

“Fireflies”  
Albumleaf 62: June 24, 2011  
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Performance Note

“Fireflies” is a structured improvisation played mostly inside the piano. The score assumes a grand—or baby-grand—piano with the lid open. The improvisation takes place between two registers: high (H) and low (L), which are defined by the beams over the soundboard. Because the number of beams inside pianos vary, pianists will have to decide whether the two registers are to consist of the strings between the highest beam and the top of the piano (which would be “H”) and the next lowest group of strings (“L”) or of the strings located between the highest two beams and the next lowest group of strings; whatever the decision, the two registers must be adjacent in range. The low register of the piano is to be avoided.

The assumed method of sound production in “Fireflies” is the glissando. Thus, in the score, “H↗” means to play an upwards glissando in the high register; “L↘” means to play a downwards glissando in the low register. All the glissandos should be relatively uniform in duration and span roughly an octave. Another important method of sound production is the “dyad pluck,” which consists simply in the simultaneous plucking of strings two pitches a second or third apart. A variation of this method is the “dyad pluck + key,” which consists of the dyad pluck accompanied at the same time by playing a key that is very near the plucked dyad; the key and the dyad have the same duration: thus, the key should not be held any longer than the dyad is plucked. When a plus sign appears between two symbols, it means to play the two simultaneously.

The damper pedal should be depressed for the duration of the piece.

To guide the interpretive decisions of the pianist, I have provided a program in boldface. In no way is this program to be communicated by the pianist to the audience: it is simply to be a story going on in the pianist’s mind while he or she performs.

Duration: approx. 2 minutes

“Fireflies”

***A couple of glances here and there . . .***

--H↗  
--L↗ [pause]  
--L↘  
--H↘ [pause]  
--H↗

***. . . you think you saw a firefly . . .***

--H↗ / with a single pluck during the gliss  
--H-single pluck [no glissando]  
--L↗ (loud)

***. . . a couple of intent glances . . .***

[all loud]  
--2x: (L↗ + H↗)  
--3x: (L↘ + H↘)  
--L↘ H↗ [pause]  
--L↗ + H↘

***. . . you definitely see some fireflies . . .***

[Più mosso]  
--L↗ + H↘  
--H-dyad-pluck  
--L↗ + H↘  
--three dyad plucks (H, L ad lib.)  
--L↘ + H↗  
--seven dyad plucks (H, L ad lib.)

***. . . you see them everywhere . . .***

[sempre Più mosso]  
--ten dyad plucks + key (H, L, ad lib.)  
--L↘ + H↗  
--L↗ + H↘  
--L↘ + H<sub>very</sub>↗  
--three dyad plucks + key (H, L, ad lib.)  
--L↗ + H↘  
--H↗ then ↘  
--five dyad plucks [*ritardando e diminuendo*]

***. . . then they seem to be gone.***

[Meno mosso]  
--L↗ + H↗ [pause]  
--three dyad plucks  
--L↗ + H↗