

GESTURE PIECE by Vicki Bennett (People Like Us)

The film is made in 9 sketches with titles that roughly describe the content/concept/theme. The themes move and progress with MANY tangents, although I've tried to keep the concept fairly intact and to keep the pace even and flowing. There is intermittent sound throughout, lots of silence too. I hope the sound will be no more surprising than any other person that you are playing with making a sound at a particular time. The audio volume should be set at the same volume as each participant.

There will be no instructions to be found beyond what is in the film, no written score beyond this text. The film will be provided to the players at least 2 weeks before the performance date, and should be viewed several times well before performing. For each sketch different numbers and combinations of performers are recommended, either spontaneously or pre-determined. All players should meet and discuss this after watching the film several times, and definitely well before the time of soundcheck. If a rehearsal is possible then it is also recommended.

Ultimately, whatever the film content suggests is what all should react to. – Vicki Bennett, May 2013

1. A Nod to Previous Players.

Majority of footage sourced from old avant-garde and comedy films featuring people playing cards and chess, also doing things at tables. Very little sound added to the film soundtrack.

2. From A-B.

Transport, trains, cars, carriages and things that move fast. Some typewriting and conducting too. This one is fast and also noisy in places!

3. Spin.

Lots of spinning, vertigo, circles and targets. Zooming into eyes. Camera shutters. Not too much incidental sound on the film apart from towards the end with a piano.

4. At Home.

Mainly footage shot in domestic environments - pans through people's rooms, people eating and chopping food, ringing doorbells, broken appliances and acts of domestic destruction. Reel to reel tape recorders and record players. Fairly quiet, some incidental sounds with a few louder bursts at the end when woman finds a monster in her fridge.

5. Several Directions at Once.

Part 1

A conductor conducts traffic lights and traffic. Incidental sound from traffic, but not conductor's music. Radio dial turns. Hands waving, pointing and conjuring. Quiet to start with then bursts of sound around the time of the radio dial being turned.

Part 2

Lots of punching, slapping and violence with incidental sound, cut in with a little conducting and hand gestures, bending and stretching. Quite noisy. Ends with car crash and bowing conjuror.

6. Dark.

Hand movements signifying quiet/listening. Record player and film leaders flicker black and white. People in the dark with candles, thunder and lightning, lights on and off. Disconnection of power, suspense and fear. Incidental sound of storm. People walking on wooden steps in the dark. Radio tuner and typewriters/printing machines. Quiet incidental sound apart from necessary bursts of weather/explosions.

7. Ups and Downs.

Record players, panning through people's living rooms. Leisure - card playing and knitting. More panning and record playing. Walking legs/feet through many films. Very quiet. Desert scene, people run down hill making a noise, there follow many scenes from westerns, woman stops train, buzzers pressed, men with bells, all incidental sounds for this section. More walking, people waiting behind doors, quiet, suspense, just footsteps and door handles. Door lock gets shot (very loud) and then follows a lot of scenes of people struggling in train/horse carriages, to the sound of a carriage then train stopping. Ends with car sinking into mud.

8. The Suspense is Killing Me.

Predator/victims leaning over/backing away or trapped. Retaliation, shooting. Walking. Snooker and more predators. Opening of doors to different scary people, hiding. Child making horrible noise with a pencil on chalkboard. Doors and wall banging intercut with silence and suspense, listening at walls. More doors opening and suspense, hiding and running. Screaming and fear, silhouettes with bright lights. Power cuts, darkness intercut with conductor and man stuck in phone booth. More power cuts and screaming, general misery. Sleeping woman, man walks up the stairs away from her, looks

around, she looks up. He walks away.

9. Nothing Happens.

Man walks down wooden stairs to men playing cards at a table. Intercut with other people staring at the screen or each other, no one does anything, they are just looking. Walking around wooden flooring, woman slams door, sits in silence, kicks floor and three people faint. LP rolls across floor, car runs over accordion. Birds fly up and down, mixed with dancing swimmers. Man sits and writes at a table, silently turning blank pages from different movies. Lots of panning over paper and big tables, mainly silent, man screams at faceless man. Lots more staring at one another, suspense, waiting. Nothing happens. Door opens to man in fez, everyone screams. More staring and suspense. Still nothing happens. Gust of wind, Harpo plays flute through window and scares all the ladies. More predators with weapons, people run away, roll credits.

More background info on Gesture Piece here: <http://peoplelikeus.org/2013/gesture-piece-a-film-for-live-improvisers/>