

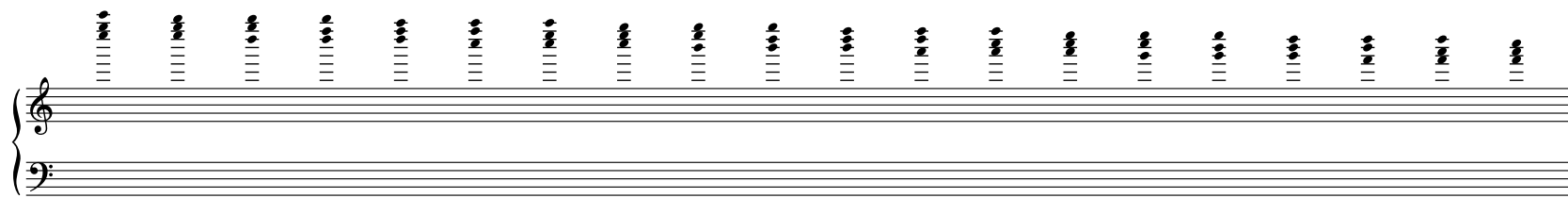
PIANO STUDIES 1-6

James M. Creed, spring 2021

PIANO STUDY 1

both pedals throughout

very slow, but somehow regular ¹



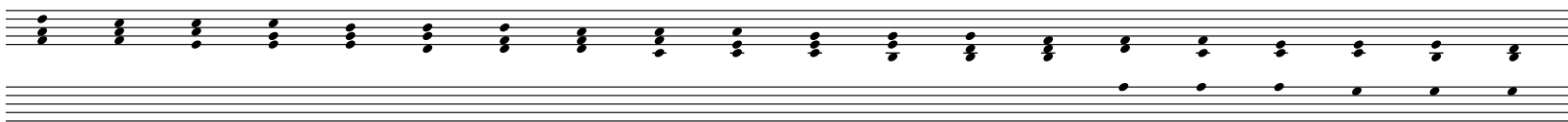
Just a little something



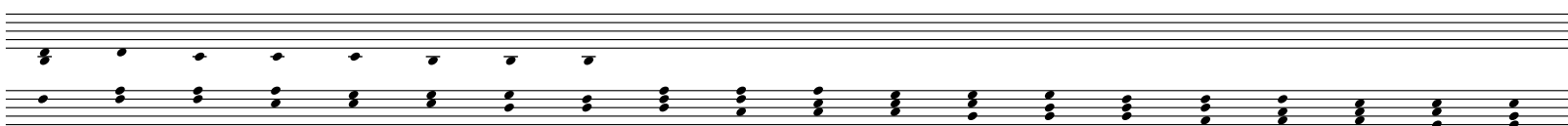
for the family piano,



that none of us play



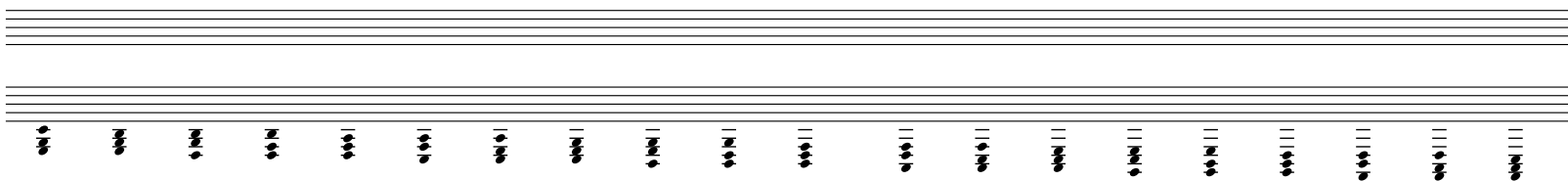
enough any more,



seeing as i'm back



for a little while



¹ Antoine Beuger, *...of being numerous*, Edition Wandelweiser, 2015.

PIANO STUDY 2

to be done, with your favourite pencil, leaning against the piano

A little homework:

There are many pianos in the world, I am here with this one today (____ / ____ / ____)

We have met before/this is our first meeting (remove as appropriate)

It was made by _____ (in _____)

It is _____ in colour

It has _____ keys (_____ black keys and _____ white keys)

It is _____ inches wide

Its highest C sustains for _____ seconds

It is _____ hands tall

Its middle C sustains for _____ seconds

It is _____ fathoms deep

Its lowest C sustains for _____ seconds

It had _____ for breakfast and I will give it _____ for dinner

It is lunchtime now, here is some _____

PIANO STUDY 3

to Annea Lockwood

A little plaque, to be affixed to or placed near the piano:

Though we often think of pianos as heavy, they are in fact incredibly light for objects of their size. A piano is, of course, difficult to move, but its perceived weight in actuality stems from a sprawling system of roots securing it to the ground, with each piano connected to every other piano by a complex lattice of tangled lines that vibrate in all directions at once when played. They are a knot of can-on-a-strings woven into a blanket.

This often-misunderstood network continues to baffle and inspire telecommunications experts around the world. Though the system is primitive in a sense – we cannot dial or tune it in any way at all, really – it seems, miraculously, to send and receive signals with zero latency: a pianist listening from the piano in Tottenham Court Road station will feel vibrations from a teaching room in Helsinki at the same time and of the same (very slight) magnitude as one resting in a private study in Adelaide, though they will be unable to distinguish either from any of the countless others. In this way, the network functions similarly to a chatroom, though it predates our use of the term by many hundreds of years.

It remains unclear at present whether the cans or the strings came first – whether each piano is constructed as a terminal or a transceiver – but it isn't terribly important.

(cut along this line)

A version for one of us:

sit down to the piano whenever you like, listening for another
or play what and when you like, that someone might listen
again tomorrow or the next day

A version for two or more of us:

agree a time to sit down to the pianos, anywhere in the world
playing as much or little as you like, listening out for each other
again tomorrow or the next day

PIANO STUDY 4

for Fernando Yada Rodrigues and Jay Keys

spend a day/week/month/year with a piece
then spend as long or longer without it

play the first note, holding it a while
and listen for the rest unfurling

puffy-eyed from sleep
and happily rested

waking up, still
but lucid in the dawning

with nowhere to be
'til the afternoon

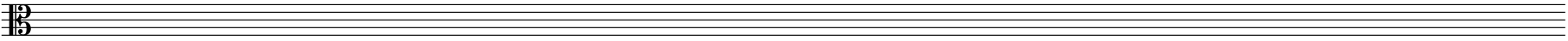
PIANO STUDY 5

● = 5"

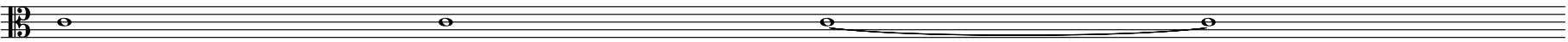
right pedal throughout, mp

with a small C harmonica in your mouth,
breathing slowly and freely, gently uncovering thresholds

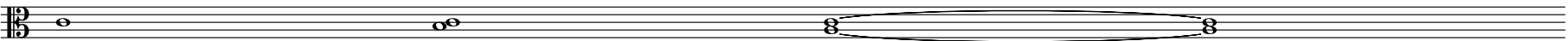
harm. *breathing through*

pno. 

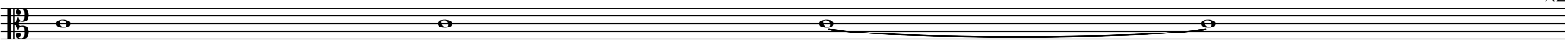
breathing one tone

 x4


breathing two tones

 x4

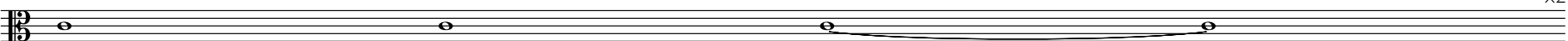
breathing one tone

 x2

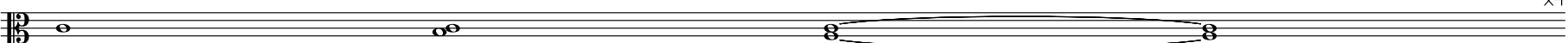
breathing three tones

 x4


breathing one tone

 x2

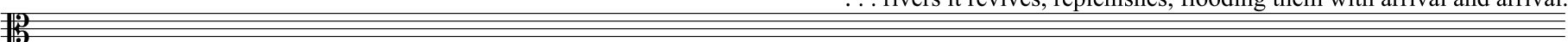
breathing two tones

 x4

breathing one tone

 x4

breathing through



[if you like]

... rivers it revives, replenishes, flooding them with arrival and arrival.²

² Don Paterson, "Palm," *Landing Light* (Faber & Faber, 2003)

PIANO STUDY 6

both pedals throughout
very slow, but somehow regular³

Musical notation for the first system, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The notation consists of vertical stems and dots, representing a complex rhythmic pattern.

Like we're

Musical notation for the second system, continuing the complex rhythmic pattern from the first system.

the last

Musical notation for the third system, continuing the complex rhythmic pattern.

awake on

Musical notation for the fourth system, continuing the complex rhythmic pattern.

New Year's

Musical notation for the fifth system, continuing the complex rhythmic pattern.

and it's

Musical notation for the sixth system, continuing the complex rhythmic pattern.

been a

Musical notation for the seventh system, continuing the complex rhythmic pattern.

good one

³Beuger, . . . of being numerous.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Hoping that the reader would want to meet the book head on I have put the introduction at the end.⁴

The scores in this little collection are for pianists and pianos. They could be “performance pieces,” but principally they are nice things to do or nice ways to think about things that we’re doing already. They are more like letters, in a sense: though they can and perhaps will be performed publicly, they address themselves to the pianist sitting at the piano whether others are there to observe or not. I would like to make a joke about quantum scores but I can’t think of one, so please insert your own here if you can:

They all, in some way, follow on from something Fernando and Mira said in the reading/study group we set up with friends – that part of being a pianist is being prepared to play any piano in the world (I prefer “every” to “any”), and I just think that’s wonderful.

Thanks to: Fernando Yada Rodrigues; Mira Benjamin; Katie Grout; Anne Han; Konstantinos Glynos; Khabat Abas; Jess Porter-Langson; Jay Keys; Clare Spollen; Luis John; Claudia Creed.

Thanks also to: the piano at home; the piano at Callum, Jenny, Sylvia and Pete’s; the piano at Gwyneth’s; the piano in room 167 at Goldsmiths; the piano at Pembroke House.

⁴ Tom Phillips, *A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel, Fifth Edition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), author’s preface.