

# Not Yet Happening

Click Nilson (2019, post humorous)

This happening is not yet happening, but the plans laid out herein should make its happening happen.

I happened to happen upon this happening idea for a happening through happenstance, and since it was not yet happening, planned its happening to happen in 2019, or thereabouts.

*The objective of the work is to examine the potentiality implicit in a score, and particularly the human language looseness of a text score.*

*Any 'rule', 'directive', 'law', 'system' is an autocracy awaiting overthrow.*

*Any revolution is only the seed for the next wave of change.*

*Do not settle for any fixity, for any stasis, for any definitive interpretation.*

*Everything is to play for.*

Ethical note: fundamental human rights should not be breached during this performance, and most importantly, no-one given a text directive to action is free to break laws or relax moral imperatives just because a novel instruction appeared. No participants should be harmed, and any participant can withdraw at any time.

Dramatis personae:

**1+ performers**

**1+ live coders** (who may also be performers)

**0+ audience** (who may also become live coders, or become performers, at any point)

Location: flexible, but either a larger space accommodating multiple simultaneous actions, or a possibility of wandering throughout multiple rooms, would probably be more comfortable. However, if five people wish to perform the work as best they can inside a single telephone box, go for it.

The performers select one or more of the text pieces included here to perform, or found in the posthumous<sup>1</sup> collection:

Nilson, C. (2016) *Collected Rewritings: Live Coding Thoughts, 1968-2015*.

Burntwood: Verbose

(<http://composerprogrammer.com/research/collectedrewritings.pdf>)

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, this collection has not yet been collected, but if all goes to plan, it should exist, albeit, perhaps in rewritten form

Performers may play for any duration desired, at any point in the space. They may move if possible to different locations. Performers may attempt the same text piece at the same time, at the same location, doing their best to resolve any conflicts of material.

The audience are free to wander about. They may become live coders or performers if the whim takes them, and the live coders and performers may also swap roles.

Performers must do their best to modify behaviour to fit any changes to their scores that occur in the course of performance. All text scores should be printed and available in the venue (it may be beneficial to have multiple copies printed in case of conflicts or a need to return to earlier versions).

**Live Coder Instruction Set:** The live coders may take any of the text pieces in this collection, and rewrite them during performance.

**Live Coding Variation 1:** Each live coder carries their instruction list, which consists initially of a print-out of the Live Coder Instruction Set above. 1+ meta-live coders are enabled to intervene with any existing live coder, and rewrite their instruction list, adding, deleting or modifying instructions as they desire

**Live Coding Variation 2:** Each meta-live coder carries their own instruction list, initialised as Live Coding Variation 1 above. 1+ meta-meta-live coders are enabled to intervene with any existing meta-live coder, though not any live coder, and rewrite their instruction list, adding, deleting or modifying instructions as they desire

**Live Coding Variations 3+:** Add additional meta until it becomes unbearable.

**Live Coding Variations aleph 0:** Any live coding instruction or meta instruction set can be modified by a participant dressed as a demigod.

**Live Coding Variations aleph 1:** The whole set of instructions for the happening, not including the ethical note, can be modified by a participant dressed as a god. The onus is on them to go around explaining the new rules of the happening to all at the happening, while it is happening.

**Live Coding Variations aleph 2:** The whole set of instructions for the happening, including the ethical note, can be modified by a participant, as long as they are dressed in so many layers of clothing, or so elaborate a costume, or so many other constraints, such as boxing gloves, that it is essentially impossible to them to actually write anything. They may try to plead with others to release them, to write things for them, to do what they tell them, but no-one in their right mind should actually pay any attention to anything they say.

## Text pieces

Some text pieces follow which can be used for the initial happening as seed material for performers. They vary in the material that must be prepared in advance of the happening.

### **Enormous quantities of silence**

In one corner, a musician struggles to carefully examine all parts of some large sculptural forms, namely, the word 'silence' cast in plastic, polystyrene and other materials, without making a single sound. Their effort to examine silence silently, while listening intently to the result, can be intensively listened to by any passer by.

Variation 1: the musician's actions are picked up by one or more microphones and video cameras, and relayed to other points in the space. At the opposite end of a hall, or another room, their attempt at silence is played back very loudly and projected large.

### **Recursive piece for Alvin**

(for electronic realisation; live coding of a computer would be a suitable way to explore this, though analog means may also be found, or the juxtaposition of multiple instruments with relatively pure sounds which can be bent, such as clarinet, flute, piccolo, whistle et al.)

A single downwards sine tone sweeps, with occasional interjections of cross-cutting upwards sine. However, the upwards sine is itself crossed by a shorter downwards one. And this on, in turn, to the nth level.

### **Extended technique**

Take any book on extended techniques, such as Gardner Read's *Compendium of Modern Instrumental Techniques*, and find as many ways to create novel sounds from the book as possible. This might include:

Turning pages quickly or slowly

Scraping fingernails on the cover

Hitting the book on a table or against a wall

Tearing, shredding or otherwise hurting the text, from individual pages to the binding

## **Satire on satire**

In this soapbox piece, delivered as oration after standing on a small platform, or delivered by the quick writing, typesetting and printing of a public pamphlet, you satirise the notion of satire, mocking satirists. For instance, you may wish to point to any inconsistencies in the statements of Ian Hislop or Peter Cook, or discuss the failures of Aristophanes, or (pretend to) really talk up the virtues of satire as an art form.

## **Satyr on satire on satire**

Perform the piece 'satire on satire' whilst dressed as a satyr.<sup>2</sup>

## **Satyr on satire on satire, with Satie**

Perform the piece 'satire on satire' whilst dressed as a satyr, with Satie's furniture music, or at least, a rough approximation to it<sup>3</sup> playing in the background

## **Satyr on satire on satire, on Satie's settee**

Perform the piece 'satyr on satire on satire, with Satie', from Satie's original settee, or at least a sofa, divan or chaise longue in keeping with an idea of what Satie might have had in his living room, circa 1920

You may not sit on the furniture.

## **Satyr on satire on satire, sat on Satie's settee**

Perform the piece 'satyr on satire on satire, on Satie', from Satie's original settee, or at least a sofa, divan or chaise longue in keeping with an idea of what Satie might have had in his living room, circa 1920

You may sit.

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<sup>2</sup> The etymology of satire has been contentious, and the word does not necessarily derive from the Greek satyr but from Roman satura. you may wish to address this in your piece, satirically.

<sup>3</sup> Who cares if it isn't played accurately? You're not supposed to be listening to it except as background noise

## **Shared periodic movements**

Two or more performers gather together in one place.

At first, performers rock their bodies together, wave hands to each other in time, nod heads together, make loving eye contact, swing their legs together whether standing or perched on the edge of a table, and generally co-ordinate.

Over time, they deviate from each other, looking less, trying out at first simply related movement speeds, and later entirely unrelated movement speeds, as the sense of synchrony and ensemble togetherness collapses. They gradually disperse.

## **Painting musicians**

One or more live painters paint musicians while those musicians carry out other musical tasks. They may either work on a separate canvas, or directly onto the musicians. If on the musicians, it must be only with permission obtained ahead of the performance, or (non-verbal) permission granted such as an encouraging nod. Painters should try to keep musical disruption to a minimum.

*Variation 1:* 1+ musicians themselves attempt to complete musical tasks whilst also creating a painting on the side, on a canvas, or on themselves.

*Variation 2:* Painting takes precedence over completion of any musical performance, and any painting can disrupt music making.

## **Stepladder**

In this variation, a performer climbs a stepladder, then reads a text about stepladders. They may relate stepladders to Zen Buddhism, or to the history of Black Mountain College, or to other stepladders.

*Variation 1 (for wooden stepladder):* Another performer gradually saws off parts of the stepladder whilst the first performer tries to continue their lecture (dangerous, only for smaller stepladders, may lead to slapstick comedy)

*Variation 2 (slappedder):* A performer climbs a teddy bear then reads a text about domestic violence.

*Variation 3 (slapsticker):* A performer slaps stickers around the performance venue or on consenting adults, advertising a performance of the piece stepladder, or one of its variants, that may or may not be scheduled to take place.

## **Flag burning**

A history of flags, or a history of vexillologists, is gradually burnt as a performance act

*Variation 1:* The sound of the burning is amplified and played somewhere in the performance space

*Variation 2 (Flag burning flags):* A further performer waits until the work *flag burning* is reaching its later stages, before writing a scathing review

*Variation 3: (Flag burning flags flags):* A further performer waits until the work *flag burning flags* is reaching its later stages, before writing a scathing review of the review

## **Flag burning burning**

The text piece *Burning flags* is gradually burnt as a performance act

*Variations:* *Flag burning burning flags* etc.

## **Anti-actionism**

A spillage of theatrical (fake) blood is mopped up by a humming performer, who cheerily goes about their work. There is nothing too sinister, just a therapeutic cleaning ritual. Everybody witnessing this is filled with a greater hope for the future of humanity. No-one joins in to help the cleaner, though.

## **Georbert and Gilge: The Green Sculpture**

After two much drinking and singing, two artists feel rather queasy and are slumped together somewhere in the performance space, wishing they could get it together enough to move off home, but feeling sick every time they move. The simulated nausea may extend to the spewing up of green liquids, which decorate the performance area.

*Variation 1:* Anti-actionism is performed, to mop up any sickness

## **Dildo Cabaret**

A succession of dildoes, donated by kind philanthropists, benefactors of the arts, audience members, and sex enthusiasts, are exhibited. Each is run for one minute precisely, with any different speed settings and other buttons pressed gleefully at the whim of the performer. The noise is highly amplified as music. Between each dildo there is a moment of silent repose.

*Variation 1:* Much frustrated fiddling with batteries takes over the performance

## **Yank tub tub**

A tub is yanked across the performance space, from one side to the other. Any sounds emitted are imitated by the performer, as onomatopoeic sound poetry.

## **Wank tum tum**

A performer simulates masturbation to a miniature portrait of theatrical pioneer Frank Wedekind, lying supine.

*Variation 1:* In the spirit of Wedekind's intimate theatre, this may not be actually simulation

## **Surrealist manifesto**

A performer creates a manifesto through the following processes:

1. Words are cut out of any existing dictionary, or manifesto, and placed in a hat, then selected out again at random
2. Words are supplied by random association, based on random trigger words derived in the first process

Once the manifesto is created, which may be any length, the performer attempts to interpret its imperatives, no matter how surreal.

## **Circus**

In this performance, one or more mobile circus performers (such as jugglers, acrobats, clowns) circumnavigate the audience and other performers, moving in circles around other people whenever possible. Epicycles (nested circular motions) are also encouraged. Performers may also continually rotate themselves.

*Variation 1:* A professional astronomer travels on ellipses within the performance space whilst arguing against the Ptolemaic system.

## **For Lamonte Young**

Feed a piano to a bale of hay. Try to do this without making any sound. Young grasshoppers accompany you.

## **Crab canon**

For two crabs, sent in opposite directions and orientations, with tracking via computer vision.

## **Canon for Doug**

Two copies of a book by Douglas Hofstadter, not necessarily but possibly GEB, are sent in opposite directions and orientations, with tracking via computer vision.

## **Canon for Cannon**

Two wheeled cannons are sent trundling in opposite directions from the top of a hill or constructed incline, with tracking via computer vision.

## **Cannon for canons**

Two canons are shot out of a cannon at the top of a hill

## **Double cannon for Double canon**

A double canon is separated into two constituent canons, which are individually fired in opposite directions from the top of a hill via two cannons.



**Canon for canon**

Two canons are thrown in opposite directions from the top of a hill, with tracking via computer vision.

**Canon for Shannon**

Two copies of Claude Shannon's information theory are thrown in opposite directions from the top of a hill, with tracking via computer vision.

**Canon for computer vision**

Two computer vision tracking systems are thrown in opposite directions from the top of a hill, watched by a crab.

**Cannon for canon of canons**

Collect as many canonical canons as you can. Fire these from a cannon.