

greys

for solo prepared guitar

Diego Rocha

2020

greys

length: at least five minutes

for prepared guitar

written in 2020

by Diego Rocha (b. 1996)

written for and premiered by Jay Sorce/Hypercube

Program Note: *greys* is a piece meant to explore and evoke a sound-world somewhat different than what we may be used to. It requires the performer to prepare their guitar, such that the frets do not create evenly spaced half-steps, like usual, but instead create unevenly spaced intervals that are between a half-step and whole-step. This is in a way a transformative process on the guitar—while the tone remains similar, the structure of how pitch is organized is fundamentally modified, both allowing for new possibilities while simultaneously disallowing the normal. Thus, it is meant, for both audience and performer, to thrust us into somewhere new, without option to return to where we once were. Old actions have new results.

Performance Notes:

Preparation:

An improvised bridge or movable bridge should be placed such that the 9th fret sounds an octave higher than the open string (placement for this is usually somewhat close to the sound hole). It may be helpful to tune the guitar a half-step or whole-step down, in order to reduce tension on the body of the guitar.

For guitars with immovable bridges: place a cylindrical object (I've found a drumstick works well) in between the strings and body of the guitar, perpendicular with the strings (and parallel with the bridge), to create an improvised bridge. This will be easier and more consistent if the object is only slightly larger than the normal gap between the strings and the body, and if it is longer (such as a drumstick) in order to more widely distribute the pressure being put on the improvised bridge and body of the guitar.

For guitars with movable bridges: simply move the bridge such that the tuning noted above is achieved.

General notes:

This piece is divided into six sections, each with accompanying directives and graphical features, in the text and graphical score found below, respectively. All sections of the piece should be performed *attacca*, with fluid transitions from each to the next. The entirety of the piece should take at least five minutes.

This piece is generally intended to be in the realm of experimental improvisation (more so than jazz improvisation, for example), but your playing biases are welcome as they will be modified and molded by the preparation. Feel free to play with pick, fingers, slide, etc. as you feel musically valuable. Do not be afraid to integrate other forms of extended technique, sound-making and objects into this work. It is not meant to be played shyly.

Performance Notes Cont'd:

Interpretive notes:

Both a text and graphic score are given below—the text score gives some specific and non-specific instruction, while the graphic score is meant to give some shape to the overall concept. While specific lengths and/or ratios for the durations of each section are not given, the graphic score does give a general idea of the comparative lengths of the sections to each other (though this need not be precise); in general, the first three sections should be shorter, with the latter three being longer.

The “titles” of each section give a general comment on the texture or narrative purpose of the section. Within, there are three types of instruction that may be given for each section: character/mood instruction (“somber, mourning/searching”), direct instructions (“find intervals that you find interesting”), and suggestions or ideas (“perhaps focusing on only a string or two”). The first two of these types are obligatory while the last are optional and always begin with “perhaps.” The directions are given in no specific order, and thus need not happen in the order written.

The graphical score is intended to be read left to right, in landscape orientation. There are lines that divide the page into six sections, with each section also being labelled with its corresponding number. This document is not meant to be read as a direct visual representation of the music, but rather a suggestion of shape, form, intensity, and texture.

If you have any questions, or would like to talk about interpretation or performance of the work, feel free to e-mail me at diegoaslandrocha@gmail.com

greys

1.

improvise melodically

perhaps focusing on only a string or two

find intervals that you find interesting

somber, mourning,

searching

2.

with a focus on chords

more open in character

perhaps with wild dynamic and tempo variation

try standard chord shapes

try unusual chord shapes

3.

continuing but with increasingly common melodic interjections

with subdued anger

perhaps referencing earlier melodic material

perhaps coming to focus on only a few sonorities

perhaps contrasting distant registers

4.

textures falling apart

perhaps incorporating indefinite/unpitched sounds

restless, acerbic with some harshness

perhaps interrupted by moments of stillness

becoming chaotic

5.

having now dissolved

wildly, frantically, with outbursts and constant movement

perhaps without any sense of consistent pulse

resonant, full activation of the strings

with much noise, incorporating techniques at will

6.

emerging from the dissolution

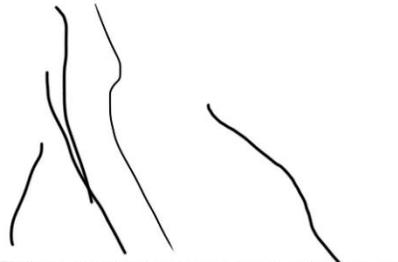
return to more melodic playing

perhaps with a limited range and dynamics

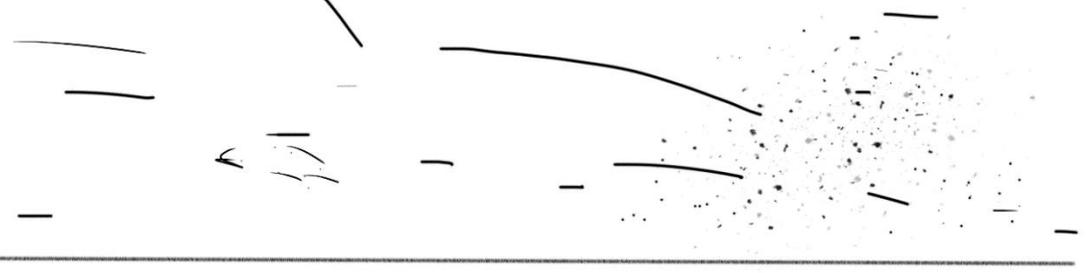
perhaps with light arpeggiation

softly, with care and tenderness

1



2



3



4



5



6

