

## Narrows / Expands / Elides

For small to large ensemble, any instrumentation.

Written for GreyWing, Breaking Waves and Gerygone as part of the *Limited Hangout: In the Field* project.

Duration: ~45 minutes.

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## Performance Notes

The piece consists of two movements which attempt to explore ideas of (non)striated space and (de)colonization and another movement which points to how problematic my attempts seem to me.

As a starting point, the piece takes one of my favourite incidental sound (non)installations in Perth—the underpass of the Narrows Bridge over Mounts Bay Road. This space offers up an intersection of different modes of spatial division—roads, paths, cycle paths and train lines—that themselves navigate the geographical terrain.

(And these spatial divisions and physical incursions manifest over the dreaming, history and sense of place of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation; which I am mostly deaf to and ignorant of.)

Soundwise, this space includes sounds of motor vehicles and trains overhead (emanating from a relatively straight flightpath, but affected by the Doppler effect), interacting with bicycles, pedestrians and other motor vehicles at ground level navigating curved trajectories determined somewhat by the terrain. The piece explores moving between ‘striated space’ and ‘non-striated’ (or, more problematically, ‘nomad space’) taking inspiration from the works of Deleuze and Guattari (in *10,000 Plateaus*).

The first section of the piece explores different forms of spatial division facilitated by mapping technologies and making use of Google Maps as a metaphor for the process of colonialism, territorialisation and the move towards increasingly strict and rigid ‘striation’.

The second section explores similar themes but through a more poetic lens and interweaves linguistic metaphor into the process of exploring a relationship to space and sound. In the second section, players do not have to *mimic* the sounds of traffic, etc., but should strive to play ‘mimetically’ in the broadest sense, in any way that moves them. Electronics parts might consider recording and moving towards manipulating sounds. Recordings from a previous outing might work just as well as live recordings—exploring a generic (or archetypal) sound of ‘traffic in this location’ rather than any particular instance of it. Performers should read each line in section two carefully and strive to manifest the differences in playing they allude to. (I considered taking out ‘lines that move towards accentuating the sonic’, but quite like the challenge that this represents to a performer, especially in contrast to the previous line. What does it mean to accentuate the *sonic* rather than the *sonic effect*?)

Section three performs an admission of failure, pointing to the futility of some white person (me) trying to explore decolonizing using theory from the European academy by some other privileged white people (Deleuze and Guattari) and laying this over a historical / cultural / physical context striving for some problematic, idealized form of space and time which elides the lived experience of the indigenous peoples of this land, their rich cultural history and relationship to country.

*Players are invited to engage with section three in any way that makes sense to them and respects Noongar culture including in ways that undermine the first two sections.*

## i. Movement; through a clumsy musickal analogy of de-striatification / de-colonization [~20 minutes]

1. Grid map (Appendix 1.) Strictly chromatic, equal temperament. No vibrato or tremolo. *Very* strict rhythm. Interpret the map through a strict grid system using one axis for twelve tones (any registers, including moving between registers) and the other for time (twelve beats—any sub-divisions acceptable). This section lasts *exactly* four minutes (exactly one minute for each quarter). Everyone starts and finishes precisely together. Each performer plays each of the four quarters but in any order that they like.
2. Map, no grid (Appendix 2.) Stepped glissandi between notes in the twelve-tone, equal temperament scale. Clear (but less strict) rhythm. This section lasts about four minutes; start and finish at about the same time.
3. Terrain map (Appendix 3.) Explore the map, but orient yourself around the other players. About four minutes.
4. Imagined map—play following the lines of an imagined image of the space. Explore your own imagining of this world. Play for some time.
5. Play in the space, through the space, as the space. Duration: free (individual, but still listening).

*For section 1. all players start and finish exactly together for an exact duration (four minutes). The delineations of time become slightly less strict as this movement continues, but each section should still have approximately equal weight (likely, but not essentially, meaning approximately equal length). Players may move between sections slightly more independently as the piece progresses.*

## ii. Movement; Too [~20 minutes]

*each player should follow one soundline [trains overhead, traffic overhead, traffic passing, bicycles passing]*

*optionally consider smaller divisions [bicycles passing in one direction, the other direction, cars overhead, heavier vehicles overhead]*

*players may have the same soundline as each other; explore what this means as the piece moves on*

play in lines;

lines that at first play mimetically with your soundlines

lines that move towards accentuating the sonic effects caused by the curves in the road, the interactions of sounds, the Doppler effect...

lines that move towards accentuating the sonic effects caused

lines that move towards accentuating the sonic effects

lines that move towards accentuating the sonic

lines that move towards accentuating

lines that move towards

lines that move

lines



### iii. Ellipsis...

The Old Swan Brewery sits on sacred Noongar land.

The Beedawong meeting place sits a little further back from the river.

The Rottnest Island Ferry service runs from Elizabeth Quay under the Narrows, taking non-indigenous people to Wadjemup: “place across the water where the spirits are”.

Wadjemup housed thousands of indigenous prisoners many of whom died of influenza.

The remains of many indigenous people lie in the ground on Wadjemup where school leavers drink themselves stupid every year and where white people go to frolic in the sun.

*(Players are invited to engage with section three in any way that makes sense to them and respects Noongar culture including in ways that undermine the first two sections...)*

Appendix. 1.

Map for  
Movement i. Part 1.



Appendix. 2.

Map for  
Movement i. Part 2.





Appendix. 3.

Map for  
Movement i. Part 3.

