

Maze of dripping Sirens

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António Sá-Dantas

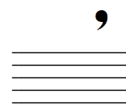
*Maze of dripping Sirens* was composed for the Royal College of Music Library and premiered by the Cat's Cradle Collective as part of the RCM's Great Exhibitionists concert series on 29 May 2019.

Further performances to date

Royal Academy of Arts, Summer Exhibition : Cat's Cradle Collective, 12.06.2019

A very special thanks to Peter Linnit and Sarah Bachelor for their unwavering support.

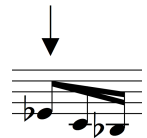
## PERFORMANCE NOTES



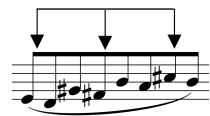
**comma** - short rest, enough to prepare for whatever follows, keeping the flow of the music, even in silence.



Continue playing what is given between repeat signs in the same manner, following indications in the score to know when to stop.



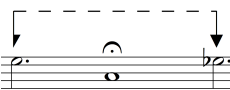
**arrow over staff** indicates a possible starting point in the section.



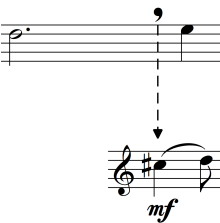
**grouped arrows** indicate possible starting points in individual phrases. i.e.: here, one could start on the e or f# or c# and then continue. (Voice A only)



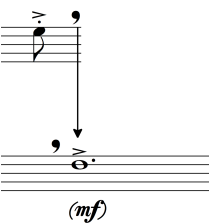
**half arrows** equivalently, these indicate a possible ending point.



**half arrow connected to full arrow** If you decide to stop where the half arrow is, then you must continue from the full arrow it is connected to. (Voice B only)



**dashed arrow between staves** indicate a change of direction — the possibility of continuing playing where the arrow leads to. Here, starting on the half note d, you would have the option to continue to e or jump down to the c# and continue from there. Once the choice is made, it cannot be undone, and so each bifurcation does indeed shape the way around the score.



**full arrow between staves** indicates an obligatory change to where the arrow points.



**bracketed notes** can be left out if not in the range of the instrument.

**Accidentals**

are only valid for the notes they precede. (Occasional cautionary accidentals are used).

## INSTRUMENTATION

This piece has four Voices, that are played independently of each other and 1x pre-recorded tape that can be used ad lib.

Each Voice has to have at least 2x players, adding to a minimum of 8x players for the piece to be performed.

Each Voice should have mainly instruments of a certain family, but others may be added:

Voice A — Strings

Voice B — Woodwinds

Voice C — Brass

Voice D — a blend of the above, Bass instruments only.

Other instruments (like piano and harp) may be added freely to any of the voices, as long as the majority of instruments in that Voice still corresponds to one of the three families.

In addition to playing their instruments, every musician will need **2 stones** that can be hit against each other repeatedly. The stones can be of different sizes and types.

Musicians are also required to **sing** very softly.

## ABOUT THE SCORE

This piece is, as the name suggests, built as a maze. Accordingly, in this score each musician has points of bifurcation in which they can choose how to continue. Even though multiple musicians will be playing the same voice (i.e. all string instruments are playing the same part exactly, maybe transposed), their individual choices will create a polyphony, in which they are imitating, overtaking, and playing with each other.

Each musician follows the score using a chronometer. The resulting performance is a planned but unpredictable layering of the voices.

## SPACIAL REQUIREMENTS

Musicians should be facing away from the audience, i.e. directly facing a wall, and not each other. Either they are all around the audience, or the audience is all around them.

This piece can be performed in unusual spaces like a library. Anything resembling a maze is ideal.

Each Voice should have their own allocated area, ideally separate from each other.

There should be one COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE, to which the musicians migrate at the end of the piece. If not, the musicians (that may be facing away from the audience) can at this point turn towards them.

The ad lib. pre-recorded track should be played from an invisible loudspeaker (i.e. behind a door / different room).

## PERFORMANCE

Ideally the musicians should be wearing very large baggy clothes, and white masks that are put on the backside of their heads. Since they are playing facing away from the audience, the white masks are facing towards the audience.

## THE MAZE

Finally, above all, this piece is an invitation to discover the extent of one's freedom when finding one's way through this musical maze, but also in reacting and playfully engaging with the other musicians. I suggest that every musician try out extreme versions of the maze (i.e. the shortest possible way from one section to the next, or the longest), to find out what is possible. In my own experience rehearsing with the Cat's Cradle Collective for the premiere it was when the simple rules were understood, that a great fun, provocation, playfulness started in which the musicians were freely engaging with each other.

The inspiration for this piece came from the greek myth of Sirens that, according to some, actually sing only to save themselves — holding on to life. Hyginus says in his Fabulae, that if they do not entrance those who sail by them, they will themselves turn to stone and die.

In the same way all artists — possibly all people — are singing out, hoping to entrance, not to turn into stone, but continue living.

The Seikilos Epitaph, that formed an important musical inspiration, is the oldest existing complete melody known to human kind. Found written on a plinth of stone, it sings:

*While you live, shine  
have no grief at all  
life exists only for a short while  
and time demands its due.*

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#### NB:

Instrumental parts for each of the Voices are available for transposing instruments, in other clefs, and in other octaves (with exception of the Mixed group, that should only be played by Bass instruments).

# Maze of dripping Sirens

## - Voice A (Strings) -

António Sá-Dantas

INTRODUCTION - start by 1'00" (♩ = ca.90)

The introduction consists of four staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a *mf* dynamic and features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature, starting with *mf* and ending with a repeat sign and the instruction "max 1x". The third staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature, starting with *mf* and ending with a repeat sign and the instruction "max 2x". The fourth staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature, starting with *mf* and ending with a repeat sign and the instruction "attaca ①". Vertical dashed lines connect the first and second staves, the second and third staves, and the third and fourth staves, indicating synchronization points.

① continue to ② by 7'00"

The main section consists of three staves of music. Each staff begins with a *p* dynamic and features a complex melodic line with many accidentals and dynamic markings. The first staff includes markings for *sfz*, *sfz*, *sfz > p*, and *p*. The second staff includes markings for *sfz*, *sfz*, *sfz > p*, and *p*. The third staff includes markings for *sfz*, *sfz*, *sfz > p*, and *p*. Each staff ends with a repeat sign and the instruction "attaca ②". A box in the upper right of the third staff contains the text "Repeat from any ↓ in ① and continue from there". Vertical dashed lines connect the first and second staves, and the second and third staves, indicating synchronization points.

2 start by 7'00" - continue to ③ by 10'30"

(any tempo) Gradually align rhythm,\* then start decresc. al niente.

simile

*p* *ff* *p* *fpp* *ff*

*p* *fpp* *ff* *p* *fpp* *ff*

*p* *fpp* *ff* *p* *fpp* *ff*

*p* *fpp* *ff* *p* *fpp* *ff*

*p* *fpp* *ff* *p* *fpp* *ff*

Stones gradually align rhythm, then STOP *ff* sempre **attacca** ③

Stones gradually align rhythm, then STOP *ff* sempre **attacca** ③

Stones gradually align rhythm, then STOP *f* *p* *ff* sempre **attacca** ③

1st time repeat from ② 2nd time

*p* *fpp* *ff* *f* *p* *ff* sempre **attacca** ③

\*NB: Very gradually align your rythm with the others, finding a common tempo. When all are playing the same rythm in sync (or if no one else is playing), then start decrescendo al niente at will.

**3** play until 11'00" then continue to **4**

Stones

start quite fast or quite slow

*ff sempre*

gradually align rhythm then STOP

Repeat **3**

**4** start at 11'00" - continue to **5** by 12'00"

quite slow

*ff sempre*

gradually align rhythm, then start accelerando together

(♩=180-200)

quite fast

*ff sempre*

maintain for a while

*ff*

play at the end

attacca **5**

**5** start by 12'00" - continue to CODA by 16'00"

(♩=60)

(ad lib hum in unison or octave with instrument)

with voice .....

*p* *f* *p* *f* *pp* *p* *mf* *f* *mf*

attacca CODA

with voice.....

*p* *f* *pp* *mf* *mf*

poco accel.

(♩=60)

attacca CODA

with voice .....

*p* *f* *mf* *mp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

poco accel.

Repeat from any ↓ and continue from there

attacca CODA

CODA start by 16'00" - move to COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE at 19'00" - finish around 20'00"

(♩. = ca.60)

Epitaph of Seikilos (ca. 200 CE)

Voice & Instrument

*p* hold pitches freely with voice (\* = suggestion)

Voice only as written

Voice & Stones

free accompaniment (suggestion)

only Stones as written

Voice & Stones

free

Voice only

optional

at 19'00" always singing turn around and go to COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE - finish around 20'00"

Voice only flexible tempo, going in and out of sync with others

repeat until end

when in COMMON PERF. SPACE: *decresc. al niente*



# Maze of dripping Sirens - Voice B (Woodwinds) -

António Sá-Dantas

## INTRODUCTION - start by 1'00"

Stones  $\text{♩} = 50-72$  *f* **molto rit.** **accel.**

1st. time da Capo  
2nd. time attacca ①

(a tpo.)

1st. time da Capo  
2nd. time attacca ①

### 1

1st time a tpo. 2nd time on instrument *mf* *mf* *(mf)* max 1x

attacca ②

### 2 continue to ② by 10'00"

like bells\* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp or f sim.*

*or f* *pp* *or f* *pp* *pp or f sim.*

*pp or f sim.* *pp or f sim.* *pp or f sim.*

attacca ③

*pp or f sim.* *pp or f sim.*

attacca ③

Repeat from any ↓ in ③  
and continue from there

\*NB: Dashed hairpins indicate general change, full hairpins indicate specific note dynamic: if *pp* < *f*, start each note gradually louder, while *decresc. al niente* each time, if *f* > *pp*, the opposite.

**3** play until 11'00" then continue to **4**

Stones start quite fast or quite slow

gradually align rhythm\* while doing crescendo, then STOP

Repeat **3**

**4** start at 11'00"

quite slow

gradually align rhythm, then start accelerando together

quite fast

maintain for a while

play at the end

attacca **5**

*ff* sempre

(♩=180-200)

**5**

♩=60-72

*f*

molto rit.

(a tpo.)

1st. time back to **5**  
2nd. time attacca **6**

♩=60-72

accel.

accel.

a tpo.

1st. time back to **5**  
2nd. time attacca **6**

**6** continue to CODA by 16'00"

*f* *p* *f* *f* *p* *pp* *mf*

attacca CODA

*p* *mf* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *ppp* *p* *sfz* *f* *p* *mf*

attacca CODA

*p* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *pp* *f* *p*

attacca CODA

Repeat from any ↓ in **6** and continue from there

\*NB: Very gradually align your rhythm with the others, finding a common tempo. When all are playing the same rhythm in sync (or if no one else is playing), then stop at will.

CODA start by 16'00" - move to COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE at 19'00" - finish around 20'00"

(♩ = ca.60)

*p*

*Epitaph of Seikilos (ca. 200 CE)*

Voice only as written

*p*

Voice & Stones

free accompaniment (suggestion)

only Stones as written

Voice & Stones - free accompaniment

free

Voice only

optional

(at 19'00" always singing turn around and go to COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE - finish around 20'00" )

Voice only flexible tempo, going in and out of sync with others

repeat until end

when in COMMON PERF. SPACE: decresc. al niente





6

♩.=50-72 calmly

**molto rit.**



**accel.**

a tpo.

This space is intentionally left blank.

7

always free to change timbre of repeated tones

Musical score for section 7, featuring three staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a *mf* dynamic. The second staff is in bass clef with a *mf* dynamic and a *(mf)* dynamic marking. The third staff is in treble clef with a *mf* dynamic and a series of dynamic markings: *mf mp*, *f p*, *ff pp*, *ff ppp*, *fff ppp*, *f ppp*, and *p*. The section concludes with a repeat sign and the instruction "1st. time repeat 2nd time attacca 8".

8

continue to CODA by 17'00"

winds: ad lib mute / all others: ad lib voice in unison or holding individual tones

Musical score for section 8, featuring three staves. The first staff is in treble clef with dynamics *f decresc. or p*, *f decresc. or p*, and *simile*. The second staff is in bass clef with dynamics *simile* and *f or p*. The third staff is in treble clef with dynamics *mf*, *(mf)*, *simile*, and *p*. The section concludes with a repeat sign and the instruction "1st. time repeat 2nd time attacca CODA".

CODA start by 16'00" - move to COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE at 19'00" - finish around 20'00"

Voice & Stones (♩. = ca.60)

Epitaph of Seikilos (ca. 200 CE)

Musical score for the Epitaph of Seikilos, featuring a voice line and a free accompaniment line. The voice line is in treble clef with a tempo marking of *(♩. = ca.60)*. The accompaniment line is in bass clef with the instruction "free accompaniment (suggestion)".

Voice only flexible tempo, going in and out of sync with others

repeat CODA al fine

Musical score for the voice-only part of the Epitaph of Seikilos, featuring a single staff in treble clef with a tempo marking of *flexible tempo, going in and out of sync with others*. The section concludes with a repeat sign and the instruction "repeat CODA al fine".

# Maze of dripping Sirens - Voice D (Mixed) -

António Sá-Dantas

**INTRODUCTION - start at 0'00'' - continue to ① at 4'00''**

(♩ = ca.60) Play until any half arrow (↓), then repeat from any ↓.  
The whole Introduction like a very gradual *accelerando* throughout.

*pp cresc.*    *p cresc.*    *mp cresc.*

*mf cresc.*    *poco f*    *decresc.*    *p*

*cantabile*    *ritardando*

Repeat from any ↓ in Intro and continue from there

**1 start at 4'00'' - continue to Part ② by 5'00''**

*Stones*    *quite slow*    *gradually align rhythm, then start accelerando together*    *quite fast*    *maintain for a while, then start decrescendo*

*p*    *f*    *pp*

individually attacca ④

**2 start by 5'00'' - continue to ③ by 6'00''**

*p very softly*

Repeat max 2x or attacca ③



**3** start by 6'00" - continue to **4** by 9'00"

(♩ = 60-90) Like a very gradual *accelerando* throughout.

*p cresc.* *mp cresc.* *mf cresc.* **attacca 4**

*poco f* *decres.* *p* **attacca 4** **attacca 4** *ritardando* Repeat from any ↓ in 3 or **attacca 4**

**4** start by 9'00" - continue to **5** by 11'00"

♩ = 60-72

*molto rit.*

*accel.*

1st. time back to **4**  
2nd. time **attacca 5**  
a tpo.

*p cresc.* *mp decres.* *ff decres.* *mf decres.* **attacca 4** **attacca 5**

**5** start by 11'00" - continue to **6** by 12'00"

start quite fast  
or quite slow

Stones

Repeat **5**

*ff sempre* gradually align rhythm then STOP Repeat **5**

\*NB: Very gradually align your rhythm with the others, finding a common tempo. When all are playing the same rhythm in sync (or if no one else is playing), then stop.



CODA start by 16'00" - move to COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE at 19'00" - finish around 20'00"

(♩ = ca.60)

Epitaph of Seikilos (ca. 200 CE)

**Voice & Instrument**

Play what is written and sing individual pitches  
Winds: only sing individual pitches.

*p* (\* = suggestion of pitches to hold)

**Voice only as written**

**Voice & Stones**

free accompaniment (suggestion)

**only Stones as written**

**Voice & Stones**

free

**Voice only**

optional

at 19'00" always singing turn around and go to COMMON PERFORMANCE SPACE - finish around 20'00"

**Voice only** flexible tempo, going in and out of sync with others

repeat until end

when in COMMON PERF. SPACE: *decresc. al niente*