JACOB THOMPSON-BELL

COLLAGES and SOUNDTRACKS
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A collection of graphic scores and soundtracks
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This is a collection of collage pieces with soundtracks (included on disc at the front of this volume) produced 2012 — 2013. They can each be enjoyed as standalone pieces, cover to cover, as a combined work, or by taking and combining extracts. Collage scores can also be coupled with any chosen soundtrack.

The collages are provided for enjoyment both as visual pieces and as musical compositions; some of them are even documents about other things altogether.

These pieces are designed for private and public performances alike. Feel free to look at the collages and listen to the soundtracks; listen to the soundtracks alone; or simply look and hear nothing at all. Short instructions on how to use the collages as performance pieces are given alongside each one, though these guides might be useful when reading the scores too, suggesting when and where to look, for example. Whilst indications on which instruments might be used for each piece should be clear enough, there is nothing to stop musicians trying them out on a different instrument.

When combining collages and soundtracks, readers, players, performers, and all others, are encouraged to respond freely to associations between the layers.

Jacob Thompson-Bell, May 2013
Read
Review
Decode
Interpret
Hear
See
Critique
Dismiss
Enjoy
COLLAGES and SOUNDTRACKS
A musical map for any string instrument...

PERFORMING FROM THE SCORE

The score opposite is a musical map — the performer should begin at the START sign and navigate their way around the page. The performance can last for as long as is desired but should generally include half of the score or more, to ensure a varied series of gestures.

The piece can be played on any string instrument, with optional octave transpositions of material where appropriate. The performer should respond as consistently as possible, assigning chosen gestures (i.e. glissando, pitch bend, arpeggio, grace note, and so on) to specific symbols in the score. When travelling around the score, the performer should continue moving in the same direction until they reach a junction, at which point the direction can change. Expressions such as dynamics and articulation should be chosen based on the images themselves, and their context (i.e. adjacent symbols and direction of approach).

The player is encouraged to use a good range of techniques, including extended techniques if desired. Indicated pitches should be preserved but can be double stopped or detuned at the player’s discretion.
SONGMAKING: ECLECTICA

A score written for solo viola, using images of museum artefacts, a photograph of my face, a Canadian postcard, and a traditional song from Alaska...

PERFORMING FROM THE SCORE

This score is a mixture of gestural and prescriptive notations. Where the score resembles traditional musical notation, the player should respond as such. Where the notation is more image-based, the player should try to maintain a consistent approach. The player can decide how literal their response will be — how much to respond to the character of the handwriting, angle of the lines, colours, and so on.

When playing the bow drills, the player should use only the pitches indicated on the first page, preserving their harmonic content throughout. If the player wishes, these pitches can be used as a harmonic basis for the entire piece, unless clearly indicated otherwise.

It is possible to repeat fragments or whole pages *ad libitum*, according to preference and the intended duration of the performance, though each page should last roughly 30 – 60 seconds. The player may wish to project the score if it is performed publicly.
Depicted right are four of seven Inupiat ivory bow drills housed at the British Museum (2013). They show scenes of community activities common to late-nineteenth century Inupiat society, a community still living predominantly in northern Alaska. The drills are ornamental versions of a common tool for firemaking, household items that have become works of art and cultural documents in their own right.

As part of the present composition, these images were hand copied and then abstracted to resemble musical notation, paralleling the part-instructive, part-ornamental function of the original drills.

This photograph shows the display cabinet (centre-right), which houses the seven Inupiat ivory bow drills at the British Museum (2013). Grouped with other North American artefacts, the drills are part of a curated collection.

The score below presents images and instructions derived from this image to make a new curated collection of visual and musical artefacts. As part of the process, the above photograph was fragmented, and recoloured. The resultant snapshots were then used as abstract shapes on which to hang gestures.

This Inupiat song, which features below, was transcribed from Laura Boulton’s recording, The Eskimo’s of Hudson Bay and Alaska, an audio-document of the songs of Inupiat people in the communities she visited, released in 1955.

The song is about the act of songmaking, an activity which gives its title to this score. The words translate: All songs have been exhausted | He picks up some of all | And adds his own | And makes a new song.
THE BOW DRILLS:

range open

G E C A F D

A D G C

sonorous assured

(natural harmonics welcome)
SONGMAKING

A POSTAL TRIBUTE
TO THE PEOPLE OF
CANADA'S FAR NORTH

Based on—"All songs have been
exhausted..." (imprint song.)

ISSUED FEBRUARY 21, 1955

"...He picks up some of all
And adds his own
And makes a new song."

THE ESKIMO HUNTER
Based on “ALL SONGS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED…” (Impiati song)

Cantabile

I   II   III

I   II   II

ad lib.

II   II

“… He picks up some of all
And adds his own
And makes a new song.”

Bluegrass tremolando
decrescendo

arco
VI
O
LA
F
R
A
G
M
E
N
T
S
The player should select three consecutive double-page spreads from which to perform.

The score can be read by hopping from one fragment to another (within the double page), seeking to deliver the changes from one section of material to another as smoothly as possible. Each fragment should be played once in its entirety before moving onto the next, and each double page should be completed before progressing. The player may choose to repeat some or all fragments, though attention should be paid to the overall duration of the performance.

Where the notation is incomplete, the player may either choose to play, literally, from the information available, or to infer information about the fragment from other pages of the score. This approach does not need to be preserved between different fragments. However, some consistency should be aimed for between fragments of the same colour and speed, to give a clear impression of three distinct varieties of musical material. Each complete double page of the score should last somewhere between one minute and two minutes.

Pauses caused by changes between pages can be used as short structural commas, or avoided entirely by copying the pages and setting them out in order. On the final page presented, the player may choose to finish part way through the page (including in the middle of a fragment), in order to arrive at a clear stopping point.
inc. bow pressure to gradually crush string

dec. bow pressure ord.

mp ff

f sonore pp

mf

pp → mf → pp

FAST
SLOW
poco S.P.
gradually move bow to ord. position

MEDIUM

espressivo

pizz.

arco

pp

pp
A graphic score in 20 questionable parts, for any instrument

Play some, or all, of the pages displayed
R H I Z O M E