

Some notes on 'not clapping'

Sometimes it feels that the ritual of clapping functions to ensure that the world of the performance does not permeate outside of the confines of its allotted time. It can work to renormalising a space so that we can return to the codified social interactions that feel familiar, having fenced off any possible effect (or affect) of the performance within the confines of the stage and length of performance. This score invites people to explore a world with less rigid boundaries and how we might navigate together through this world.

(We can, of course, read clapping in other ways—as a communal show of gratitude or appreciation, as the audience having a voice after remaining silent through a performance, etc.)

I have thought about (not) clapping for some years, first asserting this preference when at Dan O'Connor's [*Residence Series*](#). Not clapping felt particularly important in this context as I felt clear that I wanted people to read these 'performances' as ritual work primarily rather than musical or physical performance (though they obviously constituted this as well). This also felt like a space in which I could control the environment easily and that made sense for me to do so—I here shared my invocation practice explicitly with attendees for the first time and people recognised the intimacy of the project.

Arnold Schoenberg ran the 'Society for Private Musical Performances' in Vienna from 1918-1922. Schoenberg formed the society to "give artists and art-lovers a real and accurate knowledge of modern music" (cited in Jarman, 1993, p. 64). The society put on a concert most weeks of music from Mahler to the present day and they had strict rules about attendance: "admission by subscriber pass only, no applause or expression of disfavor and no music critics" (Yoell, 1988, p. 290).

Schoenberg seems to have had more interest in sharing music free from critical judgment, than an aesthetics or politics of ritual, but to some extent this might manifest similar results to the intent embedded in my own score—at the Society for

Private Musical Performances the work stands by itself, the audience allow themselves to feel the effect of the work in ways other than a critical response.

Bibliography

Jarman, D. (1993). Vienna after the empire. In R. P. Morgan (Ed.), *Modern Times: From World War I to the Present*. London, England: MacMillan Press.

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