

PSYCHODRAMA: THREE INVITATIONS TO AN ENCOUNTER
for conductor-therapist and neurotic ensemble (open instrumentation)

by **David Jason Snow**
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"I attended one of Freud's lectures... As the students filed out, he singled me out from the crowd and asked me what I was doing. I responded, 'Well, Dr. Freud, I start where you leave off. You meet people in the artificial setting of your office. I meet them on the street and in their homes, in their natural surroundings. You analyze their dreams. I give them the courage to dream again. You analyze and tear them apart. I let them act out their conflicting roles and help them to put the parts back together again.'"

From *The Autobiography of J. L. Moreno, M.D.* (abridged),
Moreno Archives, Harvard University, 1985.

COMPOSER'S NOTE

Musical improvisation has characteristics in common with psychological therapy, including attentive listening and thoughtful response, actions that require participants to be fully present and self-aware. Therapy has the power to repair injured psyches; improvisation can also provide cathartic experiences. The way forward through both processes is never simple or easy, and mistakes will be made, but ongoing practice sharpens the skills of both patient and musician.

DURATION

Open.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

None.

OTHER SCORES AND RECORDINGS BY THE COMPOSER

<http://davidsnowmusic.org/HITS.HTM>

FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS

None.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

The compositions of David Jason Snow have been performed in concert by the Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Banda Municipal de Bilbao at the Euskalduna Palace in Bilbao, The New Juilliard Ensemble at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and many other artists and ensembles internationally. His fixed media audio and visual works have been performed at the Musinfo Journées Art & Science Festival in Bourges, the Festival Exhibitronic in Strasbourg, the Festival Internacional de Video Arte y Música Visual in Mexico City, the Sound Thought Festival in Glasgow, and Echofluxx in Prague.

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Ensemble exercise no. 1: At an imaginary cocktail party, each player “chats” with others in the ensemble in musical phrases, exchanging ideas and making jokes. Eventually, a mild disagreement arises which escalates into an argument. Each side of the conflict holds fast to its position until the conductor-therapist intervenes and communicates to the group that the conflict was caused by misunderstandings that arose from not listening carefully. The performers musically “explain” their true intentions and make up.

Ensemble exercise no. 2: The ensemble breaks into pairs of performers (in the case of an odd number of performers, the remaining player sits out the exercise and sulks). Each pair performs a duet in turn, the duet taking the form of a musical conversation about what one of the performers thinks the other should sound like. There are hurt feelings all around. When all the couples have had their say, the conductor-therapist leads the whole ensemble in a unison primal scream.

Ensemble exercise no. 3: The ensemble divides itself into two groups of unequal size. The smaller group huddles together, and the larger group encircles the smaller. The smaller group improvises a homophonic chorale, starting softly and building in intensity, while the larger group marches around the smaller, hurling rude musical epithets of increasing vitriol. At a climactic moment, the conductor-therapist intervenes and halts the proceedings, at which point all the performers band together and symbolically annihilate the conductor-therapist.