

THE THERMODYNAMICS OF WORK

for one performer

Robert Blatt

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MATERIALS

- 1 acoustic guitar
- 1 medium sized tom-tom or snare drum with unactivated snares
- 1 tambourine
- 1 metal circular plate from the inside of a record player
- 1 wooden chopstick
- 2 metal surgical clamps
- 2 metal alligator clips with metal knitting needles attached lengthwise to their ends
- 4 large metal coins
- 4 bouncy balls

GUITAR PREPARATION

Thread the chopstick under string 5 and over the remaining strings, resting parallel with the frets and between the sound hole and the bridge. Experiment with how far the chopstick is threaded through the strings and its distance from the bridge, searching for a setup where gently tapping the end of the chopstick sets it into a long undulating vibration.

Attach one surgical clamp to string 5, just behind fret 5. Attach the other surgical clamp to string 4 just behind fret 11. Attach both alligator clips to string 6, one just behind fret 2 and the other just behind fret 8. The surgical clamps and alligator clips rest in the direction of string 1.

PERFORMANCE LAYOUT

The instruments surround the performer. One possible setup will have the performer seated on a chair. To the right, the guitar rests on its back on a table; the drum is in front of the performer, and the tambourine, on the left, lays on the ground with its head facing up. The additional performance materials are within reach of the performer.

READING THE SCORE

Perform each page, one after the other, in their assigned order.

Gently tap the chopstick, setting it into a long undulating vibration.

silence

Gently tap the chopstick, setting it into a long undulating vibration.

silence

Gently tap the chopstick, setting it into a long undulating vibration.

silence

Gently tap the chopstick, setting it into a long undulating vibration,
followed by tapping the surgical clamps and alligator clips,
maintaining a continuous, perpetual sound for a long time.

Spin a coin on its edge on the head of the drum.

silence

Spin a different coin on its edge on the head of the drum.

silence

Spin another different coin on its edge on the head of the drum.

silence

Spin yet another different coin on its edge on the head of the drum,
followed by spinning the other coins, one by one, on their edge on the head of the drum,
maintaing a continuous, perpetual sound for a long time.

While continuing to spin the coins:

Throw a bouncy ball at the head of the tambourine causing it to bounce around the space.

Let it come to rest.

Throw a different bouncy ball at the head of the tambourine causing it to bounce around the space.

Let it come to rest.

Throw another different bouncy ball at the head of the tambourine causing it to bounce around the space.

Let it come to rest.

Throw yet another different bouncy ball at the head of the tambourine causing it to bounce around the space.

Let it come to rest.

Spin the metal circular plate on the ground.