

8 PIECES FROM THE SONORAN DESERT

by Richard Lerman © 1997, 98 BMI

An Extended Soundscape for video, saxophone, computer/electronics and two performers

8 PIECES FROM THE SONORAN DESERT (1997)

1. Harvester Ants
2. A Compass Cactus in the Rain
3. Bees & an Ironwood Tree
4. Monsoon, NW Phoenix, Aug. 14, 1996
5. Near the Bee Line Highway: A Burned Saguaro and Snakeskin
6. An Ocotillo [a desert plant] and a Hummingbird
7. Small Red Weeds
8. Digger Wasps at White Tank Mountain

In 1995 I received a grant from the Institute for Studies in the Arts at Arizona State Univ. to record in the Sonoran Desert in Phoenix and environs over the course of one year. I was interested in the sonic possibilities, and in exploring the interplay between very highly amplified sounds and different visual perspectives.

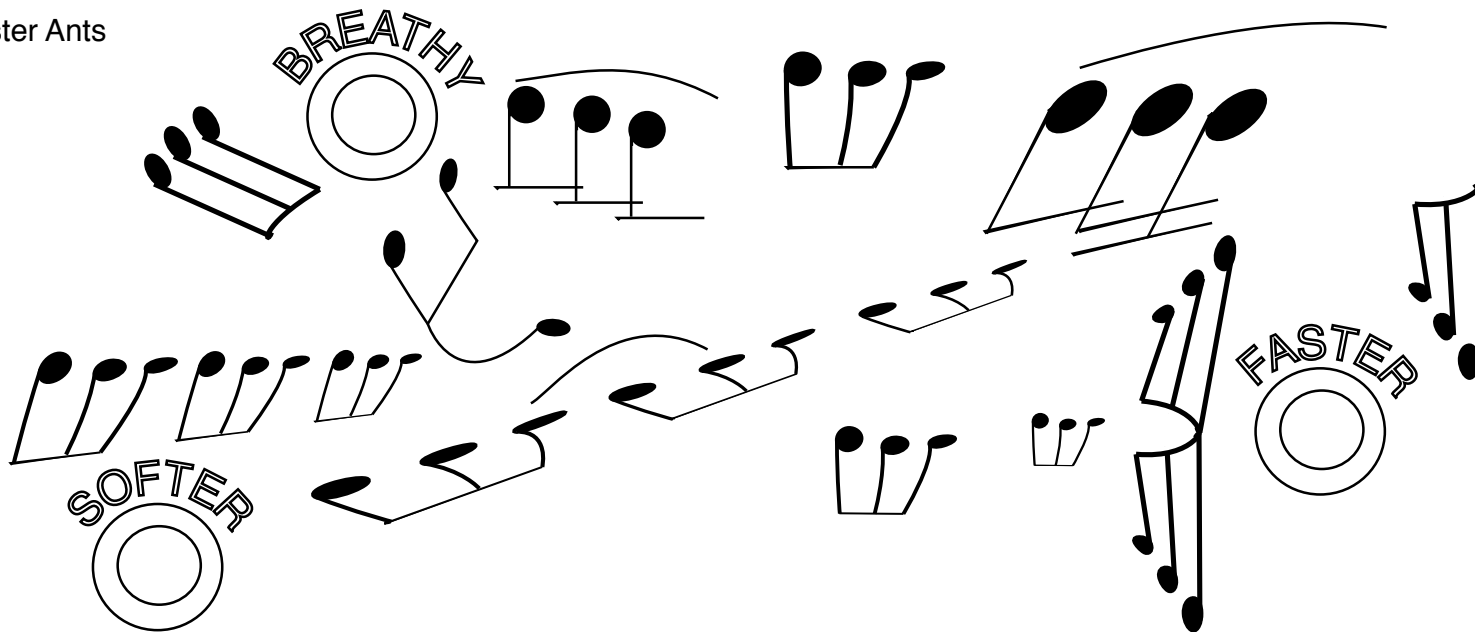
Each piece (excepting #4) uses self built microphones to record a different aspect of the Desert. The microphones/transducers include different piezo electric devices and small condenser mics. As in all of my transducer pieces, I am interested in the musicality of the original material as well as getting as close as possible to the subject.

In performance, audio from the video tape is sent to a pitch to midi converter. Using software developed by Larry Polansky, I am able to direct this midi information to a synthesizer/sampler. The score for Saxophonist Steve Nelson-Raney suggests sonic images but also depends on the skills of his improvisation. We first performed this version of the piece in Milwaukee at Woodland Pattern in November, 1998. The premiere of the piece took place in May, 1997 at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts at the opening of the installation TRACES between Mona Higuchi and myself, which utilized four of the video pieces.

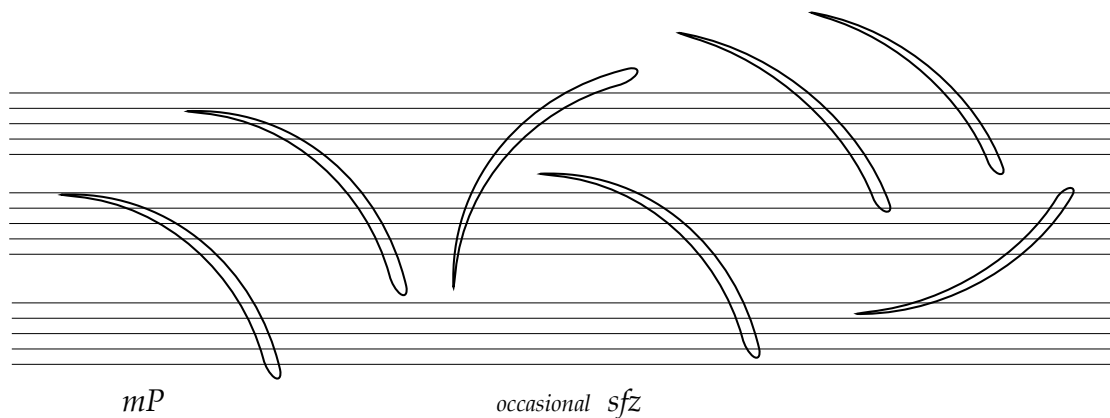
With QT3 or QT4 installed on both PC and Mac, these excerpts may be viewed and listened to. The score on the following pages may be printed out to any postscript printer. The link on the top left of this page goes to another PDF file describing and linking to Larry Polansky's software.

Eight Pieces from the Sonoran Desert
Richard Lerman ©1997/98 BMI
for Video, saxophones, & electronics

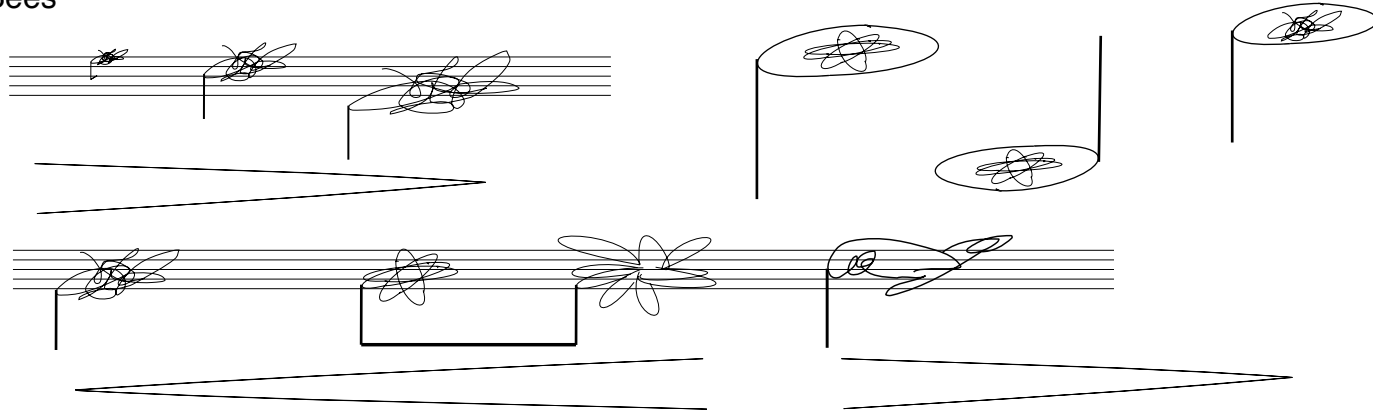
1. Harvester Ants



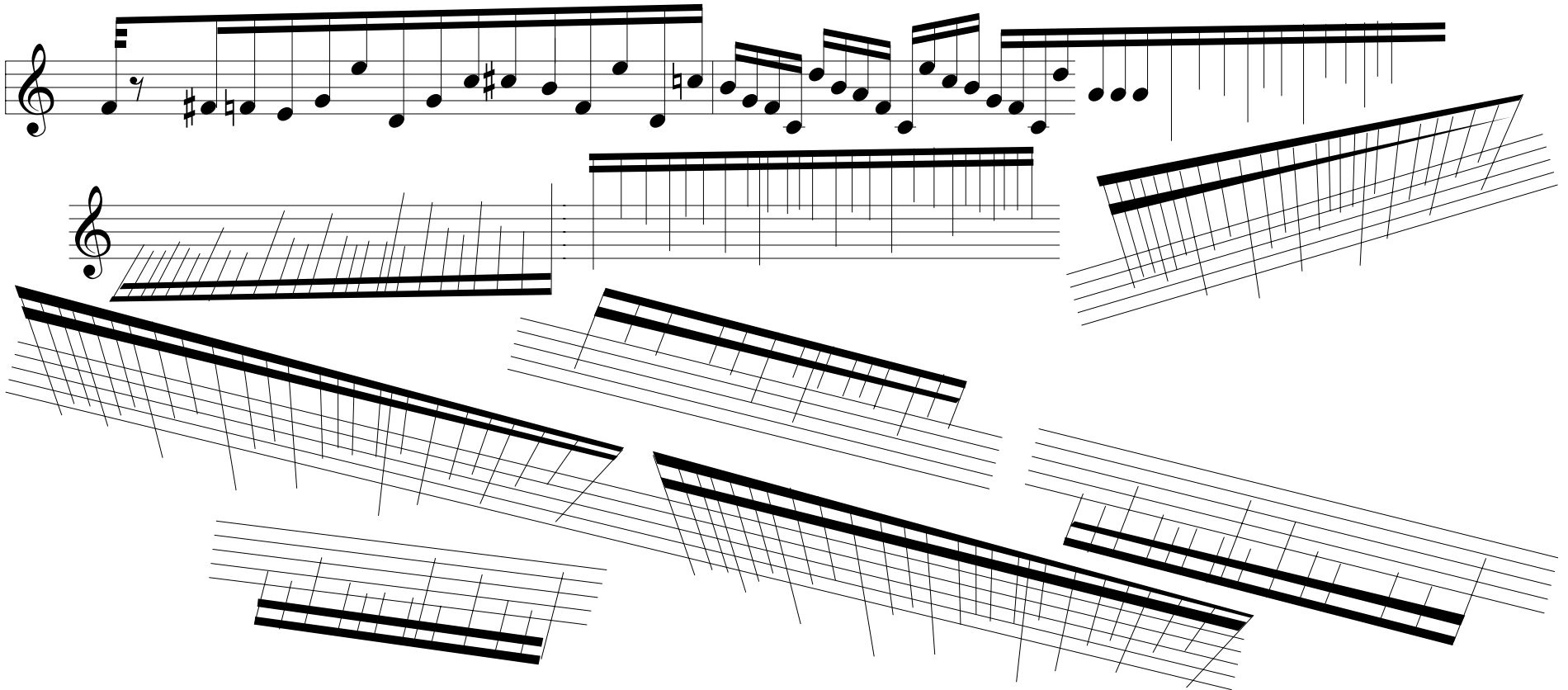
2. Cactus



3. Bees



4. Storm



5. Saguaro & Snakeskin

[may be transposed]

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, G major. The first staff contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5. The second and third staves continue the melody with various articulations and dynamics. A vertical line with three dots is positioned between the second and third staves.

[may be legato, staccato, slap tongue - more rhythmic for snakeskin]

6. Ocotillo/Hummer

low breathy sounds, ominous .
until hummingbird appears .
then:

Two staves of musical notation. The top staff features high notes with a 'very high' label. The bottom staff includes a dynamic marking 'mP' and features a sharp sign on the first note. The notation includes various articulations and dynamics.

7. Weeds

Two horizontal lines representing musical staves. The top line is labeled 'short flutter tongue' and the bottom line is labeled 'light'. The text 'FACE SCREEN & MUTE HORN' is centered between the two lines. The word 'soft' is written below the bottom line.

8. Wasps

Two staves of musical notation showing wavy, scribbled lines representing the sound of wasps. The text 'Brass-like: anticipate/pitch-follow wasps' is written below the first staff.