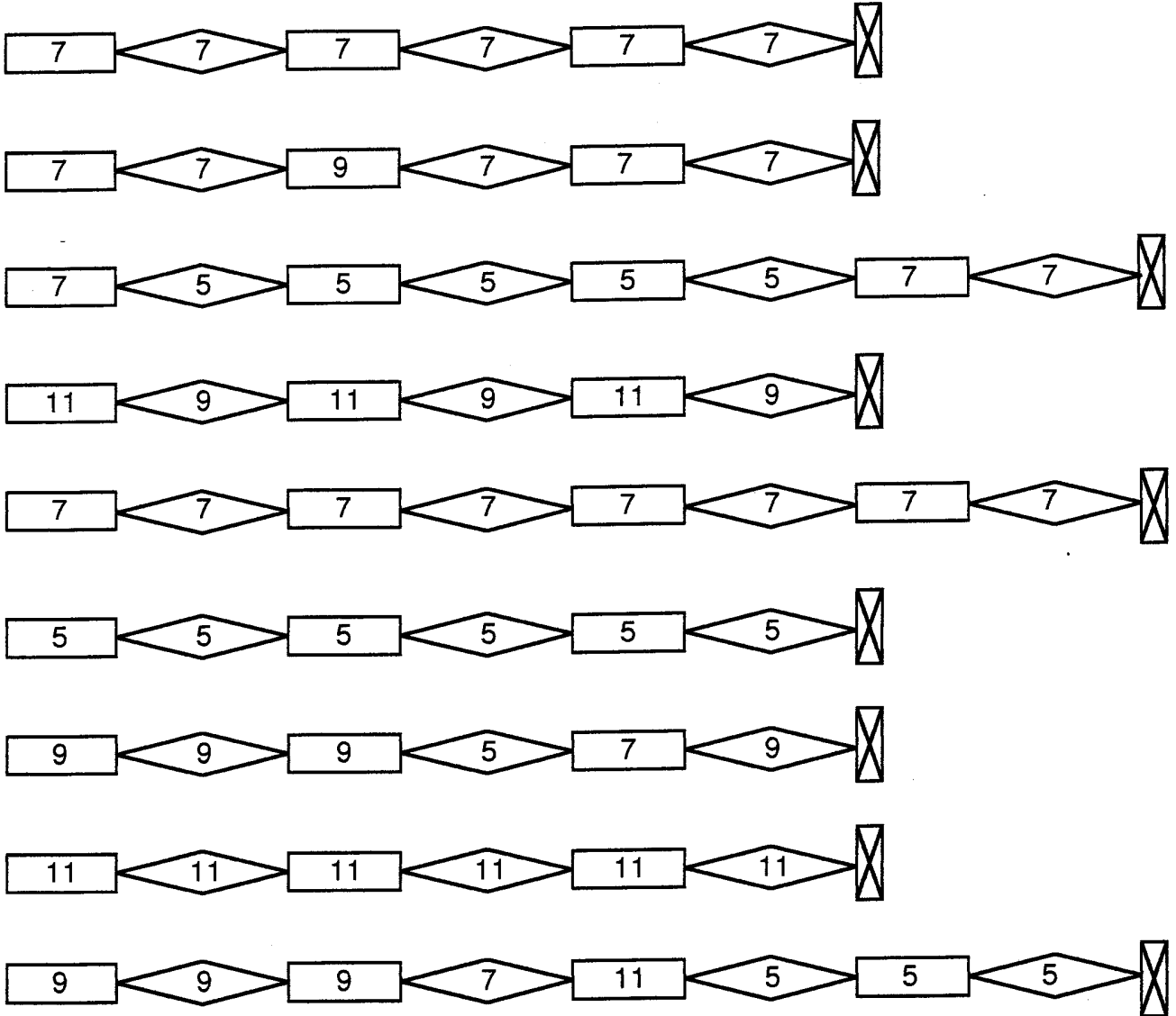


Adrift & Afloat

J. Simon van der Walt

for gamelan (or anything else)



Adrift & Afloat (reluctantly) explained

This started life as a piece of gamelan music, specifically for the pelog gamelan of Naga Mas, the Glasgow Gamelan Group. For many years I have resisted putting down anything on paper about this piece apart from the single cryptic page above. The fact is, with ten minutes explanation from the composer in person, that is all the notation which is actually necessary to perform the piece!

Partly as an example of how much stupid, redundant effort is involved in converting a living, breathing piece of music into a dead (as in *artist, death of the*) score, I have now added these supplementary pages which will outline as clearly as possible how to perform this piece on a gamelan, before moving on to suggest how it might be done on other instruments.

Instructions

- Leaving aside the intro for now, and also leaving the gong player out of consideration...
- All players start by picking a random note on their instrument; everyone picks their own note, without planning or consulting with anyone else
- The first rectangular box with a '7' in it means that everyone, together, at a steady tempo of 1 count equal to approximately 115-128 beats per minute, plays two quiet, even strokes on their chosen note for each count
- The next box, the diamond with a '7' in it, means do the same thing but with a moderate increase and decrease in volume across the seven counts
- Proceed in the same way to the end of the line, where the X is. At the start of the next line...
- All players pick a new random note, and carry on exactly as before; in other words, each line has a different, randomly chosen 'chord' which pulses, grows and fades according to the numbers in the boxes
- Damp little or not at all except when changing notes
- Moving on to the gong player now... this part was not originated by me but developed in rehearsal by the group, but has become part of the piece
- Three big gongs on their own, out of tempo, start the piece
- Then play seven soft strokes on any kempul as a count-in to the band
- From then on, play kempul or suwukan strokes on any pitch to mark the beginning of each rectangular or diamond box...
- and big gong strokes at the start of each line, as the chord changes
- At the end of the piece, play one big gong *a tempo* where the next line would begin, then two echoing, lingering strokes after that to finish

Other instruments

This piece has successfully been played in many of instrumentations, from classroom percussion to a large contemporary ensemble. Whilst not impossible to perform on bowed, sung or blown instruments, it's natural home is on pitched instruments which are struck and then decay. As part of *Tribulation* for Ensemble Thing, an out-of-tune bass guitar took the gong/kempul part, while two out-of-tune electric guitars, four vocalists and two pianos played the rest of it. The piece is yours, not mine, so do with it as you will :)

Notation

Again with some reluctance, here is the opening of the piece roughed out in conventional notation;

Intro (suggested) ♩ = 115-128

Other insts

Gongs (any)
Big gong

Any single kempul, as a count-in to...

Not too loud

Line 1 *All players pick any note, and stick with it until the start of line 2; undamped or very lightly damped*

mp

mf/f ad lib

mp etc similar dynamics throughout

Any kempul or suwukan

Line 2 *All players pick different note, and stick with it until the start of line 3*

etc