

-Symbols-
for two percussionists
with turkish finger cymbals

David Bithell, 2002

“Symbols” is a work that takes the physical movements that are inherent in the performance of percussion music and distorts, exaggerates, and re-organizes them to be useful in their own right.

The percussionists each have a pair of small turkish finger cymbals. Each cymbal should be a different pitch (though the differences may be rather small).

In general, the cymbals should be held with the strap between thumb and first finger, one in each hand. Damping the cymbals is done by the any of the remaining fingers.

In order to get only one cymbal to ring when striking both, I often use the technique of damping one during the strike. This is indicated in letters “B” and “G”. In letters “D”, “H”, and “I” this is not explicitly shown in the notation but is required.

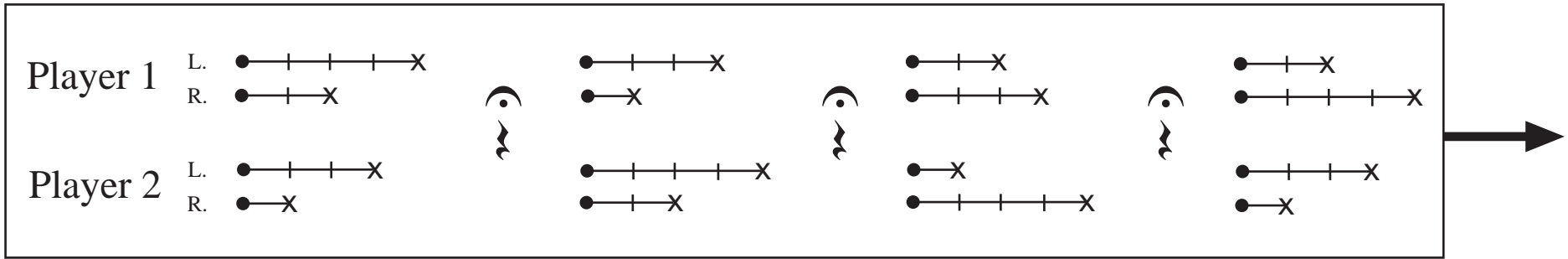
The piece lasts roughly 8 minutes.

The work was premiered by myself and Ali Momeni at the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT) at UC Berkeley on November 15, 2002.

A

Four Different Release Times

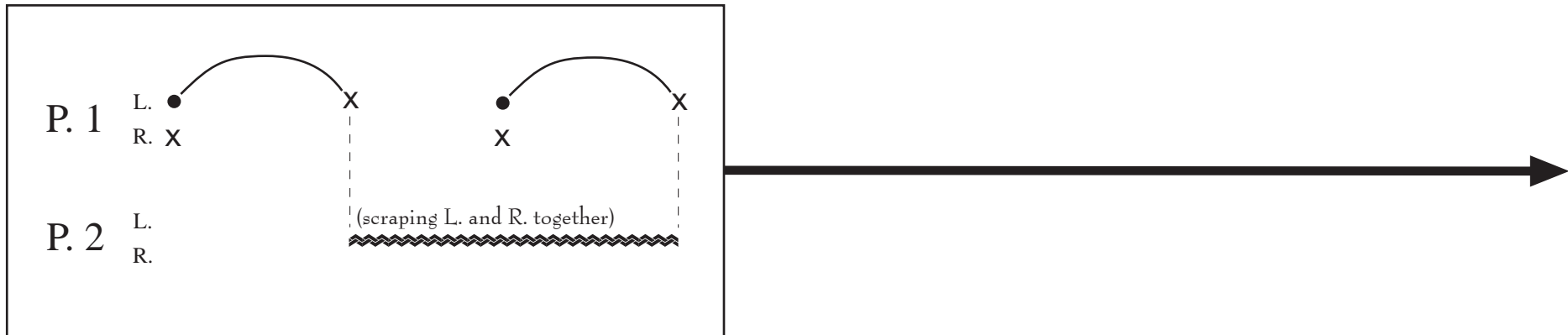
(strike both cymbals together and dampen on the "x")
(speed is approximately 120 bpm per "tick")



B

Display Rings

(strike L. against a static R. and display L. in slow arc to the left - letting left cymbal ring until damped)



C *Wompous Scraping and Different Release Times*

25''
 (improvised scraping of the two cymbals together)

(scraping in time, where quarter note = one tick mark)

(both turn heads toward each other)

P. 1 *slight accel.*

P. 2 *slight rit.*

D *Brief Hocket*

(each player moves hands for each beat even if no sound is called for -- i.e. players hands are in sync -- start by lifting up left hand)

P. 1

L.	●	→	X		●	→	X
R.				●	→	X	

P. 2

L.			●	→	X		
R.							

E *Brief Mime*

10''

Improvised movement of arms. Move cymbals individually to corners of an imaginary box surrounding the performer.

End in the following configuration:

[L.	straight up]
	R.	straight in front	
[L.	straight up]
	R.	out to the right	

Slowly bring cymbals in front of face with bells facing audience.

Then on cue, snap cymbals into playing position.

F***Wompous Improvisation***


~ 60''

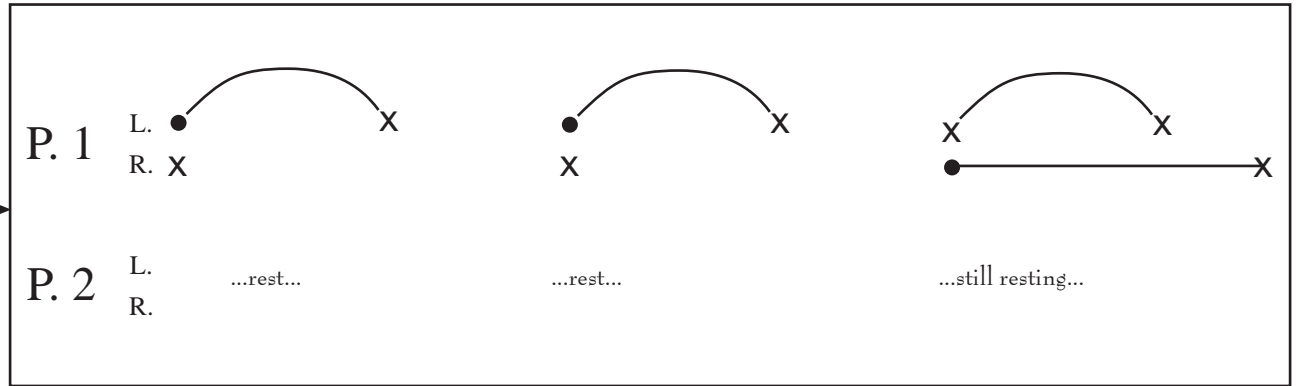
Both players improvise using various scraping and ringing techniques. The majority of the sounds should be scraping sounds.

Start very slow.
Start very soft.

Explore different speeds
(sudden and gradual changes)

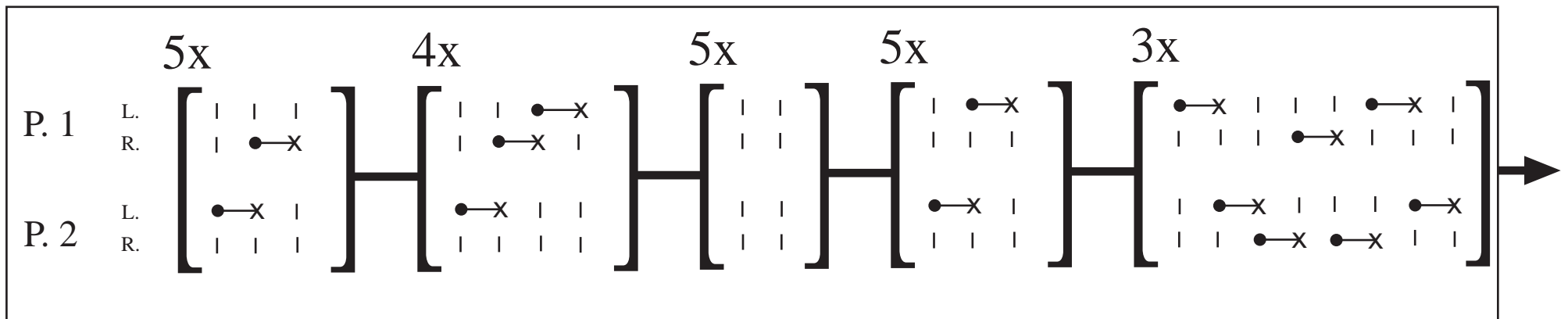
Avoid overall shape or trajectory.

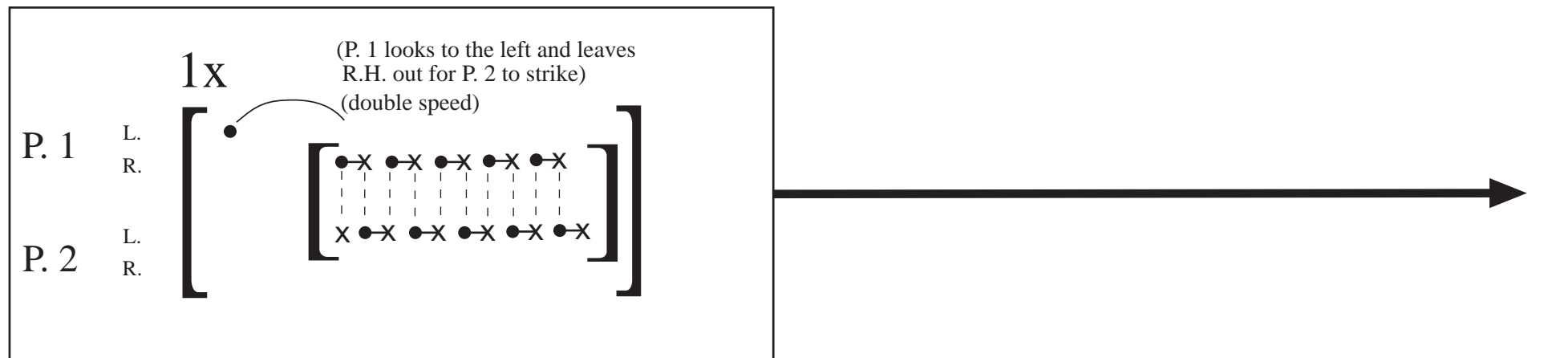
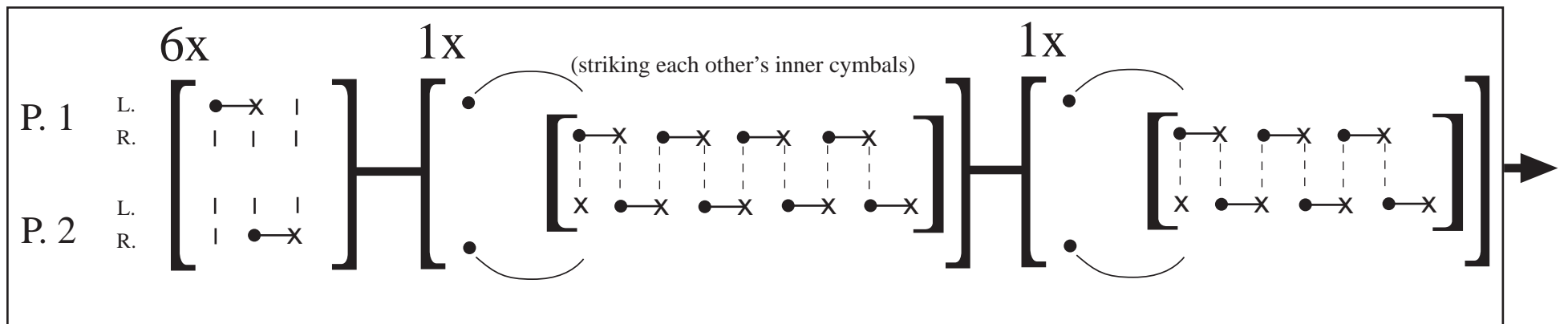
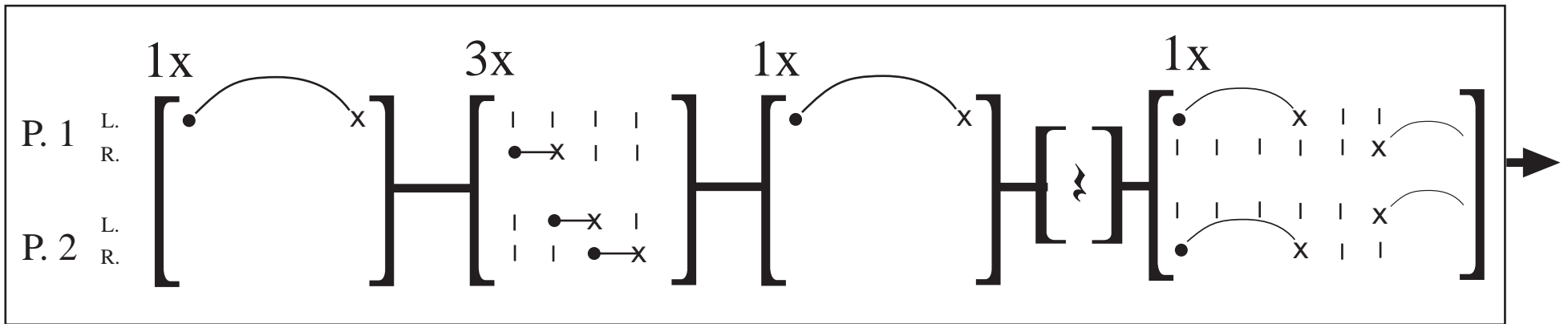
P. 1 ends improvisation by moving on to letter "G". P. 2 stops.

G***Displaced Release (Partial Mime)*****H*****Sustained Hocket***

(each player moves hands for each beat even if no sound is called for --
i.e. players hands are in sync -- start by lifting up left hand as an up beat)

(In this notation the last event of each bar coincides with the beginning of either the repeat or the next bar)





I

Different Attack Times

(cymbals should be held suspended by their straps)

P. 1

L. ● | | | ● | | X
R. | | | ● | | X

P. 2

L. | | ● | | X
R. | ● | | | X

pp

The diagram illustrates a cymbal exercise for two players, P. 1 and P. 2. Each player's part is shown with two horizontal lines representing cymbals. Vertical lines between the cymbals indicate the starting positions. P. 1 starts with the left cymbal on the first line and the right on the fourth. P. 2 starts with the left on the third and the right on the second. The exercise is performed in three stages, with cymbal positions and attack times indicated by dots and 'X' marks. A large arrow points to the right.

J

Pure Mime

(in unison)

- Raise both cymbals in front of face (bells facing audience)
- Snap both cymbals 90° counter-clockwise
- L.H. move upward halfway
- R.H. snap under to front
- With tension, spread hands apart
P. 1 look toward L.H.
P. 2 look toward R.H.
- Both look to inner hand and strike that cymbal with the other player
- Immediately improvise fast movements (as in letter "E") facing 45° away from center (approx. 30")
- Place inner hand in center dangling cymbal -- follow with outer hand (hocket placement)
- Rotate body slowly to center
- Start moving hands in sync up and down (like letter "H" but silent) freely look around disinterested

The diagram shows a list of instructions for a cymbal exercise. A large arrow points to the right.

K *Silent Hocket*

(silent visual coordination with accents made by lifting hands higher)
(repeat each bar twice -- tempo is ~ 60bpm for the half note)

P. 1 [> > > > > > > > > > > > > >]
P. 2 [> > > > > > > > > > > > > >]

[> > > > > > > > > > > > > >]
[> > > > > > > > > > > > > >]

(1x only -- no repeat) $\text{♪} = \text{♪}^3$ [> > > > > > > > > > > > > >] (1x only -- no repeat) $\text{♪} = \text{♪}^3$

L***Cymbals on Table***

~ 45''

Immediately at end of "K" both players start a hocket touching cymbals repeatedly on a resonant table.

Transform this through improvisation into a combination of scraping on the table and the sounds of forcefully lifting the cymbals off of the table.

General effect is a slow winding down.

**M*****Finale***

(cymbals are lifted off the table, and let ring -- damping is done by placing them back on the table)

P. 1	L.	● X		R.	● X		2x	(2nd X damp with finger)	
	R.	● X		L.	● X				
P. 2	L.	● X		R.	● X		2x	(2nd X damp with finger)	
	R.	● X		L.	● X				

pp