle / triangle / triangle
A crystal clear bell
glockenspiel
a “Crunchy” organ sound, with sustain.
A Latin beat, with shakers
Some kind of twangy old stringed instrument. / violin / “sawing”
Suspensful, slightly scary music.
A faint chiming sound.

Sonic:

Driving very fast.
A rolling noise, like a trolley.
The sound is in a very large room.
Squealing. / High screeching.
A monotone interrupted by rhythmic clicks.
Chanting. / Nasal chanting / Native American chanting
Laughter.
a sireny sound...like a sweeping um, sinewavy kind of noise
Waves / waves going up / waves that pulse / waves of darkness
Something going from left to right.
Whispering. / a woman speaking, I can barely hear her voice
“Computer noises” / spaceship toy noise / Halloween toy “whoooooo”
Someone saying “oh, I like it, I like it”.
A woman singing in Portugese.

Objects:

Formica.
Drumstick.
Toy truck.
Apples. / a crunchy apple being bitten and crunched
Wagon wheel.
whistling sound (whistles...)
Water / Boiling water / A bucket of water / rhythmic sloshing
A chair leg. / a wooden object
A lemon. (fresh fruit)
A silver spoon.
A pin cushion.
A roll of cloth/material.
A snowglobe.
A baguette.
A cone made out of paper made into a “horn”